

acre—or more—for any man who wanted it, and the cloud-jitney, were the two things that moved this man to become the apostle of the city extension movement.

Fresh as a daisy at 67, moving like a torpedo, he yanked me through his garden on to the verandah and told me in a very few compact words all about it, dating back to 1920.

"Fight?" he recollected. "Oh, yes, such as it was, but nothing to the war, yet the aftermath of it. Wabigo was a mule and experts like Hugo were the drivers. With all his brains I wonder that he didn't start the Aero-Suburbs himself; but of course he was a land leech. Ten of us who had been sucked by the leeches clubbed together to start this Drome No. 1.

We each bought an adjoining acre at \$600, and one cloud-jitney for the lot. Nobody else seemed to have faith that it was any more than a bubble that would be punctured like a paper tire. Everybody was afraid of somebody else being opposed. Vested interests were held up as sacred finalities. But a man and his family are more of a vested interest to a city than a block of buildings more or less inhabited by civic sharks and politicians. We purposely chose an area for our village drome remote from any improved highway because already people had begun to put up imitations of city homes along these, and we figured that was good only for nabobs who could afford motor-cars and fashionable houses.

"Air anyhow is a free world. Man owns that—not any group of men. There was a time when most of us realized that air was about the only thing needed to sustain life that didn't cost us as a rule more than it was worth."

"Different now, Mr. Lee. Wabigo is changed."

"We had no intention of reforming Wabigo. All we wanted was the land and a way to get to it winter and summer as fast as we could without menace to life. We all had brains enough to grow garden truck and small fruits and keep cows and pigs. You have seen several thousand acres of our garden lands already."

"Droves of cattle too," I suggested.

"Yes, they are communal. Each aero-suburbanite owns at least one cow. We set aside so many acres for pasture in the centre. The houses radiate from the cow-drome, just as they do from the aerodrome. The cows are all high-grade milkers."

"But in winter—how then?"

"See that block of sheds along one side of the cow-drome? Lofts of hay overtop; running water from artesian wells just as we have in the houses; electric lighting—and I forgot to say electric milking. Our No. 1 herd averages in summer from a hundred cows 2,000 quarts. None of the families need twenty quarts a day as you may imagine. Heavens! when I lived on Gable St. my family got along many a day on a pint."

"Milk's eighteen cents a quart now," I reminded him.

"A perfect holdup!" roared Abner, thumping the verandah.

"And it threatens to go up two cents next time the Milk Producers' Association meets."

"I know it. Yes, we've been asked why we don't organize our Aero-Suburb Associations into competition with the farmers. But we are not out to compete with the farms. We make our own butter, sell the surplus and always have a reserve in storage by the use of artificial ice made on the premises."

He glanced up at a scudding aero-suburban eagle. "Ah!" he said. "Millikin's coming home for lunch. He can do it in less time than he usually takes playing after-lunch billiards at his club, and he gets the air tonic besides."

This led to a breezy talk on the aero end of the garden-lands problem.

"Men are contrary mortals," he insisted. "I tried

to drive that boy of mine off his air-models because I hated the whole idea of man aiming to overcome a fiat of the Creator. I deliberately wanted to stay as much of a low-down, respectable society-hating man as I could. So I hated the war because I believed it was the product of big interests warring against the mass of mankind. I begrudged my boy to the death even when I flag-wagged and talked big about the Empire."

ABNER seemed to be looking at his garden when he didn't see it. He heard the whirr of a cloud-jitney coming down into the drome and for a moment he wore a scowl. Then he came out of it.

"Oh, yes, I was in a fair way to become a bolshevik. But I could see a bigger way. I was after all a selfish man with a moral hobby. I wanted to prove that men who held jobs in the city could live on the land by thousands without building costly highways that were snow-blocked in winter and flinging dust into people's houses in summer. Wait a bit."

He dodged into the house and came back with a stack of old magazines, all dating back to 1917 and '18.

"I shan't bore you with these," he said, as he put on his specs. "But here are a couple of articles I read in 1918; one in the Fortnightly Review by Grahame White, and another in the Nineteenth Century by Capt. Swinton. I'll just read you a paragraph or two. Here's what White said, for instance:

Such ideas as we have expressed may be criticized as being Utopian, and so indeed they would be—quite Utopian and impossible probably of achievement—unless one foresaw in advance the revolution in thoughts and ideas which should follow the coming of the air age. Winds, or bad weather, these already the modern aircraft makes light of, while the use of multiple engines, instead of one, already permits flights to be made with such regularity that a breakdown through any mechanical cause is becoming rare. . . . As to the speeds possible in the future with commercial aircraft, science, which is invariably conservative, is quite ready now to grant that we shall before long have aircraft moving at the rate of 240 or 250 miles an hour, and there seems indeed no reason, ultimately, why speeds as great as 300 miles an hour should not be attained. Imagine what this will mean to the world in the conduct of its business, and in its more intimate relations. Picture how trade, prosperity, and good feeling may be fostered when a man can transact business one day in New York and the next in London; when any part of the earth's surface can be reached in a journey lasting, say, a week or ten days, when new communities can be instituted anywhere and everywhere, relying for their means of communication on the establishment of an airway between themselves and the nearest centre of supply.

"Here is what Galsworthy said about 'Town Blight' in the article on housing by Capt. Swinton:

Our great industrial towns, sixty odd in England alone, with a population of 15,000,000 to 16,000,000, are our glory, our pride, and the main source of our wealth. They are the growth, roughly speaking, of five generations. They began at a time when social science was unknown, spread and grew in unchecked riot of individual moneymaking, till they are the nightmare of social reformers and the despair of all lovers of beauty. They have mastered us so utterly, morally, and physically, that we regard them and their results as matter of course. They are public opinion, so that for the battle against town blight there is no driving force. They paralyze the imaginations of our politicians because their voting power is so enormous, their commercial interests are so huge, and the food necessities of their populations seem so paramount.

"As Wilbur Wright once remarked," went on Abner, "you can fly with a kitchen table if you only

have enough power in the engine. The war forced the pace in flying. But it kept us from developing the commercial airship. We now have as many types of planes for ordinary human use as we have types of ships at sea. I have never studied the transoceanic craft. Some day I expect to skip over to Europe in one. I'm more interested at my age in the cloud-jitney; the useful, accommodating thing that we have in our Association by the hundreds and shall yet have by thousands. One of them costs less to build than a big touring car used to. Our commonest type carries ten passengers and makes a hundred miles an hour. You came in one."

"Hullo!" snapping his watch. "There goes Millikin back—family along by the sound."

Some woman's voice floating down over the gardens; a patch of spun-wool clouds—the cloud-jitney went under them. Half an hour or less it was due to fold its wings at the Union Drome.

"Yes," remarked Abner, "two of our young people had a honeymoon in one lately; one of the touring models. They left here at ten a.m. and were in Halifax—more than a thousand miles—by seven p.m. the same day. Changed cars twice en route. They intend to make the Halifax-Vancouver trip in two days, with five changes of car."

IX.

THE story ended rather abruptly. It was continued on a cloud-jitney as the reporter rode back to the city with his host. Abner liked the experience of diving into the city which his insurgent ideas had done so much to recreate. Here were nearly a million people. But no human eye could tell where the country merged into the town. The Civic Aerodrome—Union Depot for all cloud jitneys—was right alongside the suburban surface-car station used by thousands who had no appetite for aviation. On a safe estimate 200,000 people had overflowed into the Aero-Suburbs. By a thorough census taken every year it was found that the number of children growing up to school age had never been so high a percentage. Rents and frontage values were controlled by the corporation. The aero-suburb had killed the slum. What was formerly hundreds of miles of ingrowing houses like Gable St. had now become thousands of acres of individual homesteads. Every other house had been taken down. The box-stall lots had disappeared. A real Property department at the City Hall looked after every acre of land in the city and was operated as an extension of the census department. Census had become the mainspring of Wabigo. Gas, lighting, coal-yards, tramways were all under civic control. Milk was distributed by the city as systematically as water. The city itself, owned and operated by the people, became the one central monopoly.

Every time he sailed into the Union Aerodrome Abner peered down through a haze of dust and smoke and felt the thrill of a struggle still going on. He was a product of the city, among whose many bulky problems still remaining the milk supply was chief. With such a phenomenal increase in the number of children, milk had become almost as great a necessity as water. Before the war the average city family had been deprived of sufficient good milk. Hence the high rate of infant mortality. The city could not raise cows; and though Wabigo City had municipalized the delivery of milk by dividing the city into distributing areas, the source of the milk supply was still the herds of the farmers on a thousand hills.

The Milk Producers' Association, according to the Daily Graphic's prediction, gave out an ultimatum of a two-cents-a-quart raise in the price. The thing was debated fore and aft in the press for some days. Abner kept his eye on it shrewdly. He knew that the average daily consumption of milk in Wabigo was about 500,000 quarts, allowing for 155,000 homes and a complete census of apartment houses, hotels

