

THE NEXT.

BY E. RAYNER.

"All aboard for the Boston, New York, Washington and Chicago Exposition! This way to the World's Fair!"

A silvery chime pealed out, clear and penetrating, as unlike the clang of the old fashioned railroad bell as the soft whirring sound suggestive of myriad bird's wings was unlike the snort and puff of the contemporary locomotive. The aforesaid bell had long since completed an honorable career, and the last of its race had been afforded a worthy burial within the walls of the museum of antiquities, to be looked upon with reverent eyes by coming generations.

A ripple of excitement was at this moment discernible upon the tide of life that flowed along one of the main thoroughfares of the ancient city of Benares. The cause of the ripple was not hard to discover. The World's Aerial Navigation Company's Excursion to the West was about to take place.

"Grand three day excursion to the western world, giving the traveller thirty-six hours in America. Great Columbian Exhibition now open. Unprecedented attractions for the visitor," the advertisements announced.

An unprecedented number of excursionists were availing themselves of the opportunity to leave eastern life and eastern traditions behind them, and wing their way to the birthplace of the new. There was another imperative summons, a breathless rush of the last belated excursionist and then the silvery chime ceased, the musical whirring increased in volume and the aerial navigator, upon whose shoulders rested the responsibility of conducting the expectant crowd from the familiar sights of the old civilization to the wonders of the new, sank

back placidly into his cushioned seat, his eye resting approvingly upon the mechanism that was to perform the work and annihilate labor and space at one stroke.

No need for his hand to seek piston or valve. "Automatic" might have been written all over the glistening, flying rods, as it was written all over and through men's plans and occupations now. The minimum of labor and the maximum of result had long been the object of search, and if the absolute minimum had yet to be attained, a relative minimum was even now enjoyed. Labor—the great evil that came in with the fall—had been vigorously fought, and though not actually banished from the world it had dominated, was in a very thorough state of subjection in the year 1992, the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the American Continent by Columbus, and the year of the great Columbian Exposition to which the attention of the world had for many months been directed, and by the thought of which men's expectations and hopes had been aroused. From the islands of the sea, from the old and yet rejuvenated eastern lands, from the uttermost parts of the earth they were gathering to meet the triumph of that comparatively recently discovered continent.

"Due in New York in half an hour!"

The words aroused the sleepers in the air ship, and warned them that with another day a new environment awaited them. The sights and sounds of India had hardly yet ceased their telegraphic messages to the brain and left it free for the fresh impressions that would throng upon it. America, Columbus, the great Exhibition! No time to dream of them. The western world was a reality.