

not passed without notice, for every single one of them lived in the glare of publicity, his every action observed and noted. Wall Street had experienced a slight feverishness during the morning. A trustworthy tip should mean the making of a fortune. The Press gave the names of all the men who had come to the conference, and did not forget to mention how much each of them was worth. By five o'clock in the afternoon it was a case of thousands of millions! Whatever might be under discussion, it was certainly something gigantic. Some of the writers talked as though they had been just lunching with Lloyd, and were entirely in his confidence, but in point of fact Lloyd had told them precious little. Others went even further and recounted textually what they declared Lloyd had said to them. The matter was nothing so wonderful, they said: it was merely an extension of the mono-rail electric railway from Chicago on to San Francisco. Another version was that the network of regular airship-communication was to be extended so as to embrace the whole of the United States, instead of being confined, as at present, to leading towns like Buffalo, Chicago and St. Louis. A third announcement was that Hobby's famous project for turning New York into an American Venice was now at last to be carried out.

The reporters prowled round the hotel like police-dogs on the scent. Their heels sank into the melting asphalt of Broadway as they stood staring up at the six and thirty stories of the hotel, as though waiting for inspiration from its chalk-white walls. One resourceful individual hit on the happy expedient of smuggling himself into the hotel as a telephone official and thus penetrating into one of the millionaires' private suites, where he actually tested the telephone on the off chance of coming in for a significant word. But the manager of the hotel finding him thus occupied informed him politely that all the telephones in the hotel were working properly.

The great white tower of the hotel looked like a monument of silence in the midst of all the surrounding excitement.

Evening came. The resourceful ex-telephone official who had been frustrated in his efforts of the afternoon had donned a beard and attempted to make his way up to the roof as