

A VIEW AHEAD FROM THE LAST CENTURY
by H. P. Blanchard

Just then, skimming over a low hill-top about a mile away, and perhaps a hundred and fifty feet above the ground, Mr. White pointed out to me the mail courier.

I had been looking with some expectation away up in the clouds, trying in vain to resolve an imaginary dot or distant bird into a flying machine. So I was a good deal surprised to see the reality in the direction indicated. It was not what I had expected.

I had fancied I might see a huge elongated balloon, some way or other propelled, or maybe a great expanse of horizontal canvas, a big aeroplane, perhaps a double or a triple decker slicing the clouds as it swooped down from the heavens. Instead, as this dragon fly thing approached, decidedly with swiftness, the view from front showed the line of an isosceles triangle inverted, its apex a very obtuse angle.

Its spread was about twenty feet, and from this base or cross-tie to the lower angle was, I should judge, six feet. In the mathematical center of this triangle was a spindle, on the forward tip of which two tandem fans or propellers whirled in opposite directions. Suspended below was a light, square framed cage in which the driver sat. I had no time for further observation before the machine, keeping its speed close to the ground was almost on us; and then I saw the driver with some effort strongly press a lever down. The result was that a level sail or plane hinged at its front edge to the upper cross-tie, took an angle of some thirty degrees out of the horizontal, pointing forward and up, and the