24 Pages Today

THE SUNDAY CITIZEN

Second Section

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Airships Now Float Where Hoofs Flew Fast

Old Morris Park Track is Now Training Ground For Flying Machines.

NEW YORK, Oct. 24.—The navigation of the air has at last become an actual problem in the sicence of transportation. Like every other development in this field, the airship has had to go through a period in which it has been regarded merely as a scientific and expensive toy, attainable only by the rich. The locomotive was looked on in this manner at first, and the bicycle and the automobile have successively passed through the same stage. Naturally the airship, particularly the heavier-than-air variety, through which the final solution of the problem of aerial navigation is expected, has had to pass through the same stages. For various reasons it has had a more difficult course than any of its predecessors. Its development has been looked upon as being in the hands of a few men, and wealth has been regarded as an absolute requisite.

Now all this is changed, for within the past few weeks New York has not only made experimentation in air navigation possible for small means, but has also seen the incorporation of an aerial travel company, which plans to carry passengers through the air above the streets of the city just as other means of transportation now do on the ground. Indeed, it is now even claimed that some not distant future date will see the pavements of various city thoroughfares colored in different tones in order that aerial navigators may be able to distinguish easily places in which they may land.

Of course all this may sound visionary. Actually, however, it is not. There is nothing more impossible about it than there was in connection with the phonograph or the telephone. And, in addition to this, the general development of this practical side of flying is now for the first time underway and in this city.

Up to now this has been in the hands of a few men. In this country, and indeed throughout the world, interest has been largely centered in the Wright aeroplanes, the famous "June Bug" of the Hammondsport group of experimenters and abroad in the machines of Farman, Delagrange and a few others. All these are men of means or backing. All of them have had the advantage of experimentation grounds offered by various governments and the incentive of rich cash offers.

But now the development of flying has for the first time been made possible for the man of small means. Within a few months this city has seen the organization of the Aeronautic society, made up of men interested in a practical way in aeronautics, which has for its purpose the furnishing of testing grounds, tool sheds and all the necessary paraphernalia for experiments in the navigation of the air by heavier-than-air machines. At the grounds of the society any man who thinks he has anything to contribute to the solution of the problem of aerial flight will have the best facilities and all assistance in trying out his ideas, and the millionaire experimenter will have no advantage over the wage earner.

Nothing could exemplify better than the organization of the Aeronautic society not only that there is an important future for air navigation, but the belief that as a practical problem it will be solved by practical investigators and not by persons of wealth, who merely regard flying as offering a possibility of a new and expensive sensation.

The land which has been leased by the society on which to conduct experiments is none other than the old Morris park race track in this city. In former years the scene of many an exciting contest between turf favorites. Here with a clear air track, the first of its kind in the world, measuring more than two miles, airships, the latest development in transportation, will supplant the horse. In the club house, now devoted to the work of the Aeronautic society, photographs of every conceivable kind of air machine and models of all kinds of aerial construction, from kites to dirigible balloons, have supplanted the portraits of famous equine racers. Already at this first practical air park in the world more than a dozen machines are completed or in the course of construction, and in connection with the whole project nothing is more significant of the practical future of the airship than the fact that most of the experimenters are men of small means—wage earners, mechanics and the like. It was primarily to give an opportunity to such men as these that the Aeronautic society was organized.

Perhaps the most interesting of the various flying machines now being tested at the new aviation grounds is the helicopter of W. R. Kimball. Except for Maxim's dirigible, it is the most expensive and the most beautifully constructed airship in the world. Its motor is a marvel. Weighing only 125 pounds, it nevertheless develops 50 horsepower, by which the 20 propeller blades are driven. This helicopter, which cost $10,000, is of course entirely different from the Wright aeroplane. It consists of a frame on which the motor is placed in front with the seat for the operator directly behind. Above are the twenty propellers which not only drive the machine forward but lift as well. These propellers resemble nothing more than the old-fashioned wooden fan often seen in restaurants. The motor, however, is capable of turning them at a rate of more than 2,200 times a minute. At this speed the blades are of course invisible. In the next shed to this $10,000 beauty is the Williams "biplane," so called because of the manner in which its planes are rigged. In the very near future, too, the Schroeder "arrowplan" is to be tried out, according to its inventor. This machine takes its name from its form, being low and norrow, shaped like an arrow, and with its center of gravity extremely low. This low center of gravity it is expected will give the machine great steadiness and eliminate the danger of capsizing which has always been a difficulty in the use of air planes. The most remarkable thing about this new machine, however, is its shape, or rather the significance of the shape. Other air planes are broad, so broad, indeed, that they could never light in a city street. The new machine, however, is designed to do just this successfully, and therefore marks the first commercial application of the navigation of the air.

These, of course, are all expensive machines, as the term is generally understood, and while they are remarkable they do not in one way typify the purpose of the Arenautic club so well as many others. The purpose of the society is to encourage and aid the experimentation by persons who without such assistance could never afford to develope and test their ideas is little realized, that the greater part of the construction now underway at this first "air course" in the country is actually being carried on by men of small means. There are gliders and wind wagons, in fact nearly every kind of construction known and unknown and as a result it may yet happen, as the Aeronautic society hopes, that from some how obscure source will come the realization of a practial flying machine. Naturally the man of small means realizes best the need of an inexpensive machine which will not be merely a millionaire's toy. And while public interest has been centered in the experiments of the Wright, it is an extremely significant fact for the future of flying that nearly two dozen ideas are now being tried out at Morrise Park by quiet men who are all working for a practical solution of the problem of aerial navigation.

To most persons, of course, this problem is a sealed one. Somehow it seems hard to realize that the flying machine is coming. But to see the practical work now going on at Morris Park is to understand the matter in a different way. In the sheds which equine kings formerly occupied are now various machines, tools and models, and almost daily tests are being made. Although the course, which has been leased for a year is open at all times, Sundays especially are open days when the public is invited to come and inspect. In the same spirit, too, any one with any sort of an idea for air navigation or any sort of a vehicle driven by an air propeller is welcomed by the society. Every Wednesday night at the weekly meeting all such persons are invited to be present. To them is given all the aid of the society in testing out their ideas. Morris Park is now really a public flying course and the sheds, shops and tools and advice of the society are freely given to all who are interested.

A catapult or launching apparatus, has been erected which will give the necessary impetus to gliders and similar machines. The glider, indeed, while it has no engine and is really only a sort of huge gits, is interesting because it represents what may be called the first step in flying. With the operator sitting or lying below the kite wings it is projected from the catapult by realeasing a heavy weight and shot into the air with a large initial impulee. Once launched it is up to the operator to keep his balance by twisting his body about. As this problem of balance is a most difficult one in motor driven air planes like the Wrights, for instance, the glider or kite may be regarded as the first step in flying. In theory it is similar to the sailing flight of birds which having attained an initial velocity may glide for miles through the air without moving a pinion.

Of course not even the most enthusiastic look for the immediate production of a practical and cheap flying machine. But the Aeronautic society and the work which it is carrying on at the old race track are extremely significant. Without doubt it marks the beginning of a new stage in air navigation. Never before have men of small means been able to test their ideas, and the existence of the first public air track in the world is in itself a remarkable indication that there is a practical future for air machines. With work and experiments going ahead steadily it is also the purpose of the society to hold special public exhibitions from time to time. Strong in the belief that no point is too small to be carefully studied, prizes will be offered for even kite flying by schoolchildren. The now famous tetrahedral kite has taught much, and it is the belief of the members of the society that it may teach still more. Nothing in connection with any air apparatus, it is held, is too small to be considered. The steam engine started from a tea kettle, the baloon from a paper bag. So while all kinds of air vehicles will be seen at the park including various famous machines, nothing will be looked upon as insignificant. The Aeronautic society believes that flying will be solved in a practical way. As a result of this belief New York now has the first and only public flying grounds and shops in the country, where the impecunious experimenter can test his ideas and receive advice and assistance just as well as can the millionaire. It may looke like socialism or philanthropy. In reality it is neither. It is, however, an extremely significant development in the solution of the problem of flying.

Doors that swing of themselves are the latest. At the Hotel Astor the attendant who stands at the main entrance merely has to press a bulb and the door, which is operated by electricity, revolves. This plan has the advantage of keeping the speed uniform.—New York Sun.

LATE SCIENCE

THE HIGHEST KNOWLEDGE.

Leaving religion to one side, the highest knowledge that a man can have is the knowledge of human nature, the knowledge of what men have thought and done in the world—of their failures as well as their triumphs. Undoubtedly a young gentleman may derive much profit from a study of the amphioxus, but he will derive vastly more from a study of Magna Charta, Shakespeare and Milton. It does seem as though this should be clear to all. We have to live in the world of Shakespeare and Milton, have to do with men who are influenced by these masters, while our relation to the world of the leaf and the frog is quite external. A man had better never have heard of the science of botany—unless, of course, he is going to be a botanist—than to be unable to recognize the classical allusions in the books that he reads. This knowledge—that of history, literature, economics, etc.—is valuable for another reason. For if the studies be properly pursued, the student gets not only the drill that is afforded by other studies, but also the greatest treasures with which a human mind can be stored. You may get as much discipline from the study of mathematics as from the study of Greek. But you get little else, whereas from Greek you get the beauty of a great literature and a profound sympathy with the life and thought of a wonderful people. In other words, the things that discipline you stay with you and are a continual inspiration. If it be said that a man forgets his Greek, the answer is that the same thing is true of the higher mathematics. A man out of college for ten years would find it quite as hard to prove a geometrical theorem as to translate a page of the Iliad. The sciences, as pursued by the ordinary, nonspecializing student, are quite as "impractical" as the classics. On this score there is nothing to choose between them. But you may forget your Greek without forgetting at all the spirit of the Greek civilization, or the beauty and power of the Greek writers. All this is valuable because it is the knowledge of man rather than the knowledge of laws and things.

REFLECTION AND THOUGHT.

One, however, does get something from science indirectly, and it is the thing which our newer education sets great store by, namely, the power of observation. We are told that the child must be taught to observe, and so we show him pictures, put him through a course of of symbolic play and generally seek to draw his attention to the things about him. Science contributes very directly to this same result. But unfortunately it happens that the last thing an American needs to learn is to observe, for he is the most strained, attention (for short periods) and observant of men. Curiosity is almost a disease with him. Therefore it would seem as though we were educating the faculties that were least in need of it. The old studies, on the other hand, tend to develop precisely those faculties that are weakest in our people, namely, the faculty of reflection. Instead of jumping from one subject to another, as the children do in the kindergartens and the schools, we need to learn how to concentrate, how to think hard and straight—to think persistently, and, of course, to think of something that is worth thinking about. It is not so necessary that we should "see things" as that we should know what they mean when we do see them, should know their relations to one another and to us, know their place in the general scheme of knowledge. The study of relations is one that we need to give much attention to. We seem, therefore, as a people to stand vastly more in need of a literary, social and classical education. As for the scientific method, which is, of course, excellent, therfe is no field of investigation in which that cannot be used. Science teaches us to ask questions—which we know how to do pretty well as it is—but it takes the wisdom of the ages to enable us to answer them

WIDOW OF LATE BENJAMIN HARRISON IN RETIREMENT

For the first time in a number of years the United States does not number among its citizens a living former President of the Republic, and the number of living widows of presidents is comparatively small, considering the fact that not a few of the nation's Chief Executives have married women many years their junior.

The roster of presidential widows now comprise Mrs. Garfield, Mrs. Harrison, and the lately bereaved Mrs. Cleveland. Regarding the life of Mrs. Garfield and Mrs. Cleveland since they left the White House the public has heard more or less from time to time, but Mrs. Harrison has lived so quietly and in such seclusion that it is safe to assume that a large proportion of the American people have been unaware of her existence.

Mrs. Harrison has a comfortable home on North Delaware street, in Indianapolis—the city which was always "home" to her late husband—but she spends but a fraction of each year in the Indiana metropolis. President Harrison's wodow is fond of travel, and devotes not a littel of her leisure to journeys by easy stage in one part or another of the European continent. When she does elect to spend an interval quietly under her own roof she manifests a strong preference for her quaint country home in Herkimer county, New York. Here Mrs. Harrison can usually be found from early summer until late autumn.

That this rural retreat in northern New York should prove a magnet of undiminished power for our least-known presidential widow is by no means strange. The place is, for her, full of associations. It was at a farm house in this immediate vicinity that General Harrison and his bride spent their honeymoon. The former president was always a great walker, even in the days when his time was occupied by the manifold duties of Chief Magistrate, and he and his wife tramped over the whole countryside during that first summer of their wedded life, and then and there selected the site of the habitation which they built the following year. Furthermore, this habitation which is fraught with so many memories for the presidential widow is conducive in the highest craves.

Berkeley Lodge.

Berkeley Lodge, as the Harrison place was named in honor of the ancestral home of the Harrisons in Virginia, is situated on a point of land that justs out into what is known as Second Lake of the Fulton Chain—a series of those connected waterways which are so abundant in the northern part of the Empire state. Not only is the Harrison estate distant a number of miles from the nearest railroad, but it is wholly inaccessible by wagon road. The only means of communication with the outside world is via the small steamers which ply on the lake and which stop on signal at the private dock which Mrs. Harrison has had constructed on her property. Through this lone artery of transportation come the occasional guests entertained by Mrs. Harrison, their baggage, the mail and all supplies of every character intended for the household.

Mrs. Harrison's home is half a mile or more from the nearest neighbor but isolation was the aim of General Harrison when he built this residence. Indeed he and several wealthy men who co-operated with him purchased practically all the land bordering on the little lake in order that the district might not become too thickly populated. The Harrison estate comprises only about thirty-six acres; but throuhgh the arrangement above mentioned the Harrisons were from the outset of their occupancy insured against intrusion.

Building is Picturesque.

Berkeley Lodge, which is in truth not a single dwelling, but awhole cluster of log structures, occupies a knoll overlooking the lake but is is os hidden by trees that it is unobserved until the visitor is close upon it. The main building is a picturesque two-story structure with a large octagonal tower on each forward corner. The space between these towers across the front of the house, is occupied by a wide porch. Practically the whole central portion of this building is given over to a huge living room, open to the roof, and with a monster fireplace of field stones laid up roughly with no mortar showing.

Conspicuous on the mantel is a portrait of the late General Harrison draped with the American flag. The towers which flank this unique structure are given over to tiny bedrooms, those on the second floor being reached by galleries to which stairways ascend from either end of the living room. These sleeping apartments are reserved for the use of Mrs. Harrison, her daughter and closest personal friends.

Located a few yards distant from the main building and connected with it by means of a rustic walk is the "housekeepers annex" which contains the dining room, kitchen and quarters for the servants. These rooms alike to all those at Berkeley Lodge, are ceiled in selected spruce which though unvarnished retains the beautiful cream tint as though it were put in place but yesteray. The windows are of leaded glass and all the open fireplaces are of rough stone, similar to the one in the living room. A nook in the "annex" that would prove of interest to every housewife is the "store room."

The Tin Closet.

Housekeeping half a dozen miles from the nerest market requires forethought even if you have your own vegetable garden, and so Mrs. Harrison has a capacious closet, the well-filled sheives of which remind one of a full-fledged grocery store. While on the subject mention may be made of another unique adjunct of the Harrison country seat—the tin closet. This tin closet consists of a small room, completely lined with tin in which is stored all the bedding, clothing, etc., when the house is closed for the season, necessary precaution to thwart the field mice—a destructive pest in this section of the country.

The third of the principal structures on the Harrison estate is "The Refuge," a two-story structure—rustic like the rest—set in the midst of a densely wooded area. This building was erected by the late General Harrison in order that he might have a place to carry on important work wholly undisturbed and here he did all his premilinary work on the celebrated Venezuela case and other important legal undertaking upon which he engaged following his retirement from the presidency. On the first floor of the Refuge is former President Harrison's old workroom with its broad windows and large open fireplace, in the center of which latter is the remarkable heart-shaped stone which the General and Mrs Harrison found on one-of their honeymoon walks.

Adjoining this room is that formerly occupied by the General's secretary. This room and those on the second floor—reached by an outside stairway—are all now utilized as guest chambers. Mrs. Harrison is of the opinion that when there is a large house party at the lodge it is good for both hostess and guests not to see too much of each other and consequently she gives her visitors a sense of independence by installing them in a habitation of their own, so to speak.

They Live Very Simply.

Although there are several bed rooms at Berkeley Lodge and a greater or less number of guests are being entertained almost constantly, Mrs. Harrison lives very simply and maintains a most unpretentious establishment. The wants of the household are looked after by a capable housekeeper; "George, an old colored servitor, who has been in the employ of Mrs. Harrison for a number of years, and a general utility man, whose duties range all the way from gardening to service as guide and boatman on the occasion of these picnics or one-day excursions which constitute the one form of diversion favored by Mrs. Harrison

Mrs. Harrison is enabled to live in a style befitting the widow of an American president owing to the fact that she has independant means. There is no doubt but that congress, if the matter were brought to the attention of the national law-making body, would grant Mrs. Harrison a pension of $5,000 per year, such as is now received by Mrs. Garfield and such as voted to Mrs. McKinley after the assassination of the late President. Mrs. Harrison, however, has never made application for any annuity, nor even for the privilege of franking her letters, although any Presidential wodow can presumably be placed on the postal 'free list" for the asking. Any such action has been unnecessary, as General Harrison left his family well provided for.

It need scarcely be explained that Mrs. Harrison, who is now in fiftieth year, was the second wife of Benjamin Harrison. The first Mrs. Harrison, who was Caroline Lavina Scott and to whom Harrison was married in 1853, died at the White House a few days before the Presidential election in 1892. In 1896 when Harrison was sixty-three years of age, he was married to Mrs. Mary Scott Lord Dimmock, a niece of his first wife.

The second Mrs. Harrison, who was at the time of the wedding thirty-eight years of age, is a native of Pennsylvania and was a widow when she married the former President. Her first husband was Walter Erskine Dimmock, son of Samuel E. Dimmock, Attorney General of Pennsylvania. She was married to Dimmock in 1881, when she was twenty-three years of age, and the young man died in January of the following year. Mrs. Dimmock had, therefore, been a widow fourteen years when she was wedded to General Harrison early in April, 1896.

In arranging for his second marriage former President Harrison settled the bulk of his fortune on his children by his first wife and then set about making a new fortune. In this he was very successful, for his professional services were in constant demand and his fees large. Estimates of this second fortune at the time of his death ranged all the way from $100,000 to $200,000. His largest single fee, reported to be $100,000, was received for his services as chief counselor for Venezuela before the international commission which met in Paris in June, 1897 to settle the boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela which had for three-quarters of a century been a source of international complications.

Miss Elizabeth Harrison.

Fond as Mrs Harrison is of her life at Berkeley Lodge with its opportunities for quietude and absence of convention she does not derive such keen enjoyment from the experience as does her little daughter Elizabeth—the only child of the former President by his second wife. Miss Elizabeth Harrison, who is now in her eleventh year, and whose first portrait is presented herewith, is an exceptionally attractive girl with a rare elusive type of beauty that is almost wistful.

Little Miss Harrison has large dark eyes, similar in their depth of color to those which contribute so much to the distinguished appearance of her tall and stately mother, and a wealth of chestnut brown hair that rolls back from an unusually high forehead. As is characteristic of children who have spent most of their time with older folk and have played little with other children, this youngest living daughter of an American President is quiet and demure with beautiful manners and a sly modesty that adds greatly to the charm of her personality.

The United States produces more corn than all the rest of the world.

BIG MEN OF FUTURE WILL BE CITY-BRED

(Citizen Correspondence.)

NEW YORK, Oct. 24.—The future great men of the United States will be in the majority of cases of city birth and upbringing, according to the conclusions of scientific investigators. The traditional advantage which the rural districts have had heretofore as the breeding ground of millionaires and statesmen is already disappearing in favor of urban localities, say these skilled students of sociological conditions. After the lapse of another half century the autobiographies of the country's great men will read, "He began life as a poor boy in a city tenement." Instead of using the present popular phrase, "He started life as a farmer's boy." The future poet will have to content himself with the pale-faced city boy to the exclusion of the "barefoot boy with the cheeks of tan."

For a good many decades now it has been the popular idea, and with good reason, that the country, the rural districts, were the source of supply for our big men. Three-quarters of the present day leaders point with pardonable pride to the fact that they began life on the farm or in a country village. Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Clay, Calhoun, Sherman, Grant, Lincoln—these are only a few of the great Americans who had a rural boyhood. But here is a significant fact, and one worth noting. Theodore Roosevelt was a city boy, and just as he stands for a good deal that is new in his present office, so his metropolitan youth may presage the coming dominance of the city boy over the country boy. Likewise, William H. Taft was brought up in the city. While single instances do not prove the case, Dr. Luther Gulick, who is probably the best authority in the country on this subject, asserts that city conditions in the last decade have so far improved that the average city boy now has a better chance in life than the average country boy.

There are many reasons for this changed state of affairs, according to Lyman Beecher Stowe, who discusses the matter in Appleton's Magazine. In the first place, he points out the often forgotten fact that during the early history of the United States the country boy predominated numerically to a great extent for the simple reason that there were few city boys. Even after the cities began to grow, the country boy was supposed to have a great advantage. But now all this is changed, and as a result of the new conditions we must look to the cities for our great men of the future. Mr. Stowe makes some rather surprising statements in his article to account for this change. Of course the matter of future usefulness depends very largely on the early physical environment and development, and there is a good deal of shock for the supposedly healthful country in his statement that "the air in the poorest tenement is seldom worse than the air in an ordinary farmhouse during winter. The most refuse littered street of the slums is more sanitary than the open drain back of the ordinary farmhouse, and he might have added, the pig pen.

That the problem of helping the neglected city boy or giving him the chance at an opportunity is by no means insoluble, even if difficult, is shown by the improvement which makes the foregoing statement possible. "But," says the Appleton article, in accounting in another way for the coming superiority of the city boy, "the problem of the neglected country boy is much more difficult. All these things organization and work for his good take money. There is little money in the ordinary farm or village community. However, the first step towards helping him is to realize that he needs help. Therefore, the sooner we remove the halo which tradition has given him and see him in the cold light of reality, the better for him. Every county in every state should have a country school athletic league, as has Ulster county, New York. The country boys still form almost half of our boy population. Their very numbers demand, for the good of the nation, that they be not neglected. The barefoot boy with cheeks of tan' who has no training other than his home duties and the district school is no match in the sharp competition of modern life for the paler city boy with playgrounds, gymnasiums, recreation centers and organized athletic sports."

In a large sense the reason for this change in the source of good American citizenship, due to the alleged decadence of the country boy, may be found in the old saw which says that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. It does even more than that, and in the long hours of difficult labor which fall to the lot of the average country boy is found a handicap to his proper physical and mental development. The average city boy, on the other hand, works during far shorter hours and the means now provided for his physical strengthening in the shape of playgorunds and gymnasiums are far in advance of those to which the country boy has access. Two decades ago this was not true. Then there were less than fifty gymnasiums in New York, most of them either private or expensive, and therefore prohibited the poor city boys. Today in this city there are twenty-five hundred gymnasiums, most of them public and free. Within the last decade, too, have come the playgrounds, medical inspection, food inspection and the like, all of which have tended to make the opportunity of the city boy better than that of his country brother.

There would seem to be a good deal of misconception about the country and city boys at present. Probably nine persons out of ten would laugh at the assertion that country boys are, on the average, physically inferior to city boys. Yet it is made made as a result of most careful investigation. Popular fancy is wrong, for the city boy of today is not the pale-faced, hollow-chested, stunted "kid" that he has so long been pictured. In such competitions between city and country schools as have been recorded the city boys. Yet it is made as victorious. Apparently, he can outlast his country rival, both physically and mentally.

Of course this decadence of the country boy may seem to man to be as yet an unproven theory. For obvious reasons it is not fully demonstrated for the reason that improved conditions of physical development in the city are of very recent origin, but there is plenty of evidence to point toward the superiority of the city boy. A computation made last winter showed that a majority of the persons listed in "Who's Who in America" were of city birth. This, so far as the good of the whole country is concerned, is not a fair comparison, for it is neither on the great nor the near-great that the future of the country depends, but on that indefinable character known as the average citizen. Comparative figures are not wanting in this field, however.

"It is well known," says the Appleton article, "that the city recruits in the Union army during the civil war made better soldiers than those from the country. They were quicker, braver, more intelligent, and, what is more remarkable, could stand more hardship. A Spanish war officer told me that his New York city recruits were the best and bravest men he had, with the exception of some Bowery toughs, who were worse than useless. The tough is the waste product of the modern city."

Statistics dealing with adults in this connection have been collected with great detail in France, where it is found that the most thickly populated district shows forty-three men of genius to every one hundred thousand inhabitants, as against five to every one hundred thousand in rural districts. The figures show conclusively that the largest cities are invariably proportionately far ahead of country districts.

KALHOUN'S LOGIC

Possum Krick, 10ic, 9teen and 8.

I regret exceedingly to have to announce that it will be some time yet before my flyin masheen or aeroplane, az yu like it, will ready for military duty. Ive expended untold predigested mental energy on the konstruction of this masheen, but the end is not yet. Ive met with almost numebrless difficulties already. Ide draft a plan an waz sure mi masheen wud rise up wiiyum riley and klimb the aerial ladder, so to speak, but then other important kwestions arose like hideous spectors to annoy mi pride, distress mi konscience and blur mi moral vision, in a manner. How to make headway up stream against a strong current of air was a problem that ive not fully solved.

Ive seen kurrents of air that swept away houses, uprooted huge trees, turned over railroad trains and many sich like things. Now I opine that one of theze tarnadoes wud stop mi masheen in its wild kerser and kause it to repent, or words of like import, in fact mout disable it for life. Then again another difficulty I found was how to adjust and manipulate misterrin oar rudder soze to make mi masheen gee and haw at will and take the right road when it kame to where the rods forkt, and how to adjust mi lightnin rods soze to divert the attention of lightnin when it made up its mind to daliy with mi masheen. I see where lightnin frolickt with one of theze masheens in Yorope, and after the frolick seed masheen lookt like thirty cents, or wuss. And how to prevent a north east wind kumin from west in a sotuherly direction stricken her amid ship and keelin her over, has engaged mi most serious thot, but the solution has not yet matured sufficiently to settle the matter in mi think resort. How to sail the masheen in deep wind, turbulent wind, and shallow, smooth wind is another matter that I see must be konsidered.

All of theze things have engaged the minds of other great men before me; men have for many years bin grapplin with these great problems, and now and then men have thot they had succeeded, but at the last moment somethin allus happened and theze alleged glyin masheens were stord away for future reference, and the great genius who dadied the invention krawid into a hole and his name was soon forgotten.

Ide bin goin up into the loft every chance I got and wud work on mi drawings; I had wings and tail feathers and all sorts of devices to be used in bildin mi great invention mapt out and pictered off. The old oman had noticed and examined chicken wings and sich, and she got some sort of an idea as to what I waz up to. So one day she ascended the ladder and went into mi laboratory and kame totin mi drawins down and fed them to the flames, thereby at one fell swoop destroyed the greatest ideas ever put on paper koncerning a successful flyin masheen, I think. When I began to protest tellin her how valuable theze plans were, she sed, "yes I kno; there is another thing I kno and that is there iz a place at Knoxville called Lyons View—a lunatic assylum that wud jist fit all sich critters as yu are." And she went on to talk about mi honord self and others with whom she kompard me, till I bekame discouraged. So I kan not tell just at present how soon mi flyin clouds up above the world so high and dodge around the world of stars.

When kompleted I shall, I think, anker to Mars first, and from what ive heard by thoze who had bin there about the sile klimate of Mars, I may open up a real estate office and boom the place, bring back with me samples of vegetation, minerals and other products of Mars. I sall also bring with me a specimen or two of the klimate, let men test it and see how they like it. I shall also visit the moon, but shall not do any bizness for the moon iz too dry. The moon went dry long ago, before Maine did, in fact. Ive bin told bi men who shud not lie that the man in the moon had not had a dust of water in 5ty years; they first voted out water, and then small beer and wine, then whiskey and finally every thing wet. This is karryin the joke too far. I dont like a kuntry thats to xasperatingly dry.