

SINCE THE DAYS OF THE SEDAN CHAIR

A ROMANCE IN THE EVOLUTION OF MY LADY'S METHOD OF TRAVEL.



WITHIN the lifetime of a number of men and women of today the world has witnessed a transition in methods of locomotion from the sedan chair to the airship. For sedan chairs were used in London as late as 1830.

That children of persons who used the sedate, hand-borne sedan chair in their social or business journeys might take flights through the air in the very latest and most sensational methods of conveyance was a dream that came to few of the wildest romancers of the past, and yet it is on the verge of actuality.

One of the most interesting romances of human ambitions and achievements is bound up in the story that tells of the various methods of locomotion that successive centuries and expanding genius have given mankind.

It deals with the wheels that followed the sledge, the steam monster that supplanted the horse, the automobile that required the brougham, and is now concerning itself with airships that promise to take the wings of birds and cleave the air like things of life.

Truly, the transition from the sedan chair to the flying machine writes into history a wonderful, romantic chapter.



A Progenitor of the Cab. Horse Litter Used as Lads' Seats.



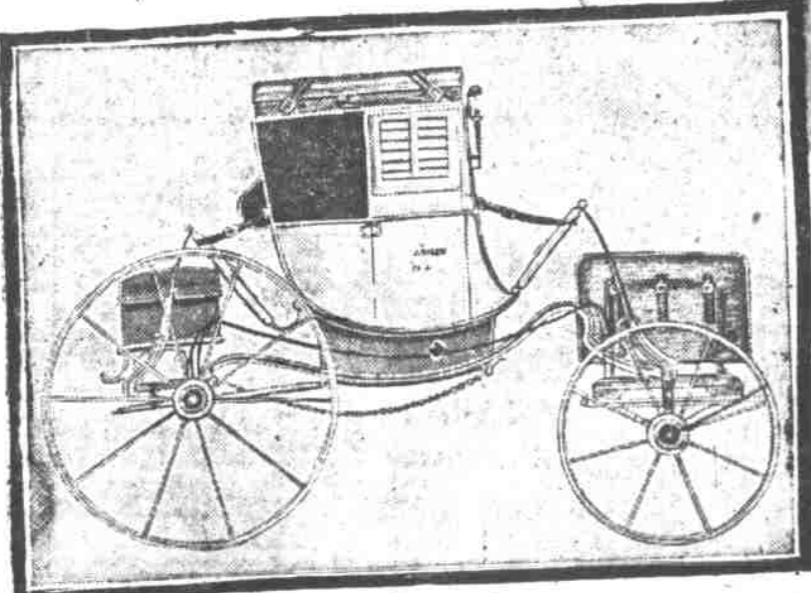
This Was a Marvel in Its Time



The Early Cab With Side Seat.



Seen in Our Grandfather's Day.



Post-Chaise of the Eighteenth Century.

...picting the social life of past generations than did the sedan chair.

There was a romance in itself about this richly upholstered and man-borne conveyance of the ladies and dandies of ages ago.

One can imagine the fine women of the period, in their silks and brocades, being conveyed to fashionable events by liveried chair-bearers—who became coachmen and footmen in later years, when wheeled vehicles supplanted the chair.

In 1634 Sir Francis Duncomb obtained letters patent allowing him to let "covered chairs"—sedan chairs—for hire for fourteen years. It is not known whether he made a success of this early attempt at monopoly, for, even at that time, hackney coaches had become numerous.

HACKNEYS GAINED GREAT VOGUE

At first these had not been allowed to stand in the streets, but had to remain in the owners' yards until called for. Their owners and drivers must have manifested some latter-day propensity for getting around such regulations, however.

By 1635 these coaches had increased to such numbers that King Charles I issued a proclamation stating that the "general and promiscuous use" of hackney coaches in great numbers "causes disturbance to the king and queen personally, to the nobility and others of place and degree; they pester the streets, break up the pavement and cause increase in the price of forage."

In the annals of old London one finds that carriages were first "driven at a rapid pace" in 1654, and, also, that in 1662 hackney coaches were forbidden to ply for hire on Sundays.

Statistics show that there were 2490 hackney coaches in London in 1662, but the number of horse litters and sedan chairs is not stated. About that time the horse litter was approaching the end of its career, and the sedan chair was coming into favor.

With the increasing popularity of the wheeled vehicle the carriage-maker's art advanced. The eighteenth century post chaise was often very elegant in its appointments, and, perhaps as a rule, not so slender in its important parts as indicated by many drawings that pictured it.

Very elegant, too, were many of the substantially built road coaches constructed for the country gentlemen of America. While the saddle horse was the favorite mode of conveyance of the men, they used the coaches, frequently for long journeys, and there were often special

coaches for the women of the family.

Indeed, the historical romances that began cropping out in such numbers some years ago would have missed some of their most picturesque features had it not been for the family coach, with the grinning negro driver on the seat, and the fair passengers, decked in furbelows and laces, on their way from plantation to plantation to attend some fashionable function of the day.

the principle of a watch. In due time, however, and in order, came the steam-propelled vehicle, the gas carriage, the air carriage and the electric wagon.

Wonderment was evoked by the first successful automobiles, and yet they are now as firmly fixed in the order of our daily life as are the skyscrapers of the city. One reason for their popularity is because they have appealed especially to the heart of woman—and woman's

WHEN one consults authorities in an effort to learn something of the history of vehicles used by man, he is led far back into the past.

"Probably," states one authority—and one regarded as authentic—"the first instrument used for drawing burdens was the sledge."

This, of course, has no reference to burdens borne on the backs of beasts—a method that was employed, perhaps, by Adam and his immediate descendants.

One finds sledges pictured upon the monuments of ancient Egypt. A little later, when the Egyptians began employing huge blocks of stone in their monument and pyramid building operations, rollers of wood were used.

The next natural step was the substitution of wheels, cut in solid pieces from large logs, for rollers. And in a little while, no doubt, came the substitution of wheels with spokes for the clumsy solid wheels.

Use of vehicles drawn by animals was introduced, it is thought, soon after the domestication of the horse and ox. From that period improvements were made from time to time.

During the middle ages vehicles were slung on wooden strips to lessen the jar. Steel springs were not introduced until about 1700, and the elliptical spring was invented in 1804.

While hackney coaches, so called, first plied for hire in London as early as 1605, their use did not become general for a long time.

And long after they made their appearance upon the streets of cities, the older and generally employed horse litter continued to convey passengers from point to point in the country and from city to city.

For centuries the horse litter had been used as a hired carriage by those unable to maintain separate conveyances for themselves. As late as 1680 it was to be seen upon the streets of English cities and upon English highways.

One of the last references to the horse lit-

ter was made in 1680, when an accident to General Shippen was recounted: "He came in a horse litter wounded to London; when he paused by the brewhouse, in St. John street, a mastiff attacked the horses, and he was tossed like a dog in a blanket."

Many a fair maid and bustling matron of those long-gone days made journeys of considerable length in the horse litter—either their own or hired for the trip.

It was not a very comfortable sort of conveyance, one surmises, but it was better—at least, more dignified—than walking, and was in great favor with women who, for any reason, did not care to ride horseback, and with gouty old gentlemen who found themselves less tortured by it than by the rougher exercise of the saddle.

It is generally understood that the sedan chair was born in Sedan, France; hence its name. Just when this introduction of a new method of conveyance was made is not stated, but the sedan chair was popular throughout Europe for many generations; it was especially the polite mode of conveyance in England long after the hackney coach had made its appearance.

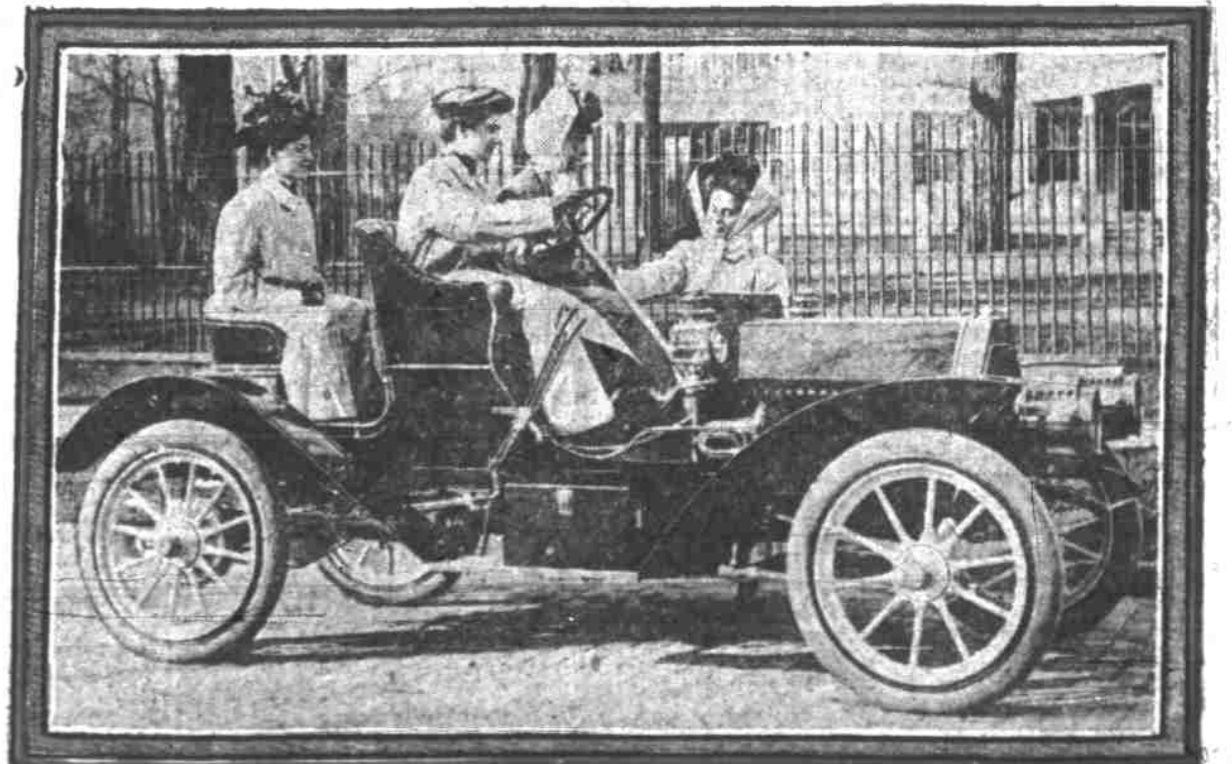
CHAIRS WERE ALL THE RAGE

Great numbers of these chairs were always available for immediate use, and numerous old engravings and pictures show every phase of their service.

They were very popular with ladies—in fact, were considered almost indispensable in fashionable circles—and they were used extensively by men as well.

One of Hogarth's famous prints in "The Rake's Progress" shows the young dandy just alighting from a sedan chair and being arrested for debt.

Nothing, perhaps, fitted better into the romantic demands of the novelist engaged in de-



And When This Came It Was Thought The End Was Reached...

Most of us, perhaps, are under the impression that the automobile is entirely the product of latter-day genius; that the swiftly gliding vehicle is among the latest of modern inventions. And yet there is on record, in the United States Patent Office, under date of October 17, 1789, a patent granted for a steam automobile—only it was called "a self-propelled carriage."

Earliest patents for self-propelled carriages or wagons covered devices that relied upon springs as the motive power, something upon

favor rules the inanimate as well as the animate world.

So it does not seem such a far cry, in view of recent developments, to the airship as a popular and general means of travel. Many a young miss now devoting her days to the polishing processes of the boarding school may own her airship in the days to come, just as her mother now calls for her automobile when she wishes to go shopping or pay a round of social calls.