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MODERN MECHANIX AND INVENTIONS

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TRAPPING SCIENTIFIC SWINDLERS
ARE OUR BIG CITIES DOOMED?
PLANS FOR A SPORT BIPLANE

saunders

Look Out for SWINDLERS

by ORVILLE H. KNEEN

PADLOCK your purses and hoard your gold—the “scientific” swindlers are coming! A flood of such schemes is in the making, ready to be released when the next boom gets under way. Even now we can “get in on the ground floor” of such recent scientific advances as television and radio, or rise to the heights of independence in weird aircraft. Promoters’ promises were never more glowing.

Thus a prospectus issued by a New York go-getter announces “the world’s largest heavier than air ship,” “fast rotation aeroplanes,” a vast aerial transport system, contracts “to be obtained from the Navy and Army,” etc., whirling us up in the air with these words:

Exaggerated Claims

“This corporation will build the world’s largest and most technical and powerful heavier than air flying Airship, capable of resisting all weather conditions upon the sea and air. This airship when complete will be of the staggered wing type which has been found to be the most technical solution wherefrom to extract the power from within the sphere of true stability and lifting efficiency.”

What more could you ask for your money? But investigators failed to get his exact meaning, and induced the “inventor” to cease his “technical” operations before much money was donated. They had to admit that he was resourceful, however, as he proposed to manufacture, while getting ready to build airships, such diverse items as fruit pickers, kitchen utensils, home furnishings, “educational

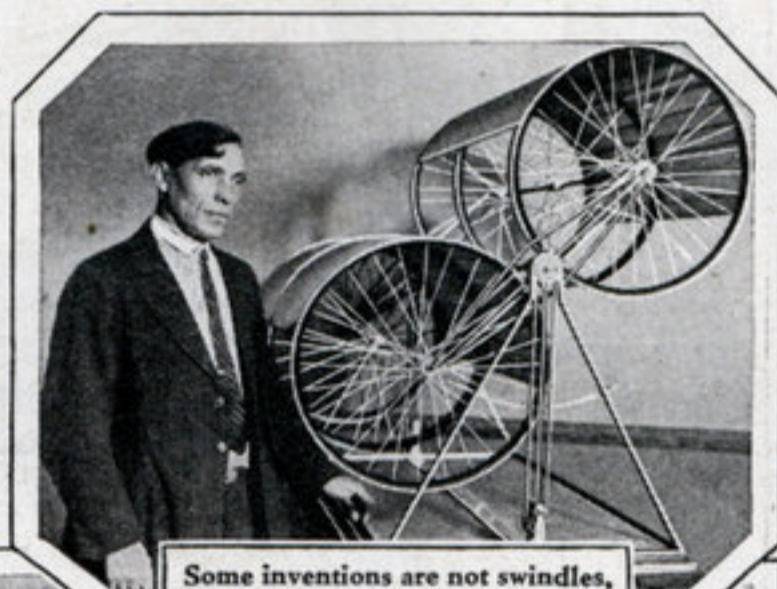
spinning toys,” and last but by no means least, a foot swimming device.

What this airy financier lacked in education was more than made up by the promoter of the latest electric cure-all. As he was going to jail a few months ago it was learned he was a university graduate—in electrical engineering. To sell his patent “ionizers” he resorted to such high-voltage methods as spending over a thousand dollars a week on radio programs.

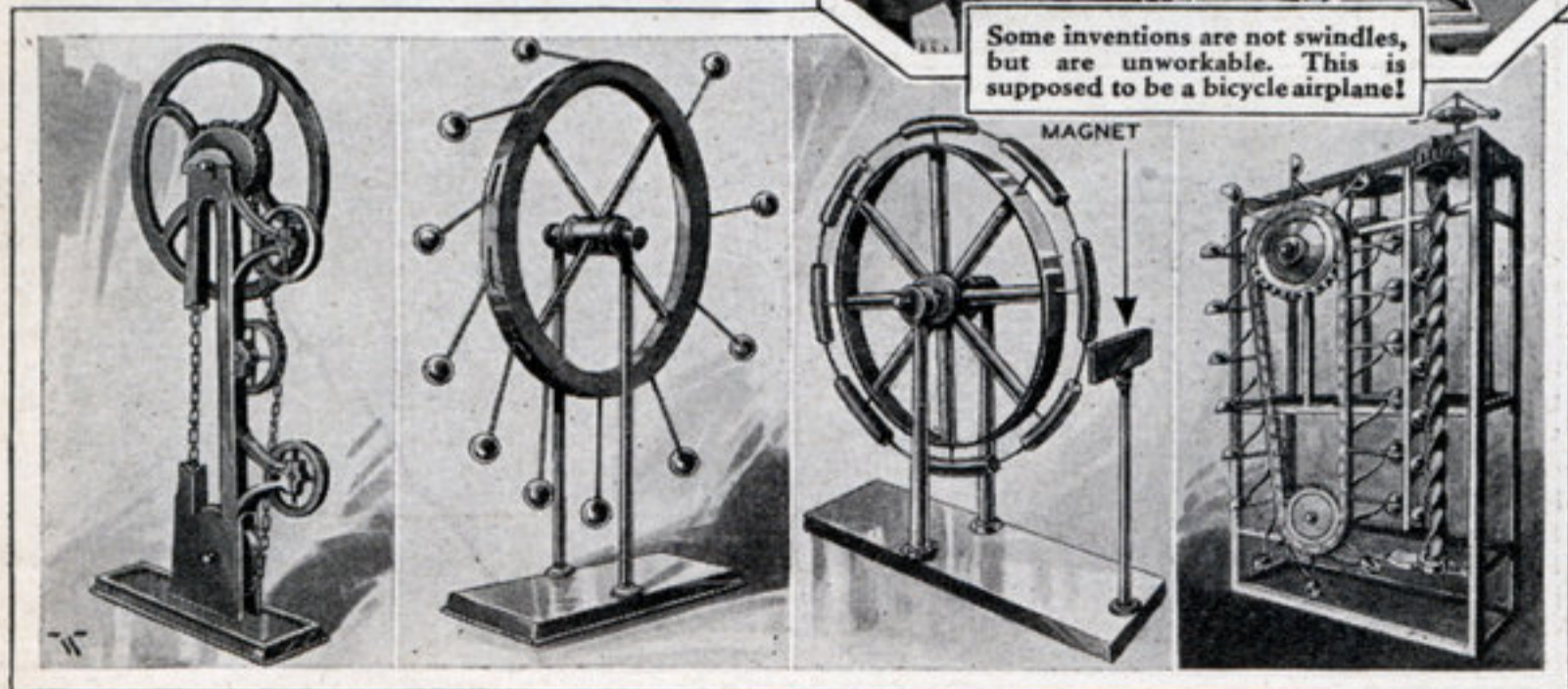
1000 Per Cent Profit

Not only did half a dozen stations radiate his appeals to the ailing, but several doctors short-circuited hundreds of dollars in weekly commissions by “advising” patients to buy the “horse collars,” as reputable physicians dubbed them. They cost the ionizing engineer less than \$10 apiece, but he sold thousands at \$100 each.

The art of extracting gold from the un-



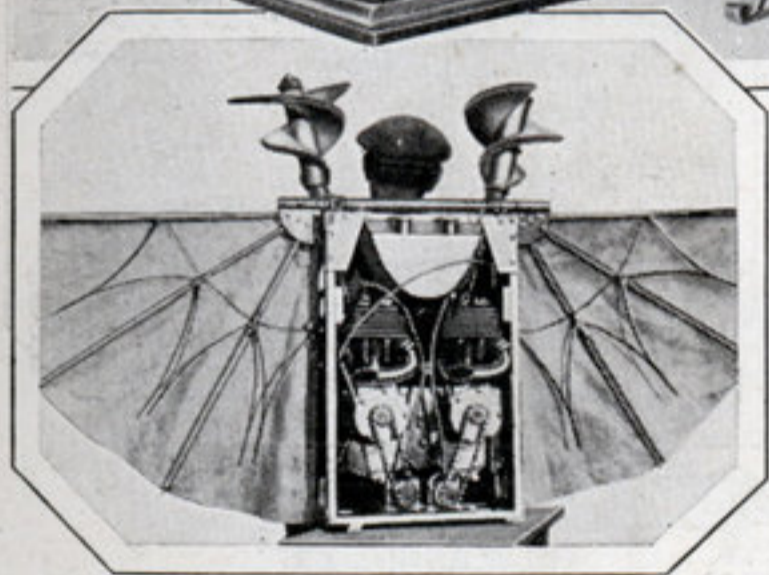
Some inventions are not swindles, but are unworkable. This is supposed to be a bicycle airplane!



Human desire to get something for nothing explains the search for perpetual motion. Here are four favorite types of perpetual motion frauds. None of them work, except to lure many dollars from the pockets of credulous investors.

Who Turn "SCIENTIFIC!"

New scientific discoveries — splitting the atom, cosmic rays, etc.—give the scientific swindler new tools to work with in luring dollars from the unwary. Some of the most famous mechanical swindles of today and of a generation ago are described in this article.



Interest in airplanes has opened up a vast field of freak inventions. This "Human Flying Wing" is the product of a Viennese mechanic who has hooked a couple of one-lung motors to spiral propellers adjacent to his head.

wary requires better technique from year to year. Thus back in 1880 electricity was known only in the laboratory, and almost anything would shock the pocket-book nerve. It was in that year that a certain "Professor" Wingard invented, or at least announced, probably the first of the numerous "death rays" which have wiped out so many bank accounts, if not cities.

From a safe distance the Professor shook scientific as well as naval circles, by blowing up the hulk of a schooner in

Two famous frauds of a generation ago are shown above. At left is a Redheffer mechanism, claimed to be a perpetual motion machine, which was operated by a hidden spring wound by turning one of the knobs on top. The other machine is one of the famous Keeley devices, claimed to run from some mysterious "etheric force," seized from the air.

New Orleans Bay. He guarded his mysterious electrical apparatus night and day, and for two years perfected his annihilating invention. The end of all navies seemed in sight when he showed up in Boston and formed a stock company.

His first modest request was for a mere \$1,800, wherewith to put on a demonstration. After convincing skeptical scientists and capitalists, millions would be his for the asking. The Professor installed his electrical outfit on a small steamer, in the deckhouse, and guarded it closely. Long before the day of wireless, he proposed to explode dynamite placed on the distant vessel, some miles away, by electrical emanations.

When Plans Go Wrong

The experts and the inventor boarded the little steamer, while two men in a rowboat set out to place the dynamite in the old vessel. Suddenly a terrific but premature explosion shook the bay, and especially the Professor. He called off the demonstration, but nothing was suspected

Typewriter Which Types Letter From Spoken Words Is Ingenious Fraud

until the rowboat and the two mangled bodies were inspected.

A long rope finally gave the Professor away. He admitted that his scheme was nothing more than having the men attach the rope as they placed the dynamite. He exploded it by pulling on the rope. While not very ingenious, as such inventions go today, it would have blasted open many a bank account if the dynamite had been more carefully handled.

Hard to Say What's Impossible

Who can say what is impossible today? Weird devices such as "electric brains" quickly solve intricate problems. Machines switch great generators on or off without attention, as load requires. Other robots steer boats and airplanes better than human hands. Unseen electric eyes guard vaults, count traffic, turn switches.

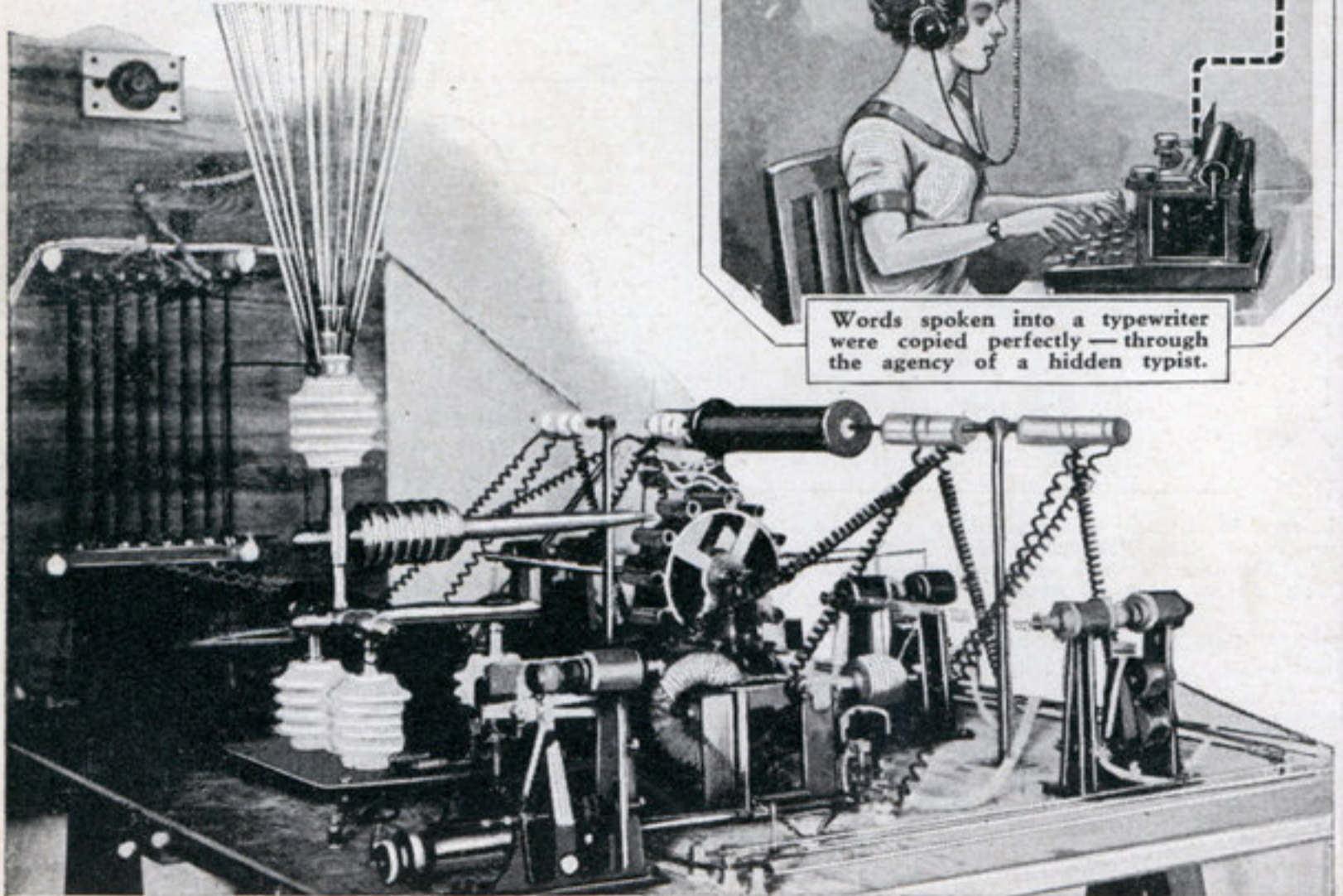
The teletypesetter will set type in any number of offices at the same time. The teletypewriter enables us to type our own messages in distant offices. Typed messages can be sent by radio—a device which stocketeers could use in place of long-distance, with which they now telephone from New York to San Francisco, if necessary, to hook a customer for a new offering.

Swindlers seem to be outclassed when a real machine is produced, as it was recently, whereby specially-typed copy is read by an electric eye, and is then set up

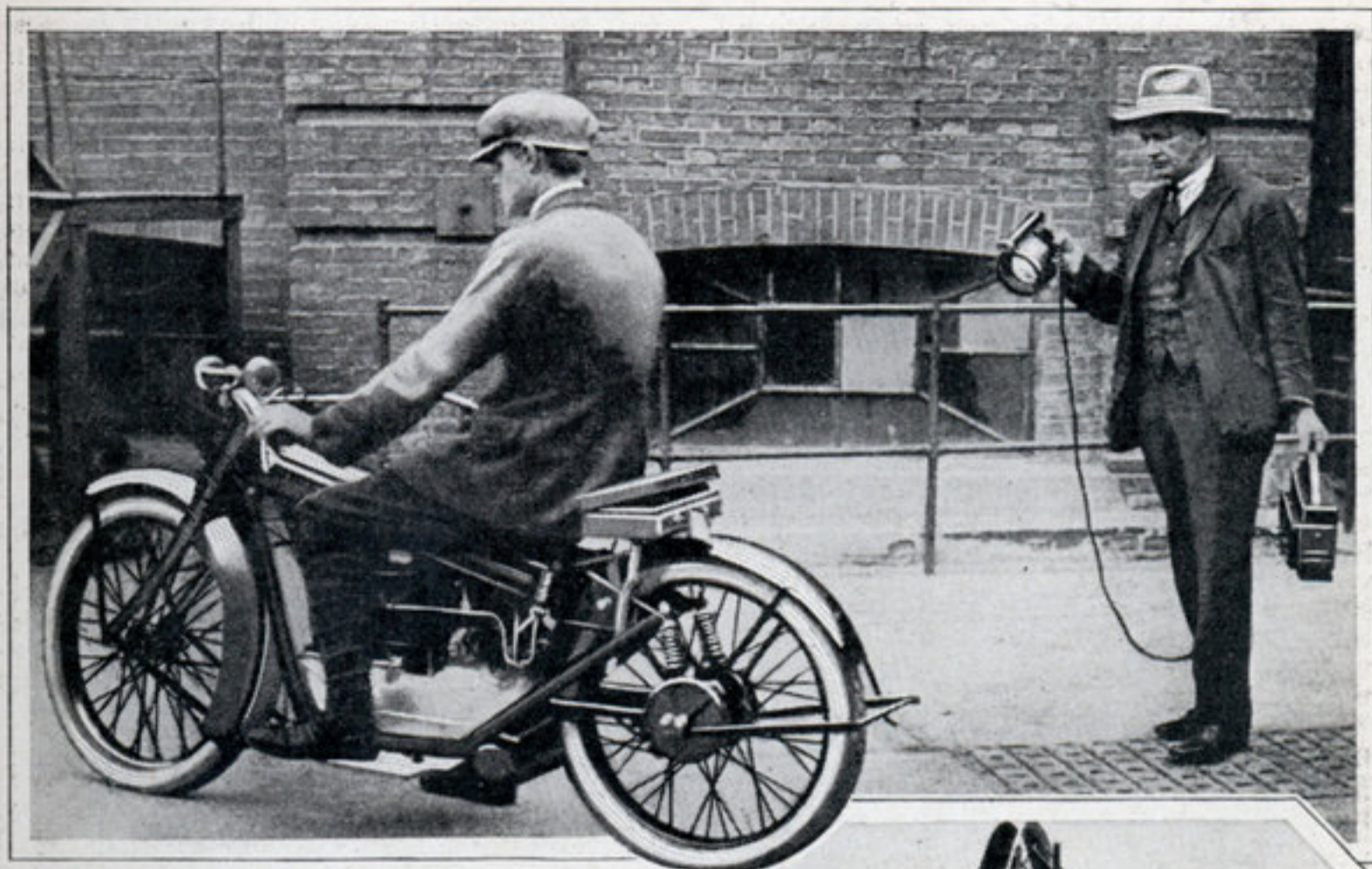
in type without human hands. Another device is the talkie-typesetter, which makes a film when copy is read into it, and then sets the type.

But an ingenious promoter has put all these machine age marvels in the shade. Realizing how many business men yearn for an errorless typewriter, able to tap out letters all day and night, at top speed and without even time out for lunch or nose-powdering, he developed just such an Iron Tillie. He may have heard of just such a machine actually built, which did take dictation and deliver finished letters.

But whereas this machine could only



View of a French machine to produce atmospheric electricity. Mechanism is highly mysterious, to impress the credulous and to conceal operating device. An expert can find out what makes such things go, but experts are not invited to inspect them.



"Death rays" have a firm hold on the popular imagination. Here a so-called ray stops the engine of a motorcycle. Such rays, though widely publicized, have never been perfected.

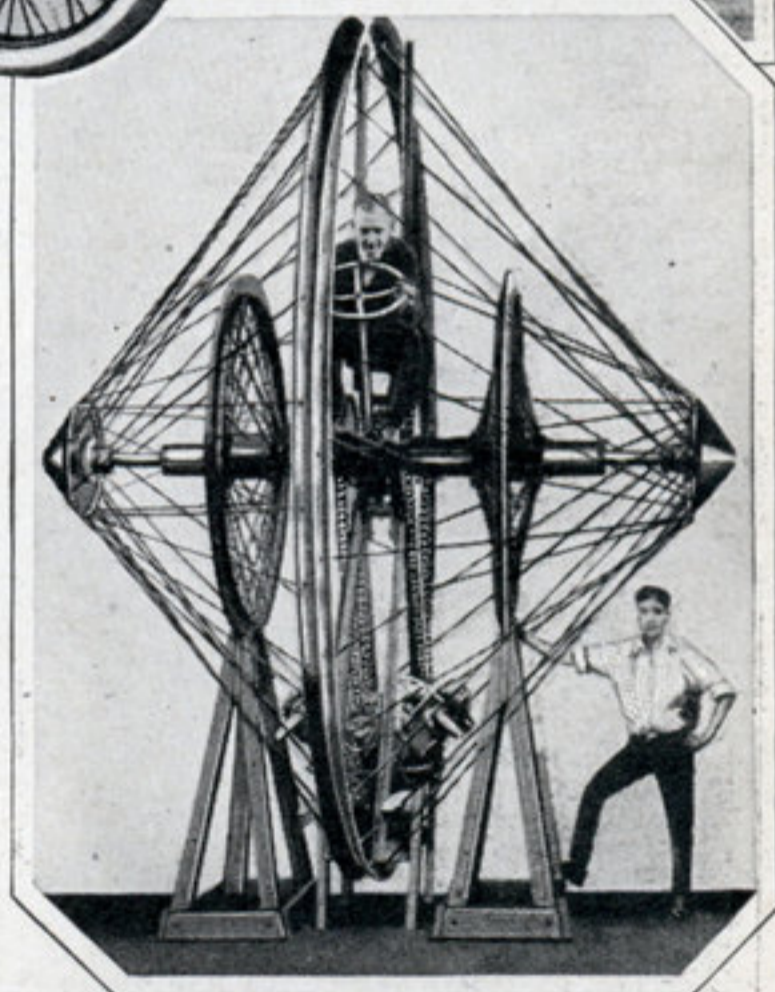
spell cat with a "k," for example, the promoter's perfect automatic typewriter came through with the correct "c"! As he or the prospective investor talked into it, rods and wires and gadgets humped themselves, electrical contacts flashed and snapped and buzzed. In a few moments the copy slid out—letter-perfect.

Secret of the Fraud

Here was the greatest invention of the age! Investors planked down their money for stock, to get in on the ground floor. But detectives from the Better Business Bureau, while the inventor was absent, went down lower yet—to the basement. There they discovered a rapid typist, with a microphone strapped to her head. Whenever she struck a key, it worked another upstairs. The arrangement, while of some advantage in removing too-attractive stenographers from the sight of tired business men, was not considered a real investment. The promoter vanished, as did the investments.

Radio-Controlled Cars

Think of the millions made by those who invested in Ford cars! Or radio! Get in on short-wave ground floors, or a super-something! Promoters find that electric waves are very effective energizers of the pocket-book nerve. Thus we all know of radio being used to control battleships, submarines, even airplanes and aerial torpedoes. What more logical, then, than a radio-controlled automobile?



This invention of a cycle car isn't necessarily a swindle, but it's so far from being practical that the investor who buys stock in the contraption is taking a long chance.

Such cars have been demonstrated, but no one knows a use for them, unless perhaps for bloodless wars, in which radio-operated machines charge each other while the armies camp safely behind, with the generals. But a glib promoter found a very practical use for such a machine recently, in a Middle Western city.

He invited prominent and well-heeled

Gold Can Be Extracted From Sea Water — But There's No Profit in It

citizens to ride in a car with himself. Ahead of them a driverless automobile, with mysterious doo-dads under the hood and elsewhere, threaded its way through the traffic. Invisible waves, sent out from their own car by the promoter, seemed to direct the leading car unerringly. Much impressed, the citizens invested heavily in this "latest achievement of science."

Is It Practical?

But investigators from the local Better Business Bureau failed to see what the thing was good for, except perhaps as a new alibi for running past a red light. When the promoter was busy promoting subscriptions they poked around the apparatus which filled the radio-car. And under the front seat they found a small chap, perfectly willing to be uncomfortable in the cause of science and finance. He was able to guide the car as required, and thus the radio-car was very simple in operation. But the stock went off the market.

Swindlers have a great variety of scientific wonders with which to work today. X-rays, ultraviolet rays, electric and magnetic and short waves, atomic and radioactive, high tension and high pressure and high frequency, sounds we cannot hear and light we cannot see. We are in exactly the right state of mind for picking. New devices are being invented for our benefit, while tried-and-true frauds like perpetual motion and gold-from-seawater are being scientifically refurbished.

Magnetizing Buried Treasure

A Kansas farmer (not one of those in need of farm relief) was informed not long ago that his farm held a fortune in buried Indian treasure. Oddly enough, the stranger knew precisely how much there was,

and to locate the \$475,000 exactly he produced a unique scientific instrument.

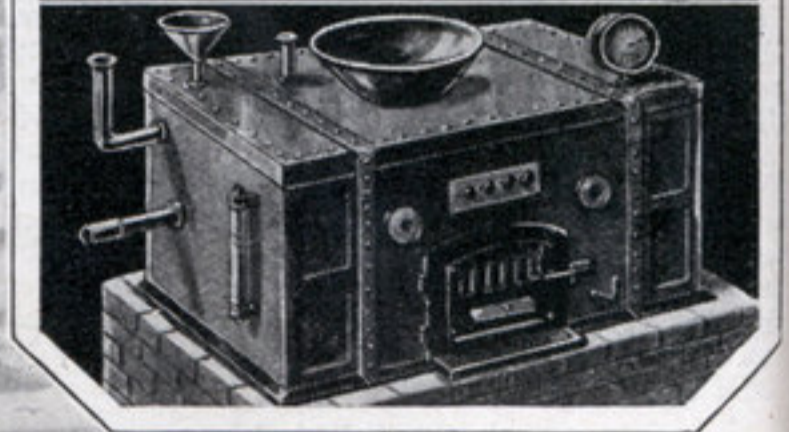
All the fortunate farmer had to do was to turn over \$4,000 to the stranger. His device would magnetize it, by a secret process, and its magnetic properties would at once locate the hidden fortune. The whole thing was amazingly simple—especially in view of the treasure-hunter's willingness to donate the lion's share to the farmer, when he could just as well have hogged it all himself.

The farmer raised the \$4,000 by a mortgage, and turned it over to be magnetized. Then the stranger made himself invisible, also by a secret process. But something went wrong, and he failed to disappear completely and suddenly enough. So he landed in the county hoosgow.

This kind of treasure finding, to be successful, requires attention to all such details. Nothing is so important to the scientific swindler as the final fade-out at the psychological moment.



This device would make a fortune if it worked. It's supposed to break down water for burning as fuel.



Transmutation apparatus, such as shown above, is supposed to turn lead into gold. Auriferous salts, among the secret ingredients, fool the unwary when gold is produced when heated. At left, extracting gold from sea water is possible, but the cost is exorbitant. Scientists working on this project have abandoned it. A thousand tons of water yield an ounce of gold.

