

# I. "In My Merry Oldsmobile"

UNDER THE palms of Miami Beach, on Alton Road and 50th Street, a bronze bust of Carl carries the legend: HE CARVED A GREAT CITY OUT OF A JUNGLE. But Miami Beach was only one of Carl Fisher's completed dreams. He created so much more than this city that became the playland of the Western World, and always against tremendous odds of struggle and misunderstanding.

Carl's lusty and incomprehensible personality first impressed itself upon me when I was a schoolgirl of fifteen. I was walking along Meridian Street in Indianapolis when I noticed all movement had stopped on that leisurely boulevard. Horses, carriages and drays had halted. Every person on the street was staring into the sky.

I looked up. Against the clouds, thousands of feet above me, I saw Carl Fisher for the first time.

He was in a white automobile hung as the basket under a vermilion balloon. Man, car and balloon were drifting over the business section of Indianapolis. The balloon that carried the Stoddard-Dayton automobile cost \$4,800 to build, but Carl received more than a million dollars worth of publicity. I heard a man say: "Another of Carl Fisher's stunts. The man is crazy!"

How many times was I to hear those words! Few people realized the underlying purpose behind the seemingly show-off tendencies that prompted the Indianapolis businessman, Carl Fisher, to ride a bicycle on a tight-rope between the State Life Insurance and Odd Fellows buildings, the two tallest on Wash-

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