

Boy's camera records decade's dash and daring

THE WORLD LEAPS INTO AN AGE OF INNOVATION

The exciting new century dashed through its early years, and Europe's youth rushed with it. A French boy named Jacques Lartigue asked a pretty lady to leap downstairs so he could see if his new camera could stop the motion, and she went along with the try-anything-once exuberance of the age. Jacques himself, clutching his precious camera in the picture at left, was already at the age of 8 a recorder of his time. His camera caught the airplanes, gliders and cars that roared and soared around him, some even built by the members of his own versatile family. The first 13 years of the 20th Century sparkled with innovation, daring and an unquenchable curiosity. Wilbur Wright delighted the French with airplane flights at Le Mans. A wealthy Brazilian set a baby blimp down in a Paris boulevard to keep a luncheon date. The world's first home wireless was selling for \$7.50, Barney Oldfield had pushed a custom-built race car to 133 mph, and a Model T was yours for \$440. The ice cream cone was new, so were vitamins, zippers, cellophane and a hand hairdryer for poodles. But in the midst of the adventure the taut fabric of Europe's alliances was splitting, and war would soon crush the century's youthful promise. The last moments of the splendid age raced to their end and young Jacques Lartigue marveled at the sights. With his pictures, shown in this second part of LIFE's three-part series, he recorded "inventions that surged before our eyes."



In 1904 Jacques Lartigue tucked his own camera under his arm and posed happily with his mother in the Bois de Boulogne. The picture was taken by Jacques's father, a wealthy banker, who gave the boy his first camera when he was 5. "All I could think of was taking pictures at noon in the Bois de Boulogne," Jacques recalls. "Every day dandies and cocottes, demimondaines and high society promenaded there. I was badly received by most people, who of course were not accustomed to having their pictures taken." The boy's other favorite spots for taking pictures were the family's summer chateau in the Auvergne and a military airfield near Paris. "To help me get on the field a friend made me a phony press card that said 'grand reportage.' It meant absolutely nothing, but it worked."



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Jacques's father shuts his eyes behind goggles and catches the breeze in his beard during breakneck 30-mph run to the Auvergne château in 1913. A year earlier Jacques snapped

a speed-distorted shot of a race car in the French Grand Prix at Dieppe. The event had not been held for three years, and its return was greeted by huge crowds and 47 entrants.

Sporting Europeans, hooked by the super speed of the auto, loved to watch racing drivers roar over the roads—when they weren't roaring over the roads themselves. The Lartigues, on their summer spin to the family château in the Auvergne, fairly ripped up the highways. In a custom-built open car that required them to wear bon-

nets and heavy rubber mackintoshes, the Lartigues surrendered themselves to the daring of their chauffeur, a former bicycle champion who ended up driving for Marshal Foch during the war.

"Our great game was to spy a cloud of dust from a car ahead of us," remembers Jacques, "and then speed past him. We

were faster than anyone and stopped only when herds of sheep blocked the road. Lots of dogs and farm animals tried to attack our speeding car, but I drove them off by tossing out tiny balls that exploded when they hit the ground. We left Paris at 8:30 in the morning and made the 220 miles by nightfall—and that was really flying."

The roads roared with amateur and pro

HOOKED ON SPEED



Vacationing in the Auvergne, the Lartigues send up a homemade balloon. Hot air was provided by the stove on the lawn, an invention of Jacques's father who stands beside it in shirtsleeves. The stove often ignited the balloon's skin, producing a spectacular blaze.



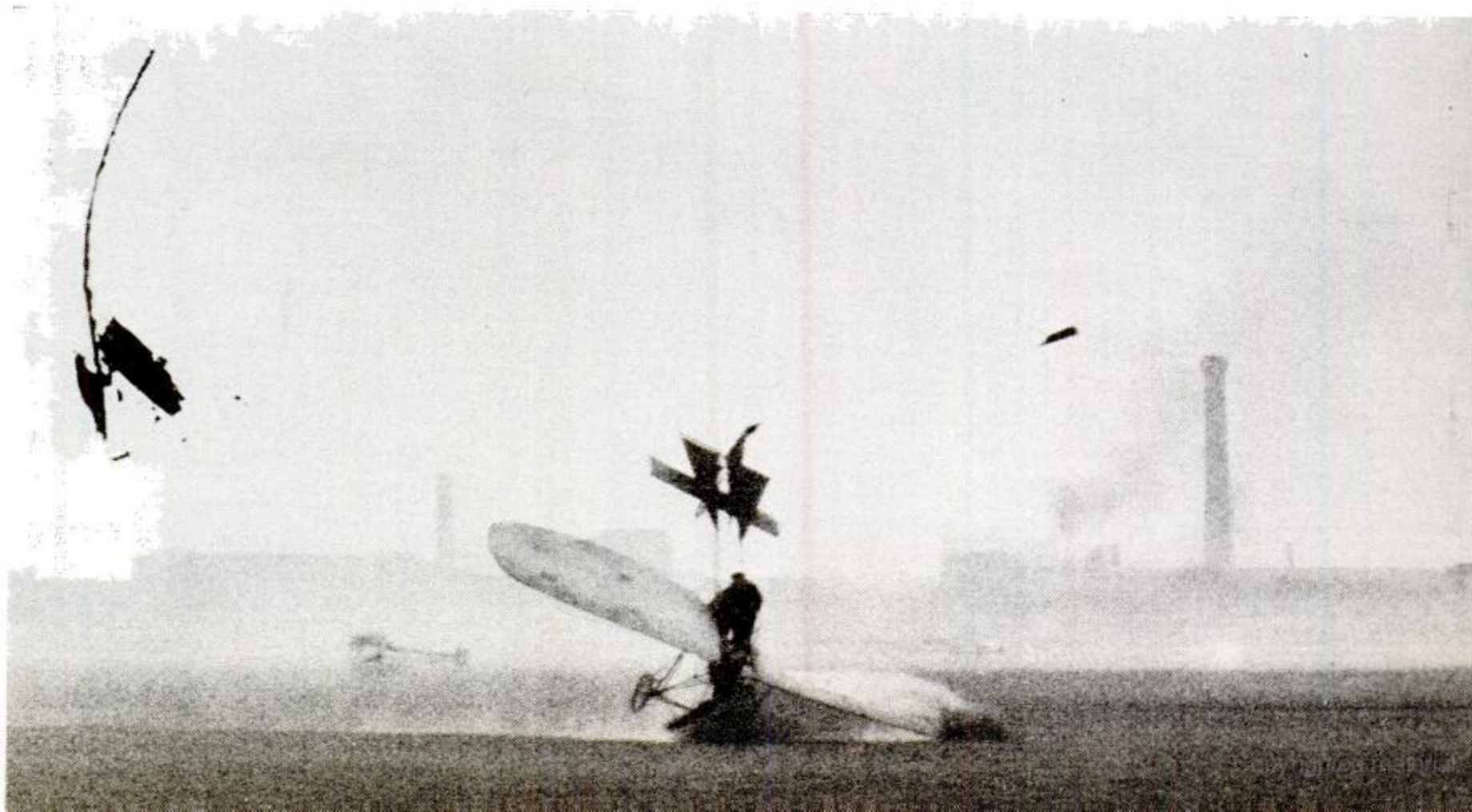
Maurice Lartigue, Jacques's older brother, leans into the propeller wash from an airplane at Buc airdrome near Versailles. The Lartigues, like all Europe, were fascinated by planes and flocked to air shows. Jacques went up the first time in 1917 in an army plane.

At the Issy-les-Moulineaux airfield near Paris, Jacques photographed a not-too-rare event—a plane coming apart at the seams. The craft had gotten 15 feet off the ground when the pilot's nerve weakened and he tried to land. Pieces went flying but he was unhurt.



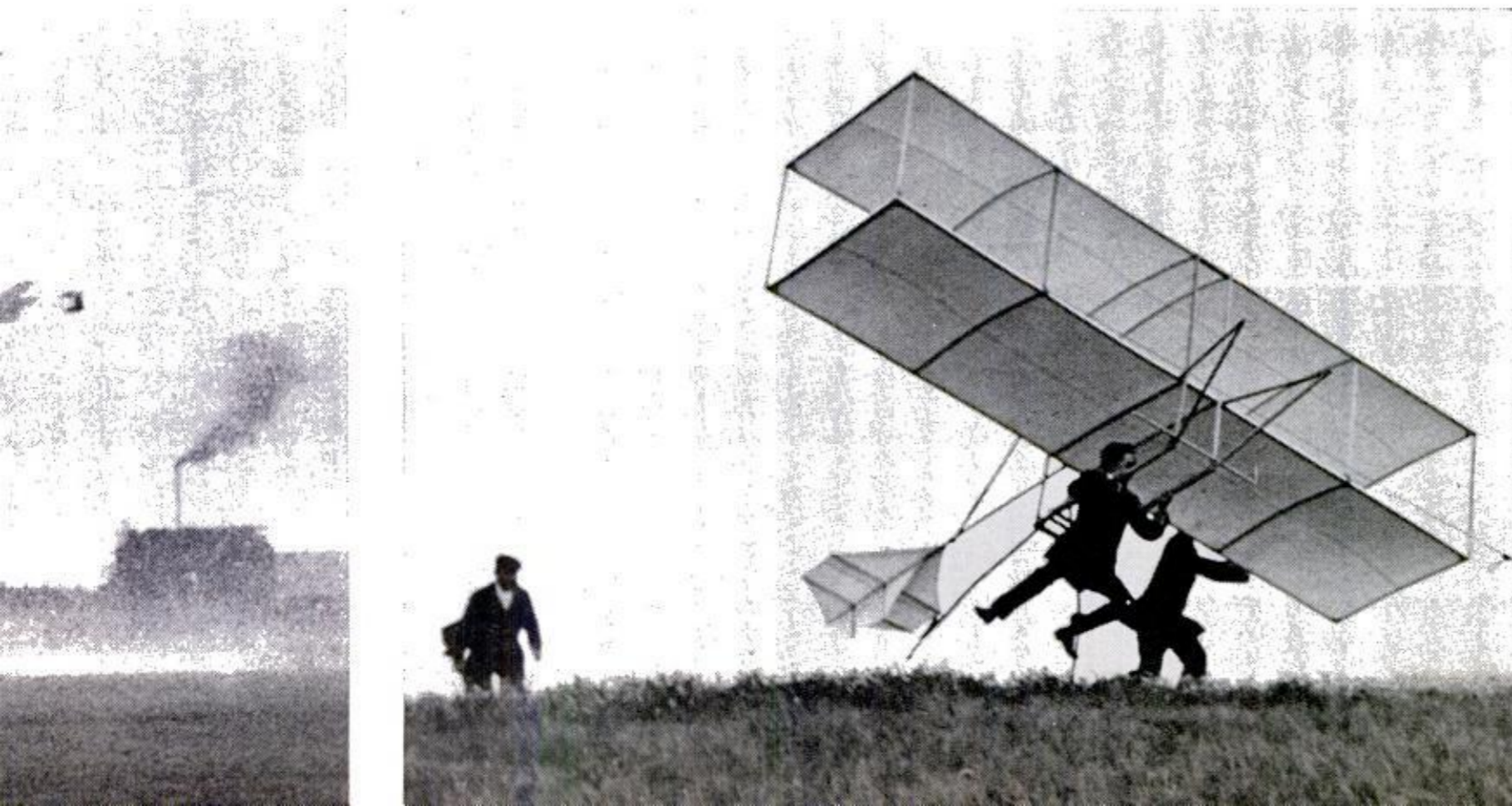
Sky-happy adventurers built
and broke up anything that flew

SCRAMBLE TO GET UP INTO THE AIR





The Lartigue family turned out gliders—and wrecked them—by the dozen. As Maurice clutches the crossbar of one of his craft in front of the summer chateau, it lifts him a few feet from the ground and begins to break up. He built 35 gliders in all. This was his last.



Having given a big push and jump, Maurice dangles from the bottom of his 22nd glider. A friend is helping by holding wings level, while another is pulling desperately at the rope disappearing off the right edge of the picture. Longest Lartigue flight was about a minute.



The Lartigues had a passion for odd boats. Maurice tries out a raft whose bottom is a pair of rubber boots. He walked in the pool's shallow end, thrashed his legs in deep water.

Crazy boats and a creative *'NEIGHBORS'*



An obliging cousin, André Haguët, jumps into pool for Jacques, who wanted to see if his camera could stop the motion. Jacques himself made the water wings and bathing suit.

A propeller-driven raft Maurice made tests the goodwill of friend Louis Ferrand. Furious pedaling was required to get any push from the propeller. Louis wisely took an oar along.

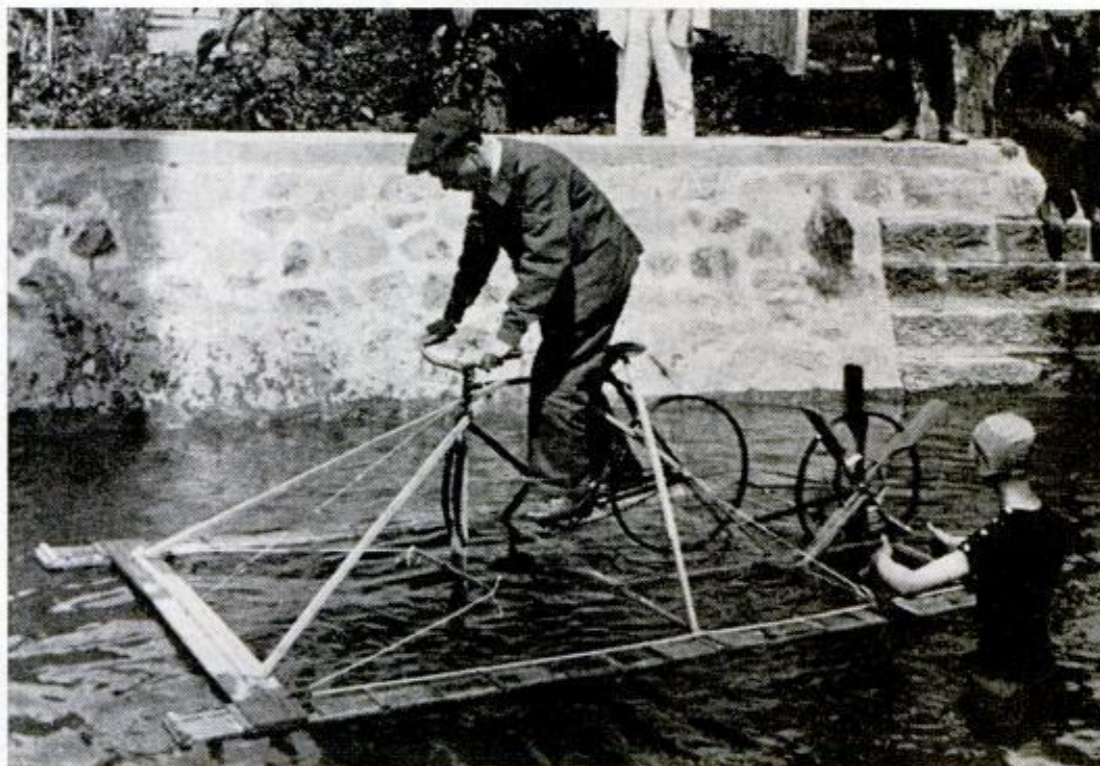


family fill the summer pool

THOUGHT US A CURIOUS LOT'



Jacques's father Henri, as crazy as his sons about outlandish boats, invented the propeller craft here driven by Maurice. The brothers made 30 boats at the summer home.



When cousin Jean Haguët did a clumsy back flip, the ubiquitous Jacques was there with camera. Jacques, who liked bright swimsuits, thought Jean stuffy for wearing black.

A raft he made from a bicycle and paddle wheel wears Maurice out. The Lartigues held many races with the bizarre boats they built, and neighbors thought them "a curious lot."



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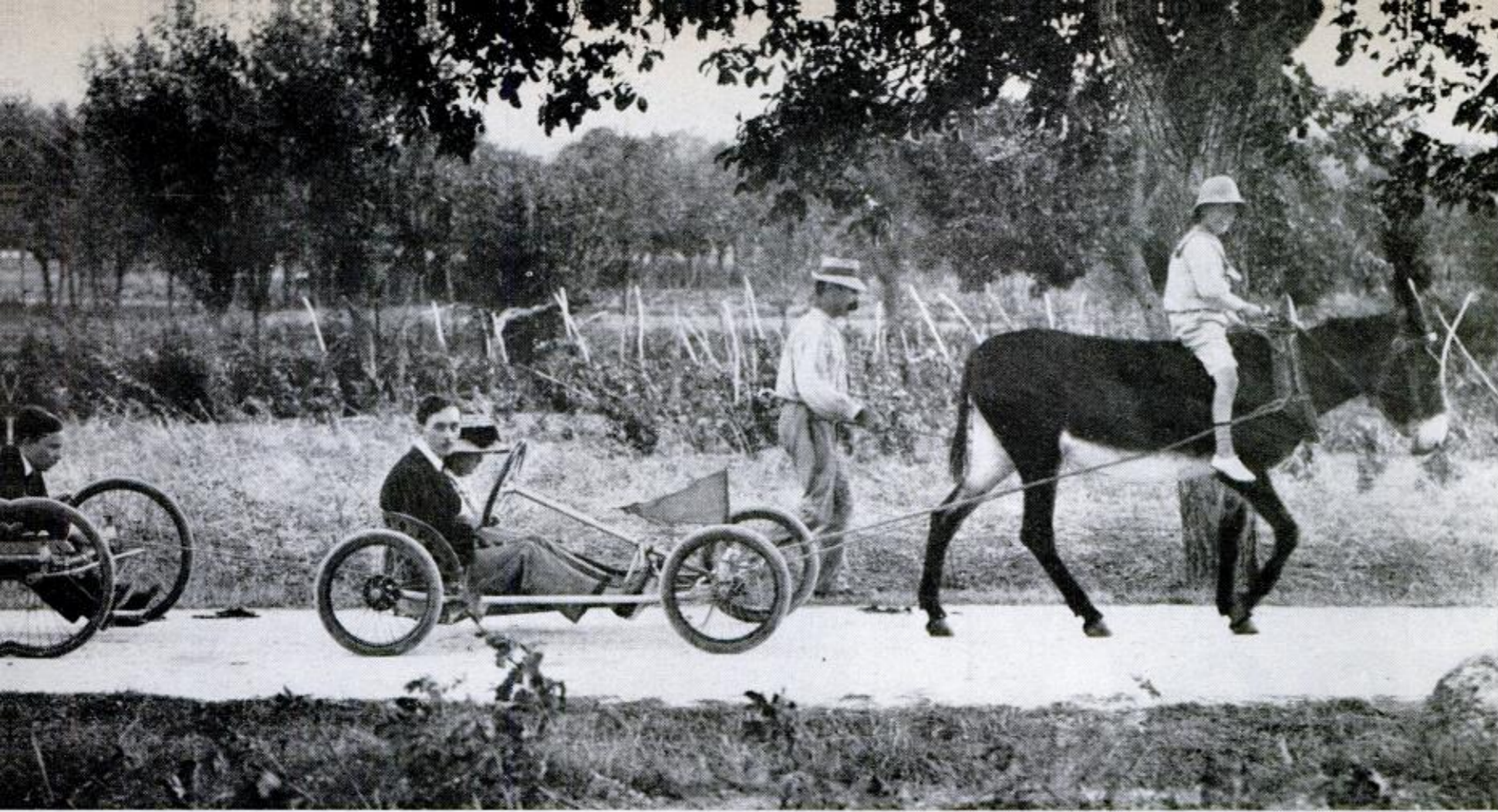
material

The family's best jumper was Raymond Van Weers, brother of the girl leaping downstairs on page 67. Jacques kept him jumping so he could photograph the rapid motion, and Raymond happily hurdled chairs, tables, even a goat. Very proper, he kept his hat on.



No indignity escaped Jacques's camera. When Simone Roussel tumbled off a Lar-tigue-made scooter while rounding a curve, she found that Jacques had anticipated the spill and was waiting with shutter cocked. She was very good natured, recalls Jacques.





A donkey pulls two Lartigue-built racing carts up the hill to the chateau, with Maurice in the lead cart. The slow four-mile trip to the top took half an hour, and the carts shot down the hill at such speed that they frequently flipped over before reaching bottom.

Petticoats fly when Jacques's cousin Marcelle Haguët (whose cousin Robert is securely atop the donkey in the picture above) tries to pull herself up for a ride to the chateau. She made the downhill trip in a cart, which had been harder to stay aboard than the donkey.

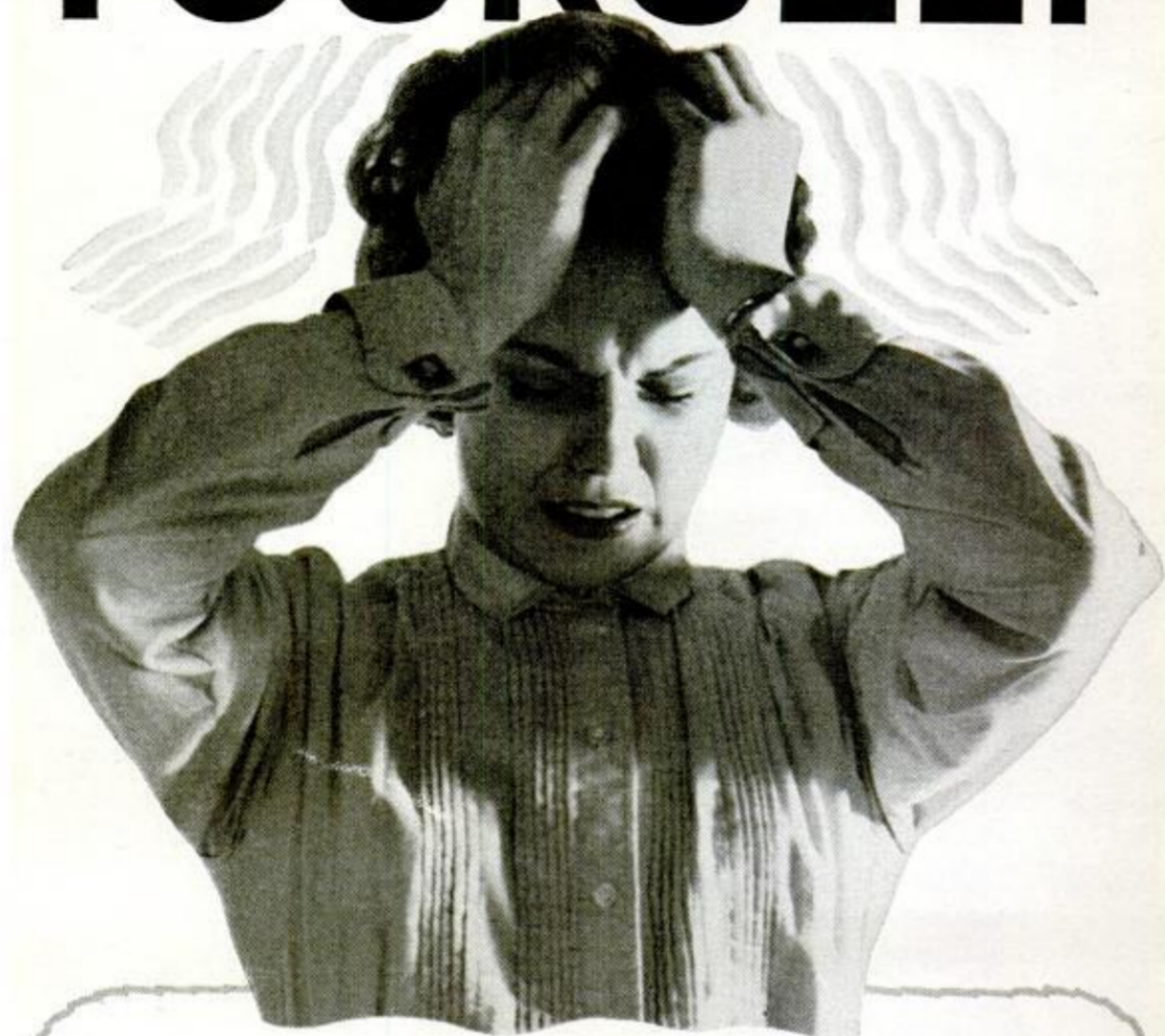




1913 CONTINUED

JACQUES STILL 'TRAPS IMAGES'

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Today, at 67, Jacques Lartigue is getting just as much fun out of life as he did half a century ago when he took the pictures on the preceding pages. Now he and his pretty wife, Florette, divide their time between an apartment in Paris and a house in Opio, on the French Riviera. They travel a great deal, always staying in the best hotels but never, if they can help it, eating in the dining rooms. Instead, for all three meals, they take off into the country and eat, *en plein air*, in fields. On their frequent trips abroad they travel on cargo ships whenever possible.

But Jacques started off his photographic career with two important advantages: he had the eye of a born photographer and he had a rich father who believed in supplying his sons with all the tools and materials they needed for their endless inventions and games. Jacques began training his eye very early, when he was still too small to join in the play and could only watch his older brother and numerous cousins. In those days he developed the habit of blinking his eyes open like a camera shutter and trying to retain the image of what he saw in his head. When

Jacques was given his first camera, he began capturing his images on film, and his remarkable pictures show that his blinking practice stood him in good stead.

Jacques has now almost forsaken the camera for the brush and makes his living as an artist. But he still has strong feelings about photography. "Picture taking," he says, "is a trap of images—serious, fleeting, funny, tragic, fanciful, rare, human, irreplaceable. And although the image can sometimes try to be pretty, it should never try to replace the image of a painter. Photographs that are planned, staged, tricked up, retouched make me think of a rare-bird collector who tries to enhance his collection with porcelain birds and false feathers." But, lest this make him sound overserious, Lartigue adds, "I am truthfully neither a painter nor a writer nor a photographer, but simply an ancient little boy running after the ghost of his game of terrestrial paradise."

At his easel in Opio with his wife Florette, Jacques Lartigue works on a painting. "I do three different kinds," he says, "garden flower scenes, portraits and abstracts." He sold his first painting when he was 25 years old.

