

The Telephone in 1873.

Edison may read with interest that in 1783 M. Linquet de La Bastille issued a prospectus, published in the Correspondence Secrete, London, 1788, (vol. xiv, p. 302), of a singular machine or experience of the propagation of sound and the voice through tubes prolonged to a great distance. If it succeeded, he announced, people would be able to maintain with their sweethearts and friends at a distance, of some hundreds of leagues a conversation which would "become somewhat public on the way, but by suppressing the names no one would be in the secret of the interlocutors." But it is not recorded that the scheme was put into practice. In a paper published in L'Illustration for 1854 by M. Charles Bourseul he says: "Let us imagine that a person speaks near to a mobile plate sufficiently flexible not to lose any of the vibrations produced by his voice, and that this plate interrupts and establishes accordingly communications with a battery, then we might have at a distance another plate which would give at the same time the same vibrations. An electric battery, two vibrating plates and a wire would be sufficient." In apportioning the honors of telephonic discovery M. Bouseul would seem entitled to a share—New York Tribune.

Not many business houses in these United States can boast of fifty years' standing. The business of Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass., whose incomparable Sarsaparilla is known and used everywhere, has passed the half centennial and was never so vigorous as at present.

Speculation.

Speculation is a passion which wrecks fortunes, bodies, characters, communities, nations. Many men reach after immense possible results rather than take assured small ones. They prefer the bucket shop to the savings bank. The unknown patent medicine has more value in their eyes than that whose composition is understood, and whose operation has been tested by professional experts. The "divine healer" or the "Christian scientist" is trusted rather than the trained physician. Crowds of citizens shout themselves hoarse in praise of the orator who has some paraceia which never has been tried, but which he warrants to remove all national ills. Here and there one gains money. Some real or imaginary bodily ills are cured. Spasmodic impulses may be created toward national prosperity. But every sensible man knows that all these speculations offers immense risks and yield small returns. The many are duped, the few reap the rewards. Honest labor, diligent study, reliance on experience, insure safety. Gambling in business, in medicine, in government, in religion, is immortal. Its consequences are disastrous. To warn men against it and to offer the sure rewards of honesty is to preach a genuine gospel, fitted especially to the needs of this time.—Congregationalist.

Old Fine Climax Brandy.

From grape wine, has been fourteen years stored and cared for in the same way that Brandies are cared for in France and is as fine in flavor and mellowness as Hennessy Brandy or Cognac. Ask your druggist for Speer's Climax Brandy.

Massachusetts Mills Closing.

Lowell, Mass., June 19.—The Massachusetts, Merrimac and Booth Cotton Mills, each posted a notice to-day that beginning next Saturday, the mills will be closed for two weeks, and that when work is resumed, it will be only on half time. The Lowell Machine Company will also close for one week, and afterwards run on short time. This will affect in all about 2,500 persons.

WISER THAN BOOKS.

My love than books is wiser far. I scanned the countless pages Where all the words of wisdom are— The proverbs of the sages. I felt had known what meant a kiss, What were component parts of bliss. But, though I scanned them o'er and o'er, It was no plainer than before. At last I found my love, and he Explained it clearly, all, to me. —Katrina Trask in New York Times.

THE VETERAN.

Out of the low window could be seen three hickory trees placed irregularly in a meadow that was resplendent in springtime green. Farther away the old, dismal belfry of the village church loomed over the pines. A horse meditating in the shade of one of the hickories lazily swished his tail. The warm sunshine made an oblong of vivid yellow on the floor of the grocery store.

"Could you see the whites of their eyes?" said the man who was seated on a soap box.

"Nothing of the kind," replied old Henry warmly. "Just a lot of fitting figures, and I let go where they peared to be the thickest. Bang!"

"Mr. Fleming," said the greener. His deferential voice expressed somehow the old man's exact social weight. "Mr. Fleming, you never was frightened much in them battles, was you?"

The veteran looked down and grinned. Observing his manner the entire group tittered. "Well, I guess I was," he answered finally, "pretty well scared sometimes. Why, in my first battle I thought the sky was falling down. I thought the world was coming to an end. You bet I was scared."

Every one laughed. Perhaps it seemed strange and rather wonderful to them that a man should admit the thing, and in the tone of their laughter there was probably more admiration than if old Fleming had declared that he had always been a lion. Moreover, they knew that he had ranked as an orderly sergeant, and so their opinion of his heroism was fixed. None, to be sure, knew how an orderly sergeant ranked, but then it was understood to be somewhere just shy of a major general's stars. So when old Henry admitted that he had been frightened there was a laugh.

"The trouble was," said the old man, "I thought they were all shooting at me. Yes, sir, I thought every man in the other army was aiming at me in particular, and only me. And it seemed so darned unreasonable, you know. I wanted to explain to 'em what an almighty good fellow I was, because I thought then they might quit all trying to hit me. But I couldn't explain, and they kept on being unreasonable—blim—blam—bang! So I run."

Two little triangles of wrinkles appeared at the corners of his eyes. Evidently he appreciated some comedy in this recital. Down near his feet, however, little Jim, his grandson, was visibly horror stricken. His hands were clasped nervously, and his eyes were wide with astonishment at this terrible scandal—his most magnificent grandfather telling such a thing.

"That was at Chancellorsville. Of course afterward I got kind of used to it. A man does. Lots of men, though, seem to feel all right from the start. I did as soon as I got cu to it," as they say now, but at first I was pretty flustered. Now, there was young Jim Conklin, old Si Conklin's son—that used to keep the tannery; you none of you recollect him—he went into it from the start just as if he was born to it. But with me it was different. I had to get used to it."

When little Jim walked with his grandfather, he was in the habit of skipping along on the stone pavement in front of the three stores and the hotel of the town and betting that he could avoid the cracks. But upon this day he walked soberly, with his hand gripping two of his grandfather's fingers. Sometimes he kicked abstractedly at dandelions that curved over the walk. Any one could see that he was much troubled.

"There's Sickles' colt over in the medder, Jimmie," said the old man. "Don't you wish you owned one like him?"

"Um!" said the boy, with a strange lack of interest. He continued his reflections. Then finally he ventured, "Grandpa—now—was that true what you was telling those men?"

"What?" asked the grandfather.

"What was I telling them?"

"Oh, about your running."

"Why, yes, that was true enough, Jimmie. It was my first fight, and there was an awful lot of noise, you know."

Jimmie seemed dazed that this idol, of its own will, should so totter. His stout, boyish idealism was injured.

Presently the grandfather said: "Sickles' colt is going for a drink. Don't you wish you owned Sickles' colt, Jimmie?"

The boy merely answered, "He ain't as nice as our'n." He lapsed then to another moody silence.

One of the hired men, a Swede, desired to drive to the county seat for purposes of his own. The old man loaned a horse and an unwashed buggy. It appeared later that one of the purposes of the Swede was to get drunk.

After quelling some boisterous frolic of the farm hands and boys in the garret the old man had that night gone peacefully to sleep, when he was aroused by clamoring at the kitchen door. He grabbed his trousers, and they waved out behind as he dashed forward. He could hear the voice of the Swede, screaming and blubbering. He pushed the wooden button, and as the door flew open the Swede, a maniac, stumbled inward, chattering, weeping, still screaming: "De barn fire! Fire, fire! De barn fire! Fire, fire, fire!"

There was a swift and indescribable change in the old man. His face ceased instantly to be a face; it became a mask, a gray thing, with horror written about the mouth and eyes. He hoarsely shouted at the foot of the little rickety stairs, and immediately, it seemed, there came down an avalanche of men. No one knew that during this time the old lady had been standing in her nightclothes at the bedroom door yelling: "What's th' matter? What's th' matter? What's th' matter?"

When they dashed toward the barn, it presented to their eyes its usual appearance—solemn, rather mystic in the black night. The Swede's lantern was overturned at a point some yards from in front of the barn doors. It contained a wild little conflagration of its own, and even in their excitement some of those who ran felt a gentle secondary vibration of the thrifty part of their minds at sight of this overturned lantern. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been a calamity.

But the cattle in the barn were trampling, trampling, trampling, and above this noise could be heard a humming like the song of innumerable bees. The old man hurled aside the great doors, and a yellow flame leaped out at one corner and sped and sped and wavered frantically up the old gray wall. It was glad, terrible, this fragile flame, like the wild banner of deadly and triumphant foes.

The motley crowd from the garret came with all the pails of the farm. They banged themselves upon the well. It was a leisurely old machine, long dwelling in indolence. It was in the habit of spitting out water with a sort of reluctance. The men stormed at it, cursed it, but it continued to allow the buckets to be filled only after the wheezy windlass had bowled many protests at the mad-headed men.

With his open knife in his hand, old Fleming himself had gone headlong into the barn, where the stifling smoke swirled with the air currents, and where could be heard in its fullness the terrible chorus of the flames laden with tones of hate and death, a hymn of wonderful ferocity.

He flung a blanket over an old mare's head, cut the halter close to the manger, led the mare to the door and fairly kicked her out to safety. He returned with the same blanket and rescued one of the work horses. He took five horses out and then came out himself with his clothes bravely on fire. He had no whiskers and very little hair on his head. They soused five pailsful of water on him. His eldest son made a clean miss with the sixth pailful because the old man had turned and was running down the decline and around to the basement of the barn, where were the stanchions of cows. Some one noticed at the time that he ran very lamely, as if one of the frenzied horses had smashed his hip.

The cows, with their heads held in the heavy stanchions, had thrown themselves, strangled themselves, tangled themselves—done everything which the ingenuity of their exuberant fear could suggest to them.

Here, as at the well, the same thing happened to every man save one. Their hands went mad. They became incapable of everything save the power to rush into dangerous situations.

The old man released the cow nearest the door, and she, blind drunk with terror, crashed into the Swede. The Swede had been running to and fro, battling. He carried an empty milk pail, to which he clung with an unconscious fierce enthusiasm. He shrieked like one lost as he went under the cow's hoofs, and the milk pail, rolling across the floor, made a flash of silver in the gloom.

Old Fleming took a fork, beat off the cow and dragged the paralyzed Swede to the open air. When they had rescued all the cows save one, which had so fastened herself that she could not be moved an inch, they returned to the front of the barn and stood sadly, breathing like men who had reached the final point of human effort.

Many people had come running. Some one had even gone to the church, and now, from the distance, rang the tocsin note of the old bell. There was a long flare of crimson on the sky, which made remote people speculate as to the whereabouts of the fire.

The long flames sang their drumming chorus in voices of the heaviest bass. The wind whirled clouds of smoke and cinders into the faces of the spectators. The form of the old barn was outlined in black amid these masses of orange hued flames.

And then came this Swede again, crying as one who is the weapon of the sinister fates: "De colts! De colts! You have forgot de colts!"

Old Fleming staggered. It was true; they had forgotten the two colts in the box stalls at the back of the barn. "Boys," he said, "I must try to get 'em out." They clamored about him then, afraid for him, afraid of what they should see. Then they talked wildly each to each. "Why, it's sure death!" "He would never get out!" "Why, it's suicide for a man to go in there!" Old Fleming stared absentmindedly at the open doors. "The poor little things," he said. He rushed into the barn.

When the roof fell in, a great funnel of smoke swarmed toward the sky as if the old man's mighty spirit, released from its body—a little bottle—had swelled like the genius of fable. The smoke was tinted rose hue from the flames, and perhaps the unutterable midnights of the universe will have no power to daunt the color of this soul.—Stephen Crane in St. James Budget.

A Budding Philosopher.

"Say, paw, is it anything to brag about when you don't do something you can't do?"

"I'm inclined to think not. Why do you ask?"

"Cause I've just been reading that cherry tree story 'bout Washin'ton."—Detroit Free Press.

Durability of Wood.

In very dry atmospheres the durability of wood is almost incredible. Pieces of wood, wooden caskets and wooden articles have been withdrawn from Egyptian catacombs of an antiquity 2,000 or 3,000 years antedating the Christian era.

Pettigrew's Amendment.

Senator Pettigrew has introduced an amendment to the Dingley bill which provides for the admission free of duty of articles controlled by trusts. Should it become law and be carried out honestly, how much revenue would the bill yield? There are trusts in sugar, coal, window and plate glass, lumber, pottery, wall paper, rubber, cutlery and in nearly all kinds of hardware. There is no trust in tea, but that is probably because there has been no duty to encourage it. There are also trusts in the woolen and cotton industries. Revenue will be scarce if such a law should be enforced. But will those elected by trust funds destroy the system which fosters trusts? They may pass some such law, as they did the Sherman antitrust law in 1890, but it will be only another dummy.

How Protection Helps the Farmer.



"Forty-one leather firms in Chicago protest against the duty on hides. But the Beef trust cuts more ice," says the Boston Transcript (Ind. Rep.).

THE DANGER

to which the Expectant Mother is exposed and the foreboding and dread with which she looks forward to the hour of woman's severest trial is appreciated by but few. All effort should be made to smooth these rugged places in life's pathway for her, ere she presses to her bosom her babe.

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