

TRICKS OF LINEMEN.

HOW THEY STRING WIRES WHERE PEOPLE DON'T WANT THEM.

Some of These Daff Dingered Fellows Are So Skillful That They Can Run a Line Almost Under a Person's Nose Without His Being Aware of It.

On the roof of a lofty building in the business district two bravely linemen were toiling among the network of wires fastened to a high series of cross arms. One bent his ear close to a tiny telegraph instrument connected with a wire, while the other, under his direction, busily twisted two wires together.

"Hold on," cried the man listening at the instrument. "They want to measure resistance. We'll have to wait awhile."

The two descended, and behind a huge chimney lit their pipes. Asked a young man, who had been watching them with interest:

"Suppose you wanted to string a wire from this to that building opposite, how would you do it?"

"That's against the law, young man," responded the taller of the two linemen. "Telegraph companies never break the law."

"But suppose you wanted to?"

"Young man, if I wanted to carry a wire across the street from here I'd let you go down on the sidewalk and watch, and while you were watching I'd get the wire over and you'd never know it. How? Well, that's a business secret, but I don't mind telling you that I've known men to perform the feat several ways. If I wanted to do it I might take that pilot wire, for instance, that is connected with two or three strands. I might twist a bunch of wires to go across the street till they exactly resembled the pilot wire to an observer on the sidewalk. I might cut the pilot wire, hitching on my bunch, and keeping it taut by main strength my man opposite would slowly haul it over."

"You wouldn't know it was moving. When he had hauled over I'd shake out the wires I wanted from the bunch and leave the rest to make good the gap in the pilot. If I couldn't find a pilot wire on the particular roof I'd take the biggest gauge single wire there and hitch two small wires twisted together to it, make a fine joint, and my assistant would haul them over. One would serve to make up the break in the big wire, the other would be mine. If I were driven to it and had to get a rope across the street I'd work either early in the evening or early in the morning, when I have the street to myself and a few policemen around, and those either asleep or chumps that wouldn't know what I was doing."

"I knew a man on Dearborn street who had one wire in his office and had to have another. An enemy swore he shouldn't, and hired a man and a policeman to watch the corners of two buildings on opposite sides of the street and the sky to see that no wire was strung. While they were looking the wire went over. It was a single two strand cable, just the size of the little wire, and after it was fastened to the letter and the joint nicely soldered it took an hour to pull it slowly over."

"If you were to undertake such a job wouldn't you be liable to mistake the wire—get the wrong one? There are a good many on the roof tops."

"Yes, there are thousands of them—telegraph, telephone, electric light, signal, fire alarm, public and private, dead and live—there are scores of linemen that know every one. I can put my hands on a dozen men, any one of whom you can take blindfolded on any roof and he'll tell you the name, number, size, material, destination, color and age of the wire in the biggest rack you can find. It's kind of a natural knowledge. You either know it or you don't. I know a man who can't read or write, but he can break open a thirty-two strand cable and pick out the wire he wants."

"It is always a fellow who knows the wire geography of the roof," he continued, "that makes the taps. Are there any more taps? You don't hear of a fraction of them. It is natural that sometimes people would try to catch the secrets worth thousands of dollars that go over telegraph wires, ain't it?"

"I was after tap the other day and found it in our own office tower. A certain shop was getting quotations. We made a dozen tests and tours and found nothing. Finally, by accident, discovered the operator in a certain hotel had his instrument near a telephone, and shouted quotations out too loudly. I looked at that telephone and found that it was kept in circuit by a little wooden peg under the lever, which was apparently the ear-piece hanging in it. That was a good dodge, but the tappers made it a beautiful one by taking that telephone wire all over town and actually breaking open a telephone cable, running it through that tap piece, then into another cable and finally taking it through a central tower, all to disarm suspicion. We located its other end in an office in a high building on Clark street, and there sat a telegraph operator, the phone to his ear, catching the shouted quotations of the other operator and telegraphing them over a secret wire to the bucket shop."

"In another case they left a blind lead for us in the shape of a wire half concealed running into a hole in a brick wall, which they broke open the linen covered line wire, fastened their tiny copper threads to it and ran them down holes bored in the insulator into a chimney. In another case they tapped every wire of a certain company and rigged up a battery of their own, thus making themselves independent of the base defiance to that company for four weeks, till it dropped on the taps in its own office. In another case they went on a certain roof, the owner of which swore he would shoot any man found there stringing more wires, and kept a guard to do it, and while the guard was on hand the tappers on the wire they wanted. Of course we didn't think of looking there, and didn't go up there till we had, to fearing we'd be thrown off. Oh, there are tricks in all trades—but ours."

Chicago Tribune.

Crimes of High Civilization.

May not New England's murders be accepted as manifestations of the peculiar weakness of an old and advanced civilization? How else may they be accounted for? Upon what other basis may we solve the yearly reiterated riddle of the unspeakable scandals of London, the very center and fountain of modern civilization? If the most shocking crimes are not related somehow or other to the progress of civilization, why should we look for and find always the very refinement of villainy in Paris, the queen, as London may be called the king, of Christendom?

The services of the logician and the sociologist may be needed to yoke this strange team together, but surely as much may be said as has been said without risking a conviction for sophistry.—Boston Globe.

An Enticing Welsh Word.

The Listener once knew some excellent Welsh people, who insisted that no language in the world is so free from hard words as Welsh. They cited the word *ewru* as proof of the falsity of the notion that Welsh words are unpronounceable. This fascinating word is pronounced exactly as it is spelled, *keeroo*, and it means beer. To hear a Welshman pronounce that word is enough to make one's mouth water. You might remain insensible to the temptations of mere beer, but an invitation to take a glass of *keeroo*—otherwise *ewru*—is irresistible.—Boston Transcript.

Nonconformists and Music.

For more than two centuries it has been a fundamental principle of the nonconformist conscience that all instrumental music on Sundays is sinful, even when used for a religious purpose.

Bishop Earle, in his portrait of a rich "nonconformist" lady in 1828, says that "she suffered her daughters to learn on the virginals, because of their affinity with organs."

The fathers of nonconformity, in their first admonition to parliament in 1570, gravely informed the lords and commons that "organ players came from the pope, as out of the Trojan horse's belly, for the destruction of God's kingdom," which was their convenient synonym for Presbyterian nonconformity.

"That old serpent, Pope Vitalian," said the nonconformist ministers, "brought up organs," and "two other monsters, Popes Gregory and Gelasius, inspired by the devil," were the authors of "Plainsong and Pricksong."

When the nonconformist conscience, some seventy years later, had a parliament completely at its own disposal and eager to assist all its demands, commissioners were sent all over England to destroy the organs as "abominations" in the sight of the Lord. Evelyn said, in 1654, that they were then "almost universally demolished."

Any one who wishes to know something in detail of the nonconformist campaign against Sunday music should read the entries in the "Journal of Will Downing," "the parliamentary visitor," who laid waste the Suffolk churches in 1648 and 1644. Downing had a warrant from the Earl of Manchester for demolishing pictures, painted glass, superstitious images and organs.—London Saturday Review.

Some Very Old Pronunciations.

"Laylock," the pronunciation of *lao* once very common, has now almost entirely passed away. It is hardly likely to be found in dictionaries or glossaries, except such as profess to give provincial variations of spelling. Sixty years ago, however, it was by no means a provincialism or a mark of the uneducated. I well remember that Walter Savage Landor always spoke "laylocks," as did my own mother and most people of that generation. It belonged to the age, now almost entirely passed away, which called Rome "Room," gold "groid," St. James "St. Jeames," with other variations of sound now deemed vulgar. I have heard my father say that George IV always spoke of "My royal city of Lannon," while "oblonged" and "ve-cumber" were heard from the most refined mouths.

I can distinctly remember on the first Sunday in Advent, 1825, hearing the officiating clergyman at St. Mary Woolnoth give out sermons, when rendering the first lesson, "like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers," and my dear old rector, Julius Charles Hare, twenty years later, adopted the same pronunciation, saying at table, "Obblege by passing the cucumber."

"Vilets," as a disyllable for violets, was equally common among people of good education.—Notes and Queries.

Stedman on Whittier.

Taken for all in all, Whittier, "our bard and prophet best beloved," that purely American minstrel, so virginal and so impassioned, at once the man of peace and the poet militant, is the Sir Galahad of American song. He has read the hearts of his own people, and charmed their emotions and powerfully affected their convictions. His lyrics of freedom and reform, in his own justified language, were "words wrought from the nation's heart, forged at white heat."

Longfellow's national poems, with all their finish, cannot rival the natural art of Whittier; they lack the glow, the earnestness, the intense characterization of such pieces as "Randolph of Roanoke," "Ichabod" and "The Lost Occasion."

The Quaker bard besides, no less than Longfellow, is a poet of sympathy. Human feeling dominates his real life and environment, is the charm of "Snow Bound," even more than its absolute transcript of nature. Years enough have passed since it was written for us to see within its range it is not inferior to "The Deserted Village," "The Cottler's Saturday Night" and "Tam of Shanter."—Edmund C. Stedman in Century.

The Whist Players.

They play whist, the beaux in their powdered wigs and velvet coats, the ladies in their brocade petticoats and fine stomachers. The west windows are open; a fountain plashes in the garden; the flower beds are bordered with box, and the scent of the box comes in at the open windows.

They play whist. A beau shakes back the lace frill from his hand as he deals. A red jewel gleams on his finger. The ladies' brocade rustle; they frown softly at their cards. An hourglass stands on a table inlaid with mother of pearl; the sand in the hourglass flows silently; the pungent smell of the box comes in at the open windows; the sand in the hourglass flows as silently as the lives of the players.

They play whist. A beau leads an ace; his partner trumps. A trick is lost, but he looks at her and smiles. A trick is lost—but love is immortal.—Mary E. Wilkins in Century.

An Old Time Editorial.

Regarding the reading of the Declaration of Independence, says the Baltimore American, the Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser—now the Baltimore American—in an editorial of July 31, 1776, says:

"On Monday last, at 12 o'clock, the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed at the courthouse in this town at the head of the independent and artillery companies, to the great joy and satisfaction of the audience, with a discharge of cannon, etc., and universal acclamations for the prosperity of the free United States. In the evening the effigy, representing the king of Great Britain, was carted through the town to the small mirth of the numerous spectators, and thrown into a fire made for that purpose. Thus may it fare with all tyrants!"

Power in Iron Mining.

The power used in iron ore mining in the United States is enormous. The official returns from the various mines report a total of more than 1,000 steam boilers, with an aggregate of some 38,000 horsepower; and these boilers furnish steam to about 1,100 steam engines, including air compressors, hoisting machinery, engines for driving washers, crushers, etc., some of large size. These engines, however, do not in most instances include the motive power for pumps, in a majority of cases the latter being rated independent of steam engines, as a locomotive would be.

In the returns made, however, there were about eighty pumps mentioned independent of steam engines, twenty locomotives used in and about the mines, four steam shovels employed in digging or handling ore, eight turbine wheel driving machinery, and ten air compressors worked by water power.

Of course the application of steam and compressed air in the iron mines has very largely reduced the number of animals employed, and about the mines, and it is to be remarked that Michigan, on account of its numerous deep mines, and as the largest producer of iron ore, stands at the head of these data of machinery and power.—New York Sun.

TODISPLACEWRITING.

A THEATRICAL MANAGER'S PLAN OF CORRESPONDENCE.

How It Originated and Was Developed. Used First as an Advertisement—The Phonograph as a Substitute for Letters and Postal Cards.

Phonograph letters were popularized by a member of the theatrical profession, and the so-called bid bids failed to become a commendable and useful practice.

The phonograph letter is just what its name implies—a letter by phonograph. It consists of a communication spoken into a phonograph.

The phonograph letter was first used in a general way by a theatrical manager who was handling one of Mr. T. M. French's "Fauntleroy" companies in the city. He noticed that one of the attractions in nearly every town visited was a phonograph so fitted up that one or a dozen persons could listen to its story or song at one and the same time.

As customary with itinerant showmen, the first thing that suggested itself to him was the chance of advertising, so he sent for his agent to "come back" to Wilmington, N. C.—the town where the scheme was first tried—he had the scene in the second act, where Cedric meets the old earl for the first time, repeated to and recorded by the phonograph. Some ten or a dozen cylinders containing this scene from the play were prepared, and the advance agent carried them away with him. In every town visited thereafter he left one of these cylinders with the local phonograph agent, who gladly included it in his limited repertoire of phonographic works and advertised it.

The result was scores of people heard this scene long before the company arrived, and as the record of intonation, voice and inflection was absolute, and the performers were among the best to whom the respective parts had ever been entrusted, the advertisement was successful, and engagements were met the manager picked up the Fauntleroy cylinders at the local agencies and shipped them ahead, again to be used by the advance man and dealt out as before in the tour through the country.

An injury to the manager's hand, which rendered writing painful, and for a time impossible, suggested the idea of using the cylinders for correspondence, and they were tried accordingly. The first letter dictated—for that is what it really amounts to—was to his wife. Besides setting forth the fact of his injury, and his hand could not write, the cylinder gave the gossip current of the day and the general matters of business and included all that the customary hand written epistle of a man to his wife usually contains. Besides that several members of the company sat round the manager and each giving her a quiet little tip, as it were, of the daily doings of her liege lord.

The cylinder was carefully wrapped in a sheet of cotton, incased in a cardboard carton and mailed. A few days went by and then came a letter to the manager from home acknowledging the receipt of this present and asking what it was and what use could be made of it. It then dawned upon the managerial mind that having no information of the change he had made in the manner of carrying on his correspondence, his better half might well be excused if she should attempt to polish the cylinder's surface and find the message and a receptacle for hairpins. Accordingly he wired her to take the "present" to the phonograph depot in the town in which she lived and its use would be explained.

The dutiful wife did as directed and followed it up by purchasing a half dozen cylinders, dictating letters and playing banjo solos to each, which were at once sent to her spouse in the south. On receipt of the cylinders he put them on the phonograph and had what was recorded there reproduced for his own satisfaction and the amusement of several of his company. One cylinder, however, was returned, and it simply hissed and made a noise resembling the bursting of a paper bag, which was followed by a prolonged growl and a sharp, quick sound resembling the breaking of a piece of wood.

The operator suggested the manager's wife look toward you, and Chick says, "Me too!" That was all that was pulled a cork from some effervescent mixture (apollinaris probably) and drunk success to the new scheme for corresponding. This accounted for the hissing noise and explosion, and the noise likened to that of splitting wood was soon brought out by a reading of the manual of instruction. It was the machine as the manager's growling and bark of the manager's little dog.

Now quite a number of professional and traveling men make use of the phonograph letter system. They require only two things—care in packing and a knowledge of the speed at which the recording instrument is run in general operation. This should be marked on the carton containing cylinder, for to secure a perfect reproduction of the matter thereon recorded the phonograph used to grind it out must be run at precisely the same speed. Thus, if the recording phonograph is set to seventy revolutions, which it is in general use, is about right for letter dictation, the carton should be marked *lxv*. This will at once advise the operator of the machine upon which the record is to be reproduced how to adjust his instrument, and there will be no delay or break.

Logically one at the office of a phonograph company elicited the fact that the phonograph is used for a variety of purposes—many of them akin to correspondence. For instance, a leading soprano of a Denver church, who wanted to adopt the stage as a profession, wrote to a manager in this city for an engagement. He replied that he must first hear her sing, and thus get the compass and quality of her voice before he could decide upon her case, and the matter slipped from his mind instantly. Some weeks later he received a letter, accompanied by a phonograph cylinder, upon which was recorded a very good rendering of a well known tenor piece for the voice, which the manager had reproduced, and was so satisfied with it that he sent her to come to New York.—New York Mail and Express.

Tennyson's Sensitiveness.

Tennyson's sensitiveness was often much tried in the matter of reviews of his works. If unfavorable he would cry with pain and vexation, so whenever an unfavorable word appeared in a paper, however obscure, the publication was immediately hidden or destroyed, so that the poet should never see or hear anything that could pain him.—London Star.

The Wonders of Reproduction.

Aphidæ are a species of minute insect belonging to the order of hemiptera, sub-order homoptera, and taken collectively are employed in point of actual weight, to 500,000,000 very heavy men. This would be equal to one-third of the population of the globe, supposing each person to weigh an average of 260 pounds.—St. Louis Republic.

Growth Movements of Plants.

Photography is marvelously widening our field of vision. It has shown us millions of stars hitherto unknown; it has revealed astonishing details of animal motion, and caught the rifle bullet in its flight, and it is now being made to record the movements of the growing parts of plants. Especially curious are the results with certain climbers, such as the hop convolvulus, ipomoea, etc. The young stems move in a succession of irregular circular or elliptical curves, which vary every moment, even in direction, and are due to irregular growth in different parts of the stem. During the sleep of plants, movements do not cease, but consist of alternate upward and downward vibrations.—Ohio State Journal.

Hidden Fainting Spells, Epileptic Convulsions, or Fits, and all nervous diseases, as Paralysis, Locomotor Ataxia, Epilepsy, or Fits, St. Vitus's Dance, Sleeplessness, Nervous Prostration, Nervous Debility, Neuralgia, Melancholia, Threatened Insanity, and Kindred Affections, are treated as a specialty, with great success, by the Staff of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y. Many are cured at a distance without personal consultation—the necessary medicines being sent by mail or express. Question blanks sent on application.

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