









## MR. EDISON'S PHONOGRAPH.

Slowly, but steadily and surely, the inventor of the Phonograph is progressing towards the ultimate object of combining loudness with perfectly distinct articulation. Yesterday afternoon a considerable number of gentlemen and ladies interested in scientific experiments assembled by the invitation of Mr. Edison's representative, Colonel Gouraud, at his picturesque residence on Haulah-hill, Norwood, there to hear for themselves the results of some of the latest improvements as exhibited in the new models received from the other side of the Atlantic. As regards the outward aspect of the machines which were to be seen in the drawing-room and library on little stands covered with the star-spangled banner, there was little to note that has not already been shown—o little, at least, that was to be detected by the uninitiated eye—in the machines which were displayed to view.

Simple enough they are to all appearance, consisting, apart from the delicate apparatus of the electric batteries supplying the motive power, chiefly of little metal cylinders on which the short hollow tubes of wax that record the sounds are placed and removed at pleasure. It is, as has been already explained, on the surfaces of these wax cylinders, revolving rapidly as in a lathe, that the recording needle which is connected with the sensitive diaphragm makes its rapid revolutions, scoring with infinite delicacy the vocal or verbal utterances which are afterwards to be reproduced by the repeating needle in the same manner. In the earlier stages of the invention the sensitive diaphragm was simply a thin leaf of iron. Mica then took the place of the iron, but no great improvement was made upon the original confused and hardly intelligible results till the busy brain that is the inspiring and directing power of the great establishment at Hovell Park hit upon the latest and best substance, which we believe, is simply a piece of silk woven and prepared in some special manner.

Of these things, however, the guests of yesterday could not judge nor were they invited to do. They came, in brief, to hear what the phonograph could achieve—that is, what it can now achieve—for some of the marvels which it accomplished yesterday were the result of efforts to increase the delicacy and precision of the instruments that only bore fruit a week ago. In the racks behind Col. Gouraud's operator were a number of the little wax cylinders, some open, some in cardboard boxes, bearing such labels as "imitations and jokes," "Voices," "Soldiers' song," "Rock-a-bye, baby," "Irish imitations," "Ones and quaries," "Otheron' Overture," "Mikado" Medley, "Wedding March," "Adagio No. 1," "Breakdown song and Mosquito Story," "Emilio Gavotte," "God save the Queen," "Mr. Edison's Voice," and so forth. It was the last specimen which first excited curiosity, for the guests had been specially invited to meet Mr. Edison "non presencem sed alloquemur."

After some preliminary salutations and words of welcome in the name of the phonograph itself, the conical instrument known as the reel funnel was affixed to the tube, and soon the stored-up utterances of Mr. Edison in the shape of his first phonogram to Colonel Gouraud, spoken into the sound receiver on the 16th of June last, were heard in clear and manly tones by some 30, or 40 persons standing round. The concluding information that Mrs. Edison and the baby were doing well, and that the baby's articulation was "quite loud enough, and though a trifle indistinct, was not bad for a beginning," appeared to give peculiar satisfaction. For the phonograms from my Laboratory, Orange, New Jersey, were subsequently reproduced in like manner, together with songs, recitations, specimens of Mr. Edison's whistling, and some amusing observations from the same source on travelling in England, our little climate, and Mr. Gladstone's feats in tree-felling.

All whistling feats, however, were soon cast into the shade by the reproduction through the funnel of Signor Ardit's "Leggero Invisibile," not as Tichons and Volpini used to sing it, but as it was whistled in America by Mrs. Shaw, who is known to her countrymen as "La belle Suisse." By good fortune "La belle Suisse," a handsome brunette of pleasing presence, happened to be present yesterday, and having heard this weird resuscitation of her lyceum efforts, repeated the whole, at the suggestion of one of the spectators, in a brilliant style. The gutta percha tubes with their curved glass tips, to be placed in the ears of the listeners, were then brought into requisition to enable the company to hear effectively the strange babel of noises, the bantering of hammees, the whirling of wheels, the hissing and screaming of saws in Mr. Edison's great workshop, all which was prefaced by Mr. Edison's introductory words "Here's some thunder for you."

Next followed the ceremony of producing a permanent record of the gathering by inviting everyone present in turn to address to Mr. Edison a few words which, recorded on the cylinders, will in due time reach him in America. We have used the word "permanent," because of the practical permanency of these records there can be no question. Many of the mysterious little tubes have already spoken off their contents some hundreds of times without apparent deterioration; but even if they were more subject to wear and tear the fact that they can be duplicated at pleasure for a trifling cost is sufficient to guarantee their continued existence. Here we may note that one of these tubes of about, at a guess, an inch in diameter by three inches deep is capable of receiving on its surface a thousand words. More than this, though the wax is only three-thirtieths of an inch in thickness so delicate are the scorings that a record can be effaced and another added, till the process has been repeated one hundred times.

It was curious yesterday to see the planing process in operation—the thin flakes falling away from an object in a lathe, being so fine in their little threads that they might have defied a chemist's scales to appreciate their

weight. This business was necessary to prepare the way for one of the most interesting items in the proceeding. Hitherto the company had merely drawn upon the stored-up utterances from the shelves. Now they were to stand round while Colonel Gouraud spoke and sang into the funnel; and in a moment afterwards were to hear the same words and notes repeated from the funnel in the same clear resonant voice. Colonel Gouraud is a humorist in his way. Not content with singing with many quaint inflections and rolling R's, "John Brown's body," with the historical references to "Jeff Davis" and "the sour apple tree," he composed a letter, half loving, half remonstrative, to his wife; and favoured the audience with a happy imitation of the drawl and the stammer of an English swell in a speech thickly interlarded with "Don't you know's," with y's substituted for r's, and r's converted into w's, and wound up with some wonderful English of a French gentleman who was proud of his linguistic.

These, however, were not mere idle jests, but were in fact subtle trials of the power of the phonograph in reproducing certain sounds. M. Edison, we believe, used to say that when his machine could say "decees" and "specie" well his hopes would be near their complete realization, and some ten thousand times were the words "decees" and "specie" spoken to the sensitive diaphragm before fair progress in this direction was made. Perhaps the imaginatively swell's "extraneous" was an even rougher test, but certain it is that every word both said and sung by Colonel Gouraud—may, even his occasional interpolated cough was heard once more mechanically reproduced with startling accuracy.

Some interesting musical performances followed. Unfortunately, a slight accident in transit to the machinery belonging to the motive power interfered with the effects that had been expected from the machine in the library; but on both the instruments exhibited the audience were able to hear some remarkable reproductions of musical performances.

Most of these were heard through the tubes applied to the ears as before described. A duel between a cornet and a pianoforte player, recorded in New York three months ago, was among the most noteworthy of these for the clearness with which the combined effects of the two instruments were brought out, though it was stated that this single performance had in this fashion actually been repeated one thousand times. After "The National Anthem" and "The Star-spangled Banner" had been given, the company separated, abundantly satisfied that the phonograph, like the soul of John Brown, is "smashing on," and that at a pace which promises to bring it to practical perfection at no very distant date.

## ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE

The truth of the following story is vouched for by the Sydney Bulletin:—The other day a leading Sydney solicitor received instructions from London to hunt up a young man who had quitted England 10 years previously, and a draft of £200. was enclosed to pay his passage home. After a course of advertising a member of a charitable society called in and directed the solicitor to a certain hotel in Lower Alexandria, Sydney. The solicitor knowing the 'lay' of the country, judiciously sent his clerk down to catch the fever, instead of doing it in person. That well-dressed young man explored the barbarous region, dodging through back lanes and over mud pies and among broken fences that hung wearily and lopsidely amid abysses of mud, and at last he arrived at a hut which boasted a box and a pile of rags and straw for its sole furniture. A weary woman who had once been handsome, and I who, under happier auspices, would be handsome again, begged that they should not be turned out of their dismal abode until her husband, who was better, and a hollow-eyed invalid stretched on the pile of rags in the corner, echoed the petition. And these two were the heirs to a fortune of £20,000!!

## THE THROUGH TRAIN TO CONSTANTINOPLE

Constantinople, August 15. The first train from Paris arrived yesterday morning at eight o'clock in Stamboul. It was received by superior orders in solemn, not to say mournful, silence. The railway company had made preparations for decorations, but instructions came that no flag was to be hoisted and that no demonstration of any kind was to be made. Possibly three hundred people were present but they were nearly all foreign residents in Constantinople. The head of the secret police was conspicuously present to see that the orders were enforced. This first through train contained only fifty-seven persons, but its arrival is justly regarded as an important event. Already arrangements have been made by which a train will leave daily for Vienna, and though the time occupied is forty-seven hours, being only one hour less than by Varna, it is considered certain that in a few months we shall have twelve hours nearer Western Europe. Turkish sentiment is one of sadness. A wedge has been struck into the country which will have an opening through which European influences, that are already undermining Oriental customs, will enter and bring about changes. On Saturday the Feast of the Courban Bairam commences. Until is over no public business will be attended to.

Vienna, August 15. The first through train to Constantinople seems to have caused considerable excitement during its journey. It reached Adrianople at midnight. An immense crowd, estimated at 10,000 persons, was assembled at the station, and the people in their curiosity endeavoured to penetrate into the carriages. This of course was prevented by the Zaptiehs. The same scenes were repeated at all the stations until Constantinople was reached. There was no demonstration of any kind in that city.

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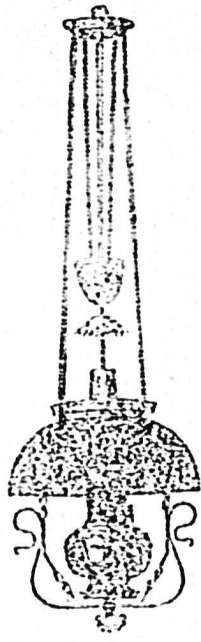
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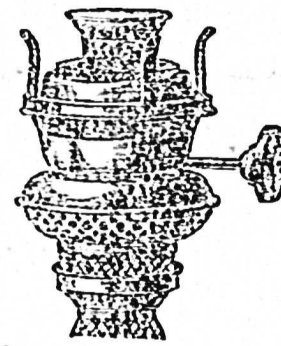


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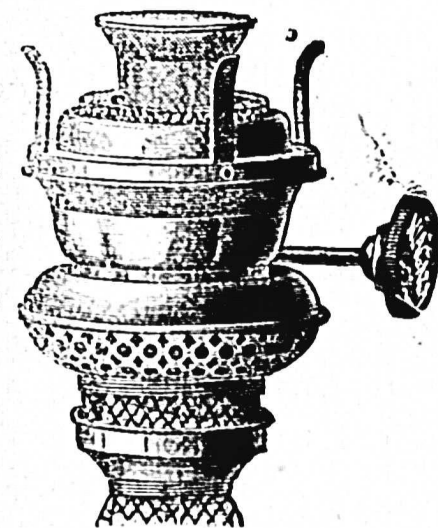
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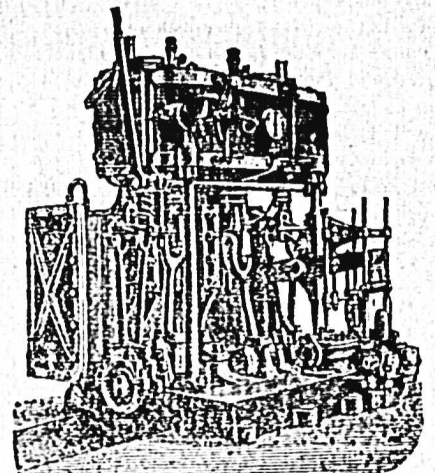
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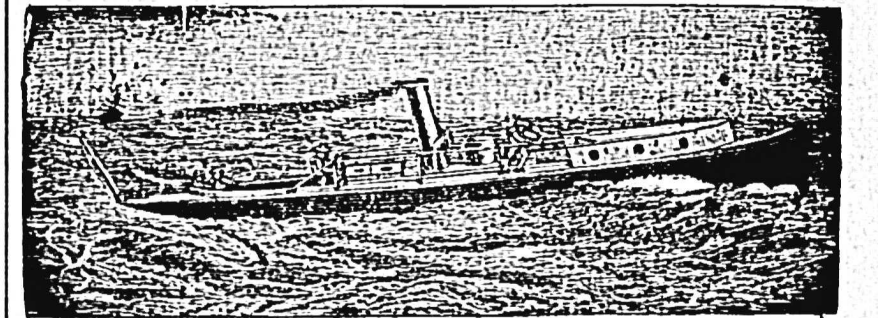
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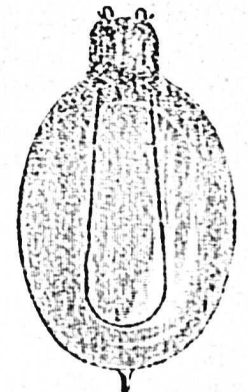
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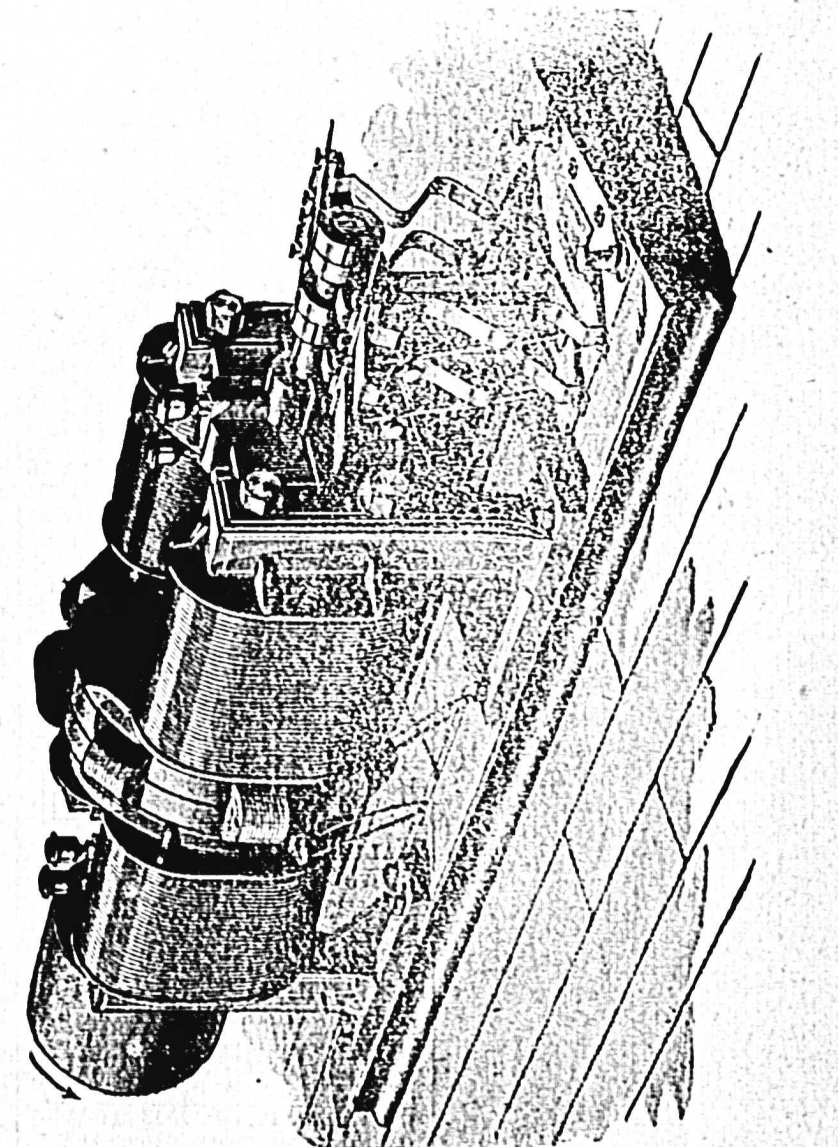
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PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE PROPRIETORS, MELVILLE HORA & Co., at "THE EXPRESS" Steam Printing Office, Calle Solís 20, Montevideo, República Oriental del Uruguay.