

New News of Yesterday

by E. J. Edwards

Builder of Panama Railroad

Commodore Aspinwall's Efficiency in Caring for Returning Gold Miners When One of His Steamers Was Stranded.

In 1850, following the discovery of gold in California, Commodore William R. Aspinwall, Commodore Vanderbilt's great rival in the waters about New York, retired from his great shipping firm and devoted all his time to building the Panama railroad, across the Isthmus of that name, and establishing steamship lines to connect it at Aspinwall (now Colon) from New York and at Panama for San Francisco.

At enormous expense and great loss of life, Aspinwall completed his railroad in 1855, and among the home-bound gold seekers who had the distinction of being the first passengers carried eastward by the road was Mr. Dudley Jones, now a prominent resident of Little Rock, Ark., and the head of a large manufacturing corporation.

"In the spring of 1855," said Mr. Jones, recently, "I was a passenger from San Francisco to Panama on the big Aspinwall steamer Golden Gate, or was it Golden Age? There were eight hundred of us returning forty-niners, and a crew of one hundred men. We had a fairly good run down the coast and were about to turn north some two hundred miles below Panama when the ship, while passing between two islands, ran on the coral reef known as Quibo Island.

"When the sidewheeler struck I was sleeping on the upper deck only a few feet from where Commodore Aspinwall and two or three of his old captains were standing admiring the scenery and the bright moonlight and speculating at what hour next morning we would reach Panama. Instantly I was awake and saw everything that followed.

"It was a critical moment. Had the order been given to head for the mainland, the vessel would not have gone her length before sinking into deep water, with the loss of most of her passengers. Whether Commodore Aspinwall or one of his captains gave the right order I don't know, but while the big ship was seemingly rocking in her death throes, with clouds of steam pouring from her hatches, her nose was pushed by emergency means into the sandy beach which we could dimly see lying a few rods ahead, and in a twinkling a cable was made fast to one of the big trees fringing it.

"By the time this had been done as many of the passengers as could find

standing room had rushed to the deck. The big boat gradually settled down at the stern until she rested on the bottom with a slight list to port. The gold dust was rushed to deck and piled in the bow. It was in very strong boxes, each about six inches wide and fifteen inches long, and there was \$4,000,000 worth of it. Later, two boats were sent out from the ship—one to the head of the island to intercept the outgoing steamer then about due, if she should happen to take the passage on the other side of the island, and the other with orders to proceed to Panama for aid unless it fell in with the outward bound steamer.

"During the three days that passed before the big steamer Brother Jonathan came in sight there were no regular meals—everyone was glad to eat what he could get. There was no cooking—no tables set. A place to spread a blanket was hard to find. The water, at high tide, invaded the upper cabins, and the lower, or second, cabin was flooded all the time. Wild animals were heard during the night in the jungle. Parrots and parquets kept up a continual screaming. And all the while there was much anxiety as to what the commander of the Brother Jonathan would do if he were intercepted. Perhaps he would carry us off the way we had come to

Prophecy of Great Engineer

General Serrell Predicted Another Canal Would Be Built Across Isthmus of Panama Via the Blas Route.

Gen. Edward Wellman Serrell, who died in 1905, was one of the great engineers of the United States. He was associated with some of the most important and difficult engineering undertakings of the time between the early forties and 20 years after the war.

In the latter years of his life, which was much occupied with his pet project of building a ship canal across the Isthmus of Panama along what is called the San Blas route, which lay some miles nearer the South American continent than the Panama canal. He projected his canal from the Gulf of San Blas, on the Atlantic, to Pearl Island harbor, on the Pacific; and he claimed that it could be built at sea level and on a straight line, with no locks, less than 30 miles from ocean to ocean, and not be costly. He was almost heart-broken when it became apparent to him that the government

Odd Railroad Coincidences

Westinghouse Airbrake, Janney Coupler and Steel Rails All Were Introduced in America About the Same Time.

"In my long career as a railway and business man I learned that whatever the emergency might be, however great the opportunity, there always came at the exact moment resources needed to meet the emergency or to grasp the opportunity," said the late James D. Layne, who for many years was associated with prominent railways of the west—the Pittsburg, Ft. Wayne and Chicago, the Chicago and Northwestern, and the Big Four—in high official capacity. "I think, however, the most extraordinary demonstration of the truth of what I have just said was that which occurred in or near Pittsburg at the time I was with the Pittsburg, Ft. Wayne and Chicago.

"In 1849 I assisted in making the first survey for any railroad west of Pittsburg. So enormously had the railway development of the mid-west been between that time and 1868, the year of the three coincidences I have in mind, that it had become apparent to all railway men that, unless there were some new inventions traffic would be congested, since railway equipment would not be sufficient to meet the demands made upon it.

"We had just been seriously concerned over the swift movement of trains between Pittsburg and Cincinnati—and especially because of an accident due to the inability of a railroad engineer to slow down a heavy freight train—when, one day, there called at my office a young man whom I knew, who said to me that he had an apparatus he had just perfected which would make it possible for a railroad

engineer completely to control a train—to bring it to a stop within the limit of safety.

"I asked him to show me his apparatus. He did so, and I was given authority to test it upon a specially prepared train on the Panhandle between Pittsburg and Steubenville, O. That was the way George Westinghouse's airbrake was introduced.

"About that time—within a few months anyway—there also called upon me an apothecary whose home was in Alexandria, Va. He told me that a railway accident had occurred near Alexandria which caused much damage by reason of the fact that the cars had clashed together and were telescoped, and he added that he had invented an apparatus which would make telescoping impossible.

"I told him to show me this apparatus, and he did. I gave orders that it be adjusted to several cars and then be severely tested. In that way the Janney coupler, perfectly supplementing the air brake, was introduced.

"Yet again, about the same time, J. Edgar Thompson, president of the Pennsylvania, told me that he wanted me to test the new steel rail which was then being first manufactured in England. I decided to put ten miles of those steel rails upon a section of the Panhandle a few miles out of Pittsburg. We gave the rails an exhaustive test, and we decided that with a slight improvement they would make very heavy traffic possible.

"These three features of modern railway equipment—the air brake, the Janney coupler, and the steel rail—which have made heavy and safe traffic upon American railways possible, were all perfected, as I now remember, within a year."

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Uncle Joe as a Quaker

Representative Palmer Tells How Speaker Was Excommunicated From Religious Sect.

Representative A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania is telling a good story on Speaker Cannon.

"Few people realize," said Mr. Palmer, "that the Quakers have a larger representation in congress, in proportion to the membership of the sect, than any other religious body. There are 200,000 Quakers in the United States; the present apportionment calls for one member of the house for approximately each 200,000 population, and yet there are nine Quakers in the house and senate. They are Representatives Cocks of New York, Butler of Pennsylvania, Grist of Pennsylvania, Barnard of Indiana, Head of Delaware, Speaker Cannon and myself. Over in the senate the Quakers are Heyburn of Idaho, Scott of West Virginia and Dixon of Montana.

"Strictly speaking, there are only

Acapulco, or even to San Francisco. And perhaps we would have to wait till a steamer could be sent out from Panama to our relief.

"Here is where the presence of Commodore Aspinwall stood us in good stead. As soon as the Brother Jonathan anchored at a safe distance from the reef we had struck he ordered us to be taken aboard her. It was a rush order, and it took nearly twelve hours of steady work on the part of both crews to transfer passengers, baggage and gold. It was just at dusk when the Brother Jonathan, hoisted anchor and headed for Panama, to our intense relief and delight.

"At Panama, the next morning, we were quickly disembarked. The tide being low, we were landed a quarter of a mile out on a coral reef and walked into the city. That night found us loaded in cars headed for Aspinwall, the first east-bound train to carry passengers on the Panama Railroad. The road was far from being finished. The tracks were slippery, the locomotive light, and it had to be helped by a lot of negro laborers pulling at long ropes.

"I never saw Commodore Aspinwall after we left the wreck. Whether he stayed at Panama or went on with us to New York I do not know. And I never saw in any paper an account of our wreck or of the first east-bound passenger train's trip across the Isthmus of Panama."

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would decide in favor of the present Panama canal project.

"During a conversation that I had with Gen. Serrell in 1874, when discussion over the probable government canal across the Isthmus of Panama was attracting a great deal of attention, I asked the general how he had become interested in the construction of a canal along the San Blas route.

"My belief in the feasibility of the San Blas route is due to two of my earlier experiences as an engineer," was the reply. "In the first place, I was one of the engineers employed by Commodore William Aspinwall to make a survey of the Panama railroad across the Isthmus of Panama so as to shorten the route between the Atlantic coast and San Francisco in California gold days. That experiment made me very familiar with the Isthmus; and we went all over the San Blas route before deciding upon our final survey for the Panama railroad.

"In the next place, my experience with the Hoosac tunnel, one of the most exciting experiences of my life, led me to realize how easily the San Blas route could be constructed in spite of the mountain that towers in its path near the center of the Isthmus.

"The state of Massachusetts had authorized the construction of a tunnel under the great Hoosac mountain. That meant tunneling through solid rock about four and three-quarters miles, and at the base of a mountain some 500 feet in height.

"You can't imagine how exciting and apprehensive we were as the workmen from either end approached each other. At last one day the rocks were pierced from the east to the west, and the drills met with a deviation of only a little over an inch.

"Now, I said to myself, when I came to study this canal problem, if we could cut the Hoosac tunnel so accurately as that, we could easily tunnel the San Blas mountain, although we might have to cut the tunnel a hundred feet wide and a hundred and fifty feet high. That, sir, would be a simple question of draughting. But with that mountain tunneled in that way, any ship could pass through, we should have a perfect sea-level canal only 30 miles long, the mountain tunneling being only five miles, and good natural harbors at either end.

"I suppose that if it had not been for my experience on the Isthmus, and my work as the engineer in charge of the Hoosac tunnel construction, I never should have thought of the San Blas interoceanic canal route. And I tell you, the great engineer added emphatically (and who dares to deny prophetically?) that if our government decides upon the Panama or the Nicaraguan route, the day will surely come in the next century when an interoceanic canal will be constructed by private capital via the San Blas route. And whenever that time comes, let the government canal look out for competition."

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Five O'Clock Tea



THE pretty and comfortable custom of serving afternoon tea is, in many houses, quite as much a part of the regular household routine as breakfast or dinner. The tea may be simply served for the family and casual visitors who drop in at the "tea-hour," or it may be quite an elaborate affair, with invitations and many guests.

When it assumes the proportions of a reception, the dining table is the center of attraction, and guests are escorted thither. For a cup of tea with a chance caller, the tea-table is brought into the drawing-room or sitting-room. It is no longer usual to leave the small table set, as used frequently to be seen. There was a suggestion of possible dust about that custom not quite savory to the tea-drinker. To quit this change in fashion a small portable table is used.

For this most simple and pleasing way of entertaining one's friends the preparations need not be elaborate. The tea-table may stand in the corner of the drawing-room, or a room opening off it.

If the hostess expects many callers, she should ask a friend to preside over the tea urn or kettle. If coffee or chocolate is to be served, other friends may be asked to pour. The second beverage is not necessary, as the one for which the function is named is sufficient and is generally liked.

The table must be covered with a pretty cloth, and on this should be the tea-kettle and an alcohol lamp to insure a constant supply of boiling water to replenish the teapot or to weaken the liquid already poured. In some homes the maid is supposed to bring in freshly boiling water as often as required, but the particular housewife usually finds that the water which she boils herself is more certain than that carried from the



"Five O'clock" Cakes. Distant kitchen. There never was a truer adage than the old one that declares:

"Unless the kettle boiling be, 'Filling the teapot spoils the tea.' Therefore, the contrivance wants to be sure that the steaming liquid poured upon the high-priced leaves

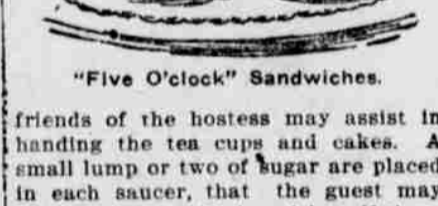
she uses is more than "scalding hot." With the kettle on the table must be the teapot, sugar bowl, and cream jug. The cups and saucers are arranged within easy reach of the person who "pours," and on the table may be a pile of plates, each one provided with a small napkin or dolly. Many hostesses omit these plates, and they are, after all, a matter of taste, although where there are several kinds of sandwiches or cakes the guest finds them a convenience.

Simple sandwiches are always popular. White bread-and-butter sandwiches cut into triangles and Boston brown-bread and cream-cheese sandwiches cut into semi-circles form a pretty combination, and are known by some housekeepers as "blond and brunette sandwiches." A dish of fancy cakes and macaroons, and another of chocolates and other sweets appeal to those with a sweet tooth.

Have fresh tea made often. The lover of the beverage is quick to detect the "flat" taste that proves that the same leaves have been used over and over again. Cheap tea is an abomination and expensive tea is too delicious an article to be spoiled in the making. Therefore, prepare only a little at a time—just a little more than will be needed by the guests this present at the time of the making. After the beverage has stood for three minutes, it is ready to pour. The usual allowance is the old-fashioned one of "a teaspoonful of tea leaves for each person and one for the pot," but some of the finest grades of tea makes too strong a decoction if used according to this formula, and a half teaspoonful of the dried leaves for each guest makes a satisfactory drink.

When the "tea" is one of considerable proportions, several young girls friends of the hostess may assist in handing the tea cups and cakes. A small lump or two of sugar are placed in each saucer, that the guest may sweeten her tea if she wishes, if there are too many guests present to ascertain their individual preferences. These young girls, prettily dressed, add to the appearance and pleasure of the occasion; and when all the guests are chatting cozily over their tea, a charming hour is spent.

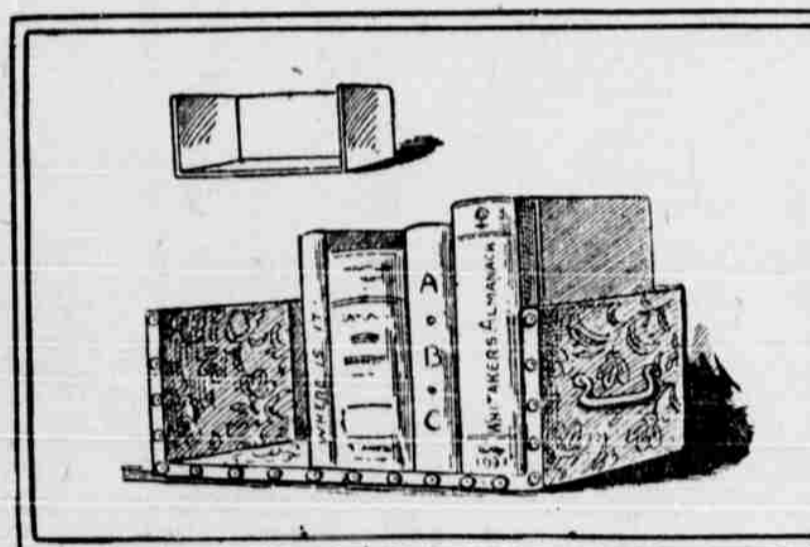
Party slippers are decorated with rosettes, buckles, bows and butterflies.



"Five O'clock" Sandwiches. friends of the hostess may assist in handing the tea cups and cakes. A small lump or two of sugar are placed in each saucer, that the guest may sweeten her tea if she wishes, if there are too many guests present to ascertain their individual preferences. These young girls, prettily dressed, add to the appearance and pleasure of the occasion; and when all the guests are chatting cozily over their tea, a charming hour is spent.

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Table Book Case



THERE are certain books that are almost as necessary on a writing table as pen and ink, and these books should be in such a position that any one of them may be ready to hand whenever required, and for that purpose the table book case shown in our sketch will prove a great convenience, and it requires little skill to make.

It can be made with the aid of any strong wooden box of a suitable size. The lid may be removed, as it will not be required, and also the front part of the box, and the remaining portion will present the appearance shown in the small sketch on the left-hand side

at the top and forms the foundation of the book case.

Both the interior and the exterior should then be smoothly covered with silk or brocade, fastened along the edges and underneath the box with thin sharp nails or Secotine, and the interior may be slightly padded with a thin layer of cotton wool placed underneath the silk.

The edges are next finished off with a narrow ornamental band, fastened on with tiny brass-headed nails; and to complete the book case small brass handles are attached to either side, so that the case may be easily lifted when filled with books.

Binding on Blankets.

One of the first places to show wear in a blanket is along the edge, which will begin to split into a coarse fringe. Keeping blankets well bound with inch wide ribbon will prevent this. Unless some accident happens to a blanket patching is not resorted to until it is very old, then a piece from another blanket may be laid on large enough to cover the worn place and held in place by darning rather than sewing. All thin places can be fortified by darning with ravelings from an old blanket. When the blanket is worn past repair, just double it and quilt it together here and there and lay it across the mattress under the sheet, and it will continue to be of service.

Smocking on Girls' Dresses.

Smocking is being done generously on the frocks of little children, the pink and blue threads on white are lovely. One wonders why they have been so slow getting here. One smocked in the neck in polka is scalloped in the neck and finished with baby Armenian lace.

Marriage to me could be but one of two things, exquisite or detestable. It was exquisite.



TURPENTINE BY ELECTRICITY

Successful Experiment in Extraction Carried on in British Columbia—Wood Is Cheap.

The attention of Consul General George N. West has been called to a small plant in operation in Vancouver in which experiments have been carried on for several years with the view of obtaining turpentine from the resinous woods of British Columbia by an electrical process of distillation. He reviews the process made:

The operations thus far have been carried on in a small way, only about two cords of wood or mull refuse having been treated daily. It is claimed, however, that the results have been eminently satisfactory. The turpentine, after tests by chemists and painters, who have used the product both for inside and outside work, pronounce it equal if not superior to the turpentine distilled from the long leaf pine of the south. From one cord of the resinous wood treated it is claimed that the tar, oil, rosin, pitch and charcoal (the by-products), more than pay the cost of the distillation of the turpentine, thereby making this process a valuable one.

It is claimed that from one cord of pitchy wood costing five dollars there can be extracted chemically pure turpentine, tar, oil, rosin, charcoal and pitch to the aggregate value of \$24.70, the present market value of these commodities, at an expense of \$12.70 per cord. That this statement is not erroneous is vouched for by persons who have the most thorough knowledge of the process and cost of manufacture, they claiming that the small plant now in operation is producing the products at the price per cord stated.

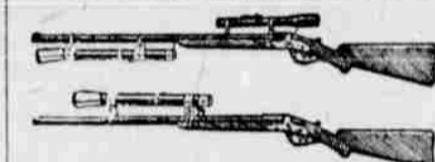
The amount of by-products said to be obtained from one cord of wood (amount of turpentine secured not being stated) are as follows: Rosin, 60 pounds; tar oil, 20 gallons; charcoal, 1,300 pounds. The oil is used for wood preservative, and is also manufactured into shingle stain. The charcoal, having been coked and cooled in a can out of contact with the air, is very perfect and valuable for making powder.

The resinous woods necessary for use in this plant are accessible in large quantities at cheap rates.

ELECTRIC LAMP FOR HUNTER

Searchlight Attached to Barrel of Gun Aids in Locating Intended Prey in Forests.

Not content with using portable lamps for lighting their way through the forests on their hunting trips, some sportsmen have learned the advantage of having an electric searchlight attached to the barrel of the gun so as to locate the intended prey in the dark, says Popular Electricity. The illustration gives a conception of the advantage of the ar-



Method of Attaching Searchlight.

angement. A lamp attachment made for this purpose by a firm in Cassell (Germany) is reported as having done excellent service in locating deer at distances of from 75 to 200 feet. Some hunters prefer it attached below the barrel, in which case a telescopic sight can be used with it; others like it mounted high above the ordinary sight. On long jaunts the hunter carries an extra pair of dry batteries and an extra lamp with him as a reserve.

Use of Precious Metals.

Few persons realize what an enormous amount of the precious metals and even precious stones, such as diamonds, are used in the manufacture of telephone apparatus. In a single year one company uses upward of a ton of platinum for this class of apparatus alone. And platinum costs 50 per cent more than pure gold, demonstrating that this expensive metal would not be used so extensively unless results justified it.

Wireless Apparatus on Vessels.

Efforts are being made in England to require that all passenger-carrying British and foreign vessels sailing from British ports should be equipped with wireless telegraph apparatus capable of transmitting to a distance of 100 miles. A bill to this effect now before the house of commons provides a penalty of \$5,000 in case of failure to obey the law.

Curious Heat Wave.

Meteorologists are being perplexed by the curious heat wave that passed over Tenerife, Canary Islands, one night last November. In the municipal weather observatory at Santa Cruz, the thermometer registered 63 degrees F. at 12:45 a. m., suddenly rose to 79 degrees within two minutes, and a few minutes later fell back to the starting point of 63 degrees. Oscillations of pressure were simultaneously recorded by the barograph.

Increased Use of Telephone.

Thirty years ago the telephone list of New York was printed on a small card and contained the names of 252 subscribers. The new city directory has 630 pages and instead of the small card is a book about a foot square and weighing 2 1/2 pounds. The city edition alone, piled one book on another, would make a tower more than six miles high.

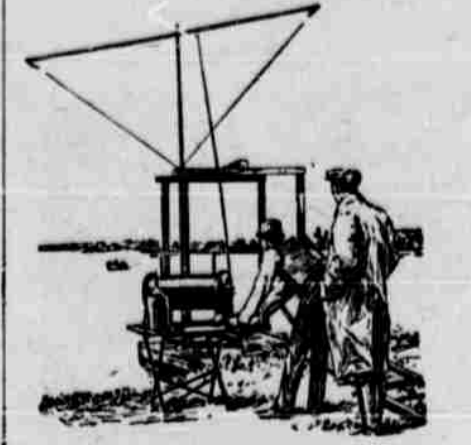
Fittings Exported.

Electrical fittings valued at \$1,100,000 were imported into British South Africa during the first seven months of 1910, against only \$368,000 worth in the same period last year.

WIRELESS CONTROL OF BOATS

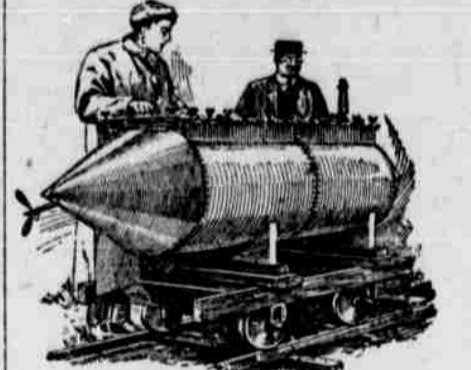
Young Australian Inventor Gives Demonstration of Guiding Movements of Water Craft.

A young Australian inventor has given successful demonstrations of a wireless apparatus for controlling the



Controlling a Motorboat by Wireless.

movement of boats on the water and torpedoes beneath the surface, says Popular Mechanics. Such control is not new, several European inventors having constructed apparatus for operating torpedoes, but the



Wireless-Controlled Submersible Torpedo.

Australian inventor has worked out what is said to be an improved system.

NEW NAVAL WIRELESS TESTS

Elaborate Series of Experiments Contemplated by United States Navy Department on Atlantic.

A notably elaborate series of experiments with wireless telegraphy is now contemplated by the United States navy department. It is proposed to install on the flagship of the Atlantic fleet and two scout cruisers apparatus capable of transmitting messages 1,000 miles under the most unfavorable circumstances, and three times as far when satisfactory conditions prevail.

The country has been treated to some surprises in respect to the distances to which radiotelegraphic dispatches have been sent from war vessels, but there has been a lamentable variation in the range of the instruments hitherto used. Perhaps any approach to uniformity is still out of the question, but an improvement on former achievements may at least be hoped for. Many clever electricians have been studying the art of which Marconi gave the world the first hint, and it would not be strange if some of his students were able to outdo their master. Communication by means of Hertz waves can hardly be supposed to have reached its full development at present.

From the announcement that the Connecticut, in Salem and the Birmingham will exchange messages with a land station at Brant Rock, in eastern Massachusetts, it is inferred that a system of which the world has heard comparatively little is about to be tested—the one devised by Prof. Reginald Fessenden, an American. The company has also sought a contract for installing apparatus at Washington which would send messages 2,000 miles. If from Brant Rock it should now prove the feasibility of such a performance its hopes of completing negotiations with the government would doubtless be strengthened.

Telephones in Use.

There are more than seven million telephones in regular service in this country and during the past year more than 7,500,000 messages were sent over the wires.

Electric Sirens in Germany.

Electric sirens are in use on the railways of Germany. The sound is produced by the vibrations of a metallic diaphragm under the influence of an electro-magnet.



On January 1 Philadelphia and its suburbs had a telephone for every 11 residents.

A rather useful novelty is a cane carrying an electric flashlight near the handle.

Wireless telephoning from a moving train has been successfully accomplished in England.

A zigzag arrow has been adopted in Germany as a danger sign to be displayed on high tension electrical apparatus.

Investigation by a French chemist shows that gold boils in an electric furnace at a temperature 2,400 degrees Centigrade.

More than nine hundred girls are being taught to operate electrically-driven machinery in a new trade school in New York.

Electric curling iron heaters of a new type that are built into a wall have been installed in 400 bedrooms of a New York hotel.

A flexible rubber mouthpiece for telephones has been invented, the idea being to prevent breakage should a desk transmitter fall.

A falling bulb of a 40-watt tungsten lamp in the show window of a Chicago store is blamed for setting fire to the dress goods on which it fell.

The attention of the oil operators in California is now directed to tests being made with electric motors for pumping and drilling oil wells.