

AN ODD KIND OF CLUB.

IT RESEMBLES A FULL FLEDGED TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

An Amateur Organization, the Members of Which Have Their Houses Connected by Wires, So That They May Communicate with Each Other by Telegraph.

One of the most novel or unique organizations in Brooklyn is one that has recently gained a new lease of life through the infusion of new and vigorous blood and by a thorough reorganization. It is called the Phenix Morse Telegraph club, and is perhaps the only one of its kind in the United States. The old organization was formed in 1879 and started in life under the name of the Phenix club. It was inaugurated by a number of young people, some of whom were engaged in occupation as telegraphers, and others of different vocations, who took pleasure in studying the mysterious language of dots and dashes. A private telegraph line was established and connected with the residences of the members. A busy wire it was too. The hum of conversation, if it can be termed such, was constant throughout the evening. Stories were passed over the electrical current, jests and jokes bantered, chess and checkers played by individuals who liked this sort of recreation, and in fact as good a time was usually passed as if the members were brought in contact with each other by person in one room.

Jokes of an innocent character were also carried on over the circuit, which had the advantage in so far as to allow the perpetrator to remain unknown or making it unnecessary to flee from the wrath of the person upon whom it was inflicted. Quite a number of these are stock property among the old members, who relate them to friends with as much gusto and enjoyment as if they had occurred only yesterday. One of these is to the effect that two members after practicing with another in the early evening, during which the sender transmitted the Morse characters as fast as he could, or as telegraphers would say "rushed" the receiver, notwithstanding the protests of this unfortunate disciple of America's noted inventor. The latter promised himself that a speedy revenge would follow, and sought to find some means whereby he could make the "rusher" as uncomfortable as he had been previously.

The practicing finally came to an end, and the receiver waited until an unearthly hour of the morning, when he supposed his victim had gone to bed and when the click of a sounder would strike the gloom and quiet with the distinctness of a blow from a trip hammer. At about 3 o'clock in the morning he went to the instrument and began to call his victim in a manner which would indicate that a fire had perhaps broken out or that the transmitter had serious need of aid in some dire calamity. He called in this furious style until he had awakened the sleeper, who jumped up out of bed and went to the instrument, expecting to hear that something dreadful had happened. He answered the call quakingly. His indignation can be imagined when the query came slowly and distinctly:

"Will you please tell me the time; my clock has run down."

His answer is not recorded, but it is safe to assume that the immediate vicinity became as warm as a hot box of an overheated wheel.

The organization went on in the even tenor of its way until two or three years ago, when it began to languish, partly on account of a defection of members who moved away from the city or because the remaining persons would not shoulder in the proper or necessary manner the worry and expense of conducting such an organization. Then came another club which was purely social in its character and which was also called the Phenix club. It may have been that the similarity of names caused a bond of friendship to be established or that some of the members of this body were capable of handling a key and working the electrical current. However this may be, the two organizations were amalgamated and a new order of affairs brought about thereby. The name was changed to the present one, and under which it started out with bright and prosperous auspices.

A flat, corner of Marcy avenue and Fulton street, has been made the headquarters of the club, and which may be termed the main office of this amateur telegraph company. Here are located the battery room, which furnishes the powerful fluid by which the wire is worked, and another, which is called the operating room, in which are placed four sets of instruments and a double practicing outfit. A galvanometer, whereby the wire is measured, so that the whereabouts of any trouble on the line can be detected, is also included in this space. Meetings and social gatherings are held in a larger room running off from this one. Eighty cells of battery work the circuit, which covers a distance of nearly eighteen miles in this city, mainly in the upper residence section.

The old "string" was overhauled by an experienced lineman recently and put in sufficiently substantial shape in order to enable it to more readily resist the wear and tear of a line in a large and busy city. The circuit is placed along the house-tops on the route, and trouble of any kind or, as an operator would say, "bugs" are rarely met with or experienced. Twenty-three so-called "offices" are on the circuit, all of which have their calls in the same manner as do the stations of a telegraph company.

Among the present members of the club are practical telegraphers of skill and records for sending and receiving. Considerable rivalry exists between them, and it is proposed at some future time to have a tournament for fast transmitting and also for skill and ability in receiving the Morse characters. Classes will be established in order to give every one a chance. One of the fastest senders in the country is the secretary of the organization, Mr. Frank L. Catlin.—Brooklyn Eagle.

HEARING A SHELL SCREAM.

A Hideous Sound That Tries the Nerves of the New Soldier.

The talk turned upon personal courage in a conversation I had the other day with an aid-de-camp of General Alexander Hays. The veteran, who had the name of being the most daring aid on Hays' staff, said: "You ask me how I felt when I first smelled powder, so to speak. Well, after the lapse of all these years I'm almost ashamed to tell you. I was panic stricken, scared out of my senses, my courage oozed out of me in an instant, and a small boy could have captured me without trouble. This awful experience came after I had been about a year in the army. The regiment of infantry in which I was was preparing to go into camp. We were a few miles outside of Yorktown, which was in the possession of the Confederates, but none of us, not even our officers, realized the proximity of the enemy. There were some cattle with the army, and some how or other some of my comrades and I were part of the crowd that drove the heaves to the place where they were to be slaughtered.

"We formed a circle, a sort of bull ring, and fell to skylarking and firing our pistols at the cattle as they ran hither and thither. It was all laughter and shouting. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, a sound that we had never heard before rose above the clamor. It was a sort of whirring howl, lasting a few seconds only, but long enough to strike terror into our hearts. The men who had been as gay and noisy as school-boys a minute before were dumb. I don't remember how they behaved. My own affairs kept me busy. I felt as if my boots were nailed to the ground. They wouldn't move, neither would my legs—in fact I had lost control of my body. I was perfectly limp and my knees sagged out.

"That was the first strange sound, as of some hideous, deadly bird flying overhead. I hardly realized, mind you, that the enemy was shelling us. All I knew for sure was that somehow my life, which I had enjoyed so much a minute before, was in danger. I wanted to run, but my legs wouldn't obey me. Two shells passed over me before I could shake off the paralysis. Then I ran as I never ran before or since, with a professional sprinter's speed, to the shelter of the woods from which our regiment had only just emerged. A second terror seized me as I reached the first scattering trees. I had selected one, a big fellow, as my refuge, and when I reached it three other men were crouched behind it pushed me violently away, saying there wasn't room for more. Shells were still in the air, and with terror I pursued my flight. When at last I fell exhausted upon the ground beyond the range of the enemy's artillery, I almost lost consciousness for awhile.

"Nobody was killed by those shells, but the 'Rebs' must have laughed to see us run, and laughed louder yet when our cattle ran into their lines as they did. I felt more or less uncomfortable always in going into battle afterward, but never again lost my nerve as I did at my fire baptism before Yorktown."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Why We Have Leap Years.

Why is it that there have to be leap years—that all our years are not of the same length? It arises from the fact that the year does not consist of an exact number of days. The length of the day and that of the year are the measures of the motions of the earth. The globe we live on moves in two ways. It turns itself around like a spinning top, and at the same time it goes steadily forward like a bullet shot from a gun. It turns itself once completely around in twenty-four of our hours, as shown by the clock; this amount of time we call a day. Its forward or onward motion carries it around the sun in a path that is nearly a circle; the time it takes to go completely around we call a year. The first motion gives us day and night following each other in turn (the word "day" here having now a different meaning—namely, not twenty-four hours, but the time of daylight).

The second motion gives us days (that is, periods of daylight) growing gradually longer and then gradually shorter, one end of the earth turning more toward the sun for half the time and the other end for the other half; and this brings us summer and winter and the seasons. Now the length of the year is found to be nearly 365½ times the length of the day of twenty-four hours; that is, the year is 365 days long and nearly six hours more. It is these six hours that give us our leap years, and it is in the "nearly" that we find the reason for 1900 not being one of their number.—Rev. George McArthur in St. Nicholas.

Cripples at the Capital.

Strangers in the capital express much surprise at the number of cripples to be seen here, and offer various explanations of the sight. The majority of maimed citizens are office holders, who were crippled during the late war. The form in which they are mostly injured is the loss of an arm, often the left one, as observation shows. Many have parted with a leg, and the suppliers of substitutes in willow, cork or rubber in Washington aver that this is one of the best markets in the country for their profession. Besides these injuries received through violence, there are scores of people in the government service who are afflicted with natural deformities. They are to be found particularly in the treasury department.—Kate Field's Washington.

A Mirror in Your Glove.

Without merely desiring to remind herself of her good looks a woman has often need of as much looking glass as she can see her face in.

In the street, at a ball, at a theater, in the shops, all sorts of little disarrangements may occur, and to set them right with a mirror is an absolute necessity. The very handiest form of portable mirrors is the new "mirror glove." A little flap is buttoned up into the palm of one glove. When it is let down a small circular mirror is disclosed.—New York Journal.

The Way Women Do.

"If men were as economical in their social relations as women are we would not be such a nation of spendthrifts," said T. B. Rose, of Minneapolis. "I was impressed with the force of this idea today by an observation begun in a cable car and pursued through a dry goods establishment and a restaurant. I saw two ladies chatting together intimately on a car, and when the conductor approached them to collect the fares one of them had no change. The other offered to pay for her companion's ride, but the latter wouldn't submit to the proposition. Instead she borrowed a nickel from her friend, remarking as she did so that she would break a bill as soon as she got down town and repay her. My curiosity was excited to see if women really dealt that way with one another, so I followed the two after they got off the car. They first entered a dry goods store, where the borrower made a small purchase, and as soon as she got her change she handed her friend five cents, which was received without the slightest protest.

"Then they went into a restaurant to get lunch. Each gave separate orders and the bill of each amounted to thirty cents. They marched up to the cashier and each paid her own bill. Now, these are small transactions, but they are indicative of the difference in the characters of men and women. Had the objects of my observations been men instead of women, the man who offered to borrow a nickel for car fare would have insulted the other, and one of them would have ordered that dinner for both and paid the bill, which, I may as well say, would have amounted to dollars instead of cents."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The True Artist.

Henry Norman gives the following instance of modest self estimate in the case of a man who is one of the most skillful and original artificers in the world, and whose works are everywhere admired:

This ivory carver sat in his little room, open to his little garden, chiseling upon a magnificent tusk, from which was just emerging a very graceful female figure. The ivory he held between his knees, and the tools were spread out at his side.

"How long will this take you?" I asked.

"About four months," he replied. "And what is the proportion between the value of the material and the value of the labor in such a work as this when completed?"

"I paid \$140 for this piece of ivory," said he, and four months' work, at \$50 a month, is \$200."

And this man was estimating his work at less than forty American dollars a month! His was the true artist's temperament, for he was willing to accept only what would supply him with the necessities of life, depending for his actual reward on the joy of seeking to do a perfect work.

"Are you not very sorry sometimes," asked I, "to part with one of these works, that I have been companions and a part of your life for so long?"

He looked up for a minute at a great white lily nodding above him in the garden, and then gently shook his head. "No," he said. "I expect the next to be more beautiful still."

A Suggestion About Dinners.

The next time you give a dinner give a good one. Do not feel that because you can afford it your dinner must consist of complex, mysterious, rich, indigestible dishes. No one wants them. All men hate them. When a man goes to a restaurant he never orders such a medley for himself. He never wishes them on his own table. Few women care for them, and not one person in fifty can digest them with comfort. Although such dinners are very common in New York, they are not given because we desire or respect them, but because we are a rich and vulgar people without the ability to realize our vulgarity.

There are many people in this city, and happily the class is growing, who have the good taste and courage to offer a simpler dinner to their guests. Such dinners can be as long and as dainty as the most fastidious may desire, and they are infinitely more satisfying. Try to bear in mind that a dinner consisting of complex and mysterious dishes is only a development of American vulgarity. When a woman gives such a dinner you are correct in supposing that either her own taste is vitiated and false or that she does it because she thinks it "the proper thing." In either case it indicates the presence of more money than intelligence.—Life.

They Agreed Then and After.

A Baptist minister took charge of a parish near Boston where he knew that one man was decidedly opposed to his pastorate. Soon after his arrival the Rev. Mr. X. called upon Mr. A.

"Brother," said he, "I hear that you think I am the wrong man to be the pastor of this church."

"Well, to be frank," replied Mr. A., "I do think that another would have filled the place better."

"Now that is just what I think," said the pastor. "But as long as we hold this opinion in opposition to the majority of the parishioners, let's try to be unselfish and make the best of it."

After that call Mr. X. never had a firmer friend nor more faithful champion than Mr. A.—Boston Herald.

Why Petrarch Is Remembered.

Petrarch thought it a disgrace that his verses should be sung in the streets, and he regretted that he had written anything in the vulgar tongue. No one now reads his Latin poetry, but every reader of Italian is charmed with the poems that attracted and suited the popular taste, which is made kin by a touch of nature, whether from the lyre or the pen.—Notes and Queries.

The Ivory of Solomon's Time.

It is not impossible that ivory and apes in Solomon's time may have come from Somali land and not from India.—Scottish Review.



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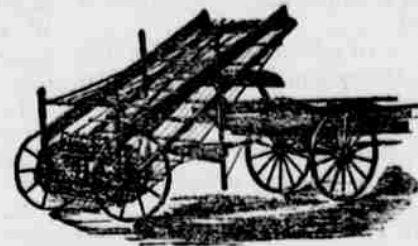
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