

overheard. Absolute silence will be our only safety. Conversation will be carried on exclusively in writing, and courtship will be conducted by the use of a system of ingenious symbols. An invention which thus mentally makes silence the sole condition of safety cannot be too severely denounced, and while violence, even in self-defense, is always to be deprecated, there can be but little doubt that the death of the inventors and manufacturers of the telephone would do much toward creating that feeling of confidence which financiers tell us must precede any revival of business.

THE TELEPHONE UNMASKED.

It is time that the atrocious nature of the telephone should be fully exposed, and its inventors, of whom there are any quantity, held up to public execration.

When this nefarious instrument was first introduced, it was pretended that its purpose was an innocent one. We were told that the telephone would enable a man in New-York to hear what a man in Philadelphia might say; and though it was difficult to understand why anybody should ever want to listen to a Philadelphian's remarks—which, notoriously, consist exclusively of allusions to the Centennial Exhibition and an alleged line of American steam-ships—there was nothing necessarily immoral in this possible use of the telephone. Then it was claimed that by means of the telephone conversations could be carried on with other than Philadelphians, and that political speeches delivered in Washington could be heard in any city of the continent. As the President was at that time making speeches in Vermont instead of Washington, the public was not alarmed by this announcement, and it was not until the telephonic conspirators mentioned that the uproar of a brass-band could be transmitted to any distance through the telephone that any general feeling of uneasiness was developed. Nevertheless, the vast capabilities for mischief of the telephone, and the real purpose of its unprincipled inventors have been studiously concealed, and it is only by accident that the greatness and imminence of the danger to which the public is exposed have suddenly been revealed.

Suspicion ought to have been awakened by the recent publication of the fact that if the lamp-posts of our City were to be connected by wires, every confidential remark made to a lamp-post by a belated Democratic statesman could be reproduced by a telephone connected with any other lamp-post. It is true that this publication was ostensibly made in the interest of the Police force, and it was recommended that patrolmen should use the lamp-posts as means of communication with Police Head-quarters. It was evident, however, that the result would be to make every lamp-post a spy upon midnight wayfarers. Men who had trusted to friendly lamp-posts for years, and embraced them with the utmost confidence in their silence and discretion, would find themselves shamelessly betrayed, and their unsuspecting soliloquies literally reported to their indignant families; strange to say this suggestive hint of the powers of the telephone attracted no attention, and has ere this been in all probability forgotten.

A series of incidents which has lately occurred in Providence has, however, clearly shown the frightful capabilities of the telephone. Two men, to whom, so far as is known, no improper motive can be attributed, were recently experimenting with a telephone, the wire of which was stretched over the roofs of innumerable buildings, and was estimated to be fully four miles in length. They relate that on the first evening of their telephonic dissipation they heard men and women singing songs and eloquent clergymen preaching ponderous sermons; and that they detected several persons in the act of practicing upon brass instruments. This sort of thing was repeated every evening, while on Sunday morning a perfect deluge of partially conglomerated sermons rolled in upon them. These are the main facts mentioned by the two men in what may be called their official report of their experiments, but it is asserted that they heard other things which they did not venture to openly repeat. The remarks of thousands of midnight cats were borne to their listening ears. The confidential conversations of hundreds of husbands and wives were whispered through the treacherous telephone, and though the remarks of Mr. and Mrs. Smith were sometimes inextricably entangled with those of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and it was frequently impossible to tell from what particular wife came the direful threat, "O! I'll just let you know," or from what strong husband in his agony came the cry, "Leggo that hair!" the two astonished telephone experimenters learned enough of the secrets of the leading families of Providence to render it a hazardous matter for any resident of that city to hereafter accept a nomination for any office.

Now, it has been ascertained that the wire of this telephone was not in contact with any other wire, and thus the hypothesis that the sounds heard by the two men were messages in process of transmission by the usual telegraphic wires is untenable. Moreover, a little reflection will show that cats do not send telegraphic messages, and that leading citizens do not transmit by telegraph petitions to their wives advocating a policy of conciliation in respect to hair. The scientific persons whom the two men have consulted have no hesitation in saying that the telephonic wire picked up all the sounds in its neighborhood by the process of induction. When the wire passed over a church, it took up the waves of sound set in motion by the preacher and reproduced them on the telephone. In like manner it collected the sounds from the concert-halls and dwelling-houses over the roofs of which it passed, and the peculiar distinctness with which it transmitted the remarks of cats was due to the fact that it must have passed in close proximity to several popular feline resorts.

We can now comprehend the danger of the telephone. If any telephonic miscreant connects a telephone with one of the countless telegraphic wires that pass over the roofs of this City there will be an immediate end of all privacy. Whatever is said in the secrecy of the back piazza by youthful students of the satellites of Mars will be proclaimed by way of the house-top to the eavesdropping telephone operator. No matter to what extent a man may close his doors and windows, and hermetically seal his key-holes and furnace-registers with towels and blankets, whatever he may say, either to himself or a companion, will be