

**A Talk with Edison.**

In the New York World of January 17th appeared a long interview with Edison. Although written in the extravagant style which characterizes the daily newspaper allusions to this inventor and his achievements, portions of the article are very interesting. For instance, Mr Edison was asked how electricity could be called into service in case of a war with Chili.

"That," said he, "I want to talk about. It is true I have invented an electric torpedo, the Sims-Edison torpedo, which we have sold out to the Armstrong Gun Company. It is a very fine thing. It is put on a wire, as of course you understand, and moved by electricity. It can be run out two miles ahead of a man-of-war's bow and kept at that distance ready to blow up anything in reach. It is a very pretty and destructive toy. But it is not in that kind of thing that I take pride. What I want to see is some foreign nation coming to this country to attack us on our own ground."

"That is what I want to see, and I think that electricity will play such a part in war when that time comes it will make gunpowder and dynamite go sit in lumbler obscurity with the obsolete flint arrowhead and call him brother. Every electrician, when that time comes, will have his plan for making the life of his enemy electrically uncomfortable. Here is one item of defence which I have in mind."

"It is simple as A B C. I have never spoken or written about it before. With twenty-five men in a fort I can make it absolutely impregnable so far as an assault is concerned, and I should only need twenty-five men in the fort to do it. This is not guesswork, but a matter of absolute scientific certainty. In fact, twenty-five men would be a very liberal garrison. Some years ago, when the wires loaded with heavy electric charges began to go up everywhere, I predicted that there would be danger of the firemen receiving deadly shocks by the electricity running down the streams of water which might cross the wires. The insurance people laughed at the idea. But I tried it on a cat, and the cat and I found my theory to be true. That is to say I did, and the cat found it out if there is another world for cats. He never knew anything about it in this world."

In each fort I would put an alternating machine of 20,000 volts capacity. One wire would be grounded. A man would govern a stream of water of about four hundred pounds' pressure to the square inch, with which the 20,000 volts alternating current could be connected. The man would simply move this stream of water back and forth with his hand, playing on the enemy as they advanced and mowing them down with absolute precision. Every man touched by the water would complete the circuit, get the force of the alternating current, and never know what had happened to him. The men trying to take a fort by assault, though they might come by tens of thousands against a handful, would be out to the ground beyond any hope of escape. Foreign soldiers undertaking to whip America could walk around any such fort as mine, but they never could get through it. It would not be necessary to deal out absolute death unless the operator felt like it. He could modify the current gently, so as simply to stun everybody, then walk outside his fort, pick up the stunned generals and others worth keeping for ransom or exchange, make prisoners also of the others if convenient, or if not convenient turn on the full force of the current, play the hose once more, and send them to the happy hunting grounds for good."

The picture raised by Mr. Edison is certainly a most beautiful and attractive one. It is nice to think of all the fine descriptive matter that could be written. Such a fort and such a warfare as Mr. Edison has planned would make old-fashioned generals and M. Dettaille, of bottle scene fame, turn in their graves. We should have infantry moving on forts at a quickstep, dressed all in rubber, with chilled glass soles to their shoes and non-conductor handles to all their swords and guns. The generals would look much funnier than a picture from Punch, charging at the head of their armies riding on horses shod with rubber arctics, the generals themselves carrying large rubber umbrellas, with gutta-percha handles, over their heads.

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