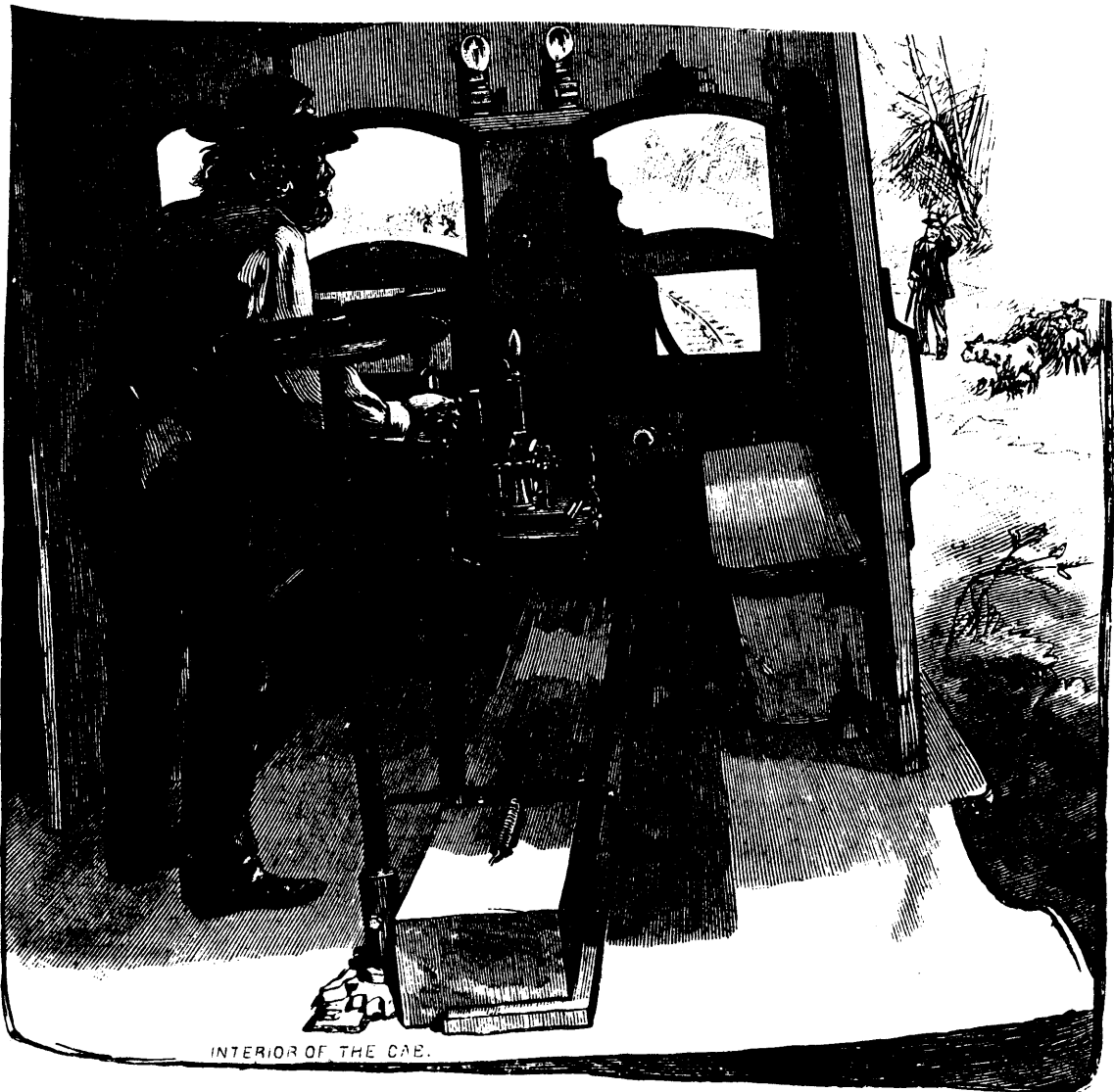




INTERIOR OF THE CAR.

THE EDISON ELECTRIC RAILROAD.—INTERIOR OF THE CAR.

Scientific.

AN ELECTRIC RAILROAD.

About an hour's ride out of Jersey City the traveller on the Pennsylvania Railroad by night is whirled through an expanse of white light and suddenly into darkness again. While he is passing through this lighted area the whole country for miles around seems illuminated. Of a summer night he can see broad fields white with daisies and clearly outlined shadows of trees and fences. In winter there is a shimmering expanse of snow, while the icicles glisten like frozen moonbeams. To the right, as the train runs from Jersey City, a line of bright silver beads seems to run along the plateau, and every now and then a house whose windows are alight with the same silvery sheen comes in sight.

It is Menlo Park, the domain of the wizard Edison and his attending sprites. The glistening silver beads are electric lamps, whose soft radiance bathes the country in light, and the houses are similarly illuminated. And all this light is generated at one point—Edison's laboratory on the plateau. From that one point he can control it all. A touch of his hand—it varies, and all is dark. Another touch—and all is light again. He seems to have one of the great forces completely in his control; and when he stands in his laboratory and illuminates the surrounding country, as far as his system extends,

by a simple gesture, the light appears to us for a moment as the iridescence of his bright intellect.

But from this point he also controls motive power as well as light; and this control extends over miles, and can include a complete railroad system. Already at Menlo Park he has such a system operating on a small scale. Behind the laboratory the plateau slopes down to a woody level, over which are laid for some two miles the tracks of a narrow-gauge railroad. The other day a car which was being repaired stood just outside of the laboratory on the plateau, in full view of the engines on the Pennsylvania Railroad, which went puffing sullenly past this evidence of rivalry. It is a singular fact, however, that, although Mr. Edison proposes to supplant steam power by electrical power, he can not get along without the former himself, for the simple reason that the dynamos which generate the electricity have to be worked by steam.

The electric locomotive and car now in use stand in the shed at the terminus, not far from where the wires fed from the dynamo in Mr. Edison's laboratory strike the rails. The locomotive has four wheels, and a driver's house, like any ordinary steam locomotive, and does not differ much at first sight in appearance from this. Even in the driver's house there are levers and mechanical arrangements which at first appear familiar. On closer inspection, however, certain differences in outline and detail are noticed. Of course there is no smoke stack, but simply something resembling it, in which the head-