

Ralph 124C 41+, Part 6

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(Continued.)

Synopsis of Preceding Installments

Ralph 124C 41+ living in New York in the year 2660 while in conversation with a friend at his telephot an instrument enabling one to see at a distance, is cut off from his friend and by mistake is connected with a young lady In Switzerland, thus making her acquaintance by Telephot.

The weather engineers in Switzerland who control the weather decided to strike against the Government and turned on the high depression of their Meteorotowers, thereby snowing in a large district. An avalanche threatens to sweep away the house in which the young Swiss lady, Miss 212B 423, lives and she appeals to the great American Inventor, Ralph 124C 41+, to save her, which he promptly does by melting the avalanche by directed wireless energy from his New York laboratory.

The inventor on the same afternoon is given an ovation by distance, in which the Telephot plays a great part. Afterwards he reads a "newspaper," the size of a postage stamp, and "writes" a lecture by means of the Menograph, an instrument by means of which words are made to appear on a paper tape by impulses from the brain acting on the apparatus. During the night his head is connected electrically to the Hypnoscopescope, an Instrument by means of which words and sentences are transmitted directly to the brain while one sleeps, in such a manner that everything can be remembered the next morning.

The great inventor, the next day, is visited by Mr. 212B 423 and his daughter from abroad. Both arrived by means of the Subatlantic Tube, piercing straight through the earth from New York to Brest in France. In the afternoon in

presence of his guests and twenty professors from all over the globe, 124C 41+ brings life to a “radiumized” dog, who had been killed three years previous. In presence of the twenty professors. The dog had been preserved with the rare gas Permagatol and Radium-K bromide, which latter occupied the blood vessels of the dog for three years.

124C 41+ then proceeds to show Miss 212B 423 wonderful New York. Both put on “Tele-Motor-Coasters,” propelled by wireless energy and roll about the town. They then visit the new electric restaurant; the “Scientificafe,” and enjoy a lunch of semi-liquid food, supplied through tubes. Afterwards they see the monument of the last horse to die in harness in New York A. D. 2096.

THEY rolled on for a while and Miss 212B 423, who saw one new wonder after another, kept her companion busily engaged answering questions, which duty he performed eagerly and enthusiastically.

Being much interested in sports, she desired to know presently how the modern New Yorker limbered himself up and for his answer 124C 41 presently stopped at a corner and they entered a tall, flat-roofed building. They took off their coasters and then stepped into the electro-magnetic elevator and then ascended fifty odd stories in a few seconds. At the top, they found a large expanse on which were stationed dozens of fliers, small and large. There was a continuous bustle of departing and arriving aerial fliers and of people alighting and departing.

As soon as our friends appeared a dozen voices began to bark : “Aerocab, sir, Aerocab, this way please!” 124C 41, unaffected by the barkers, walked over to a two-seated flier and asked his companion to be seated ; he then seated himself and after a brief, “National Playgrounds,” to the “driver,” they instantly departed. The machine, which was very light and operated entirely by electricity, was built of metal throughout ; it shot up into the air with a terrific speed and then took a northeastern course at a rate of ten miles per minute.

124C 41 kept on explaining the sights to his companion, and from the great height at which they were flying it was not hard to point out the most interesting structures, towers, and bridges, as well as other scenery.

In less than ten minutes they had arrived at their destination, the National Playgrounds. They alighted on an immense platform and then descended to the ground.

The National Playgrounds, built by the city in 2490, are located at the extreme eastern end of what used to be Long Island, a few miles from Montauk. An immense area has been fitted up for all kinds of sports, terrestrial and aquatic as well as aerial. These municipal playgrounds are the finest of the world and they are one of New York’s greatest prides. The City Government supplies all the various sporting paraphernalia and every citizen has the right to use

anything and everything, simply by applying to the Lieutenants in charge of the various sections.

There are playgrounds · for the young as well as for the old, grounds for gentlemen and grounds for the ladies. There are grounds to romp about in for babies and golf links for the old gentlemen. There are hundreds of baseball fields, thousands of tennis courts, and uncounted football fields. It never rains, it is never too hot, it is never too cold. The grounds are open three hundred and sixty-five days during the year, from seven in the morning till eleven at night. After sunset, the grounds and field;, are lighted by thousands of Iridium wire spirals, for those whose duties makes it impossible for them to frequent the grounds during the daytime.

As a matter of fact all the great baseball, tennis, and football contests are held after sundown. The reason is apparent. During the daytime, with the sun shining, there is always one team which has an advantage over the other, on account of the light being in their eyes, which blinds more or less,—an old known fact. In the evening, however, with the powerful, stationary light overhead, each team has the same odds and the game can be played with more fairness and accuracy than by sunlight.

124C 41 and his companion walked around for a while watching the players, and it was not long before he discovered 'that she was an ardent tennis player. This also happened to be his favorite sport. He naturally invited her to a game, which she accepted enthusiastically. They both walked over to the dressing building where 124C 41 kept his own sporting clothes and apparel. As his companion had come without her tennis shoes, it was necessary to secure a pair for her in the Arcade, and after she had found a suitable pair, they both went to the Tennis Grounds.

It was a delightful game and although 124C 41 was an expert, his companion beat him almost from start to finish. To be frank, he was not very attentive to the game, as it interested him far less than his fair opponent. He did not see the ball, nor did he notice the net. All he could do was to watch her in rapture and this alone kept him pretty busy.

He had never imagined that a human being could be so swift and graceful all at the same time. She darted hither and thither, she swished from right to left, smiling and beaming all the time. It seemed to him that she never touched the ground ; one moment she would be straight up in the air, straight as an arrow, trying to catch an impossible ball; the next second her lithe and wonderful, flexible body would fly almost horizontally over the field after a hopelessly "out" ball. And she always smiled and beamed upon him, no matter what her pose, her white and perfect teeth, glittering in the sunlight, trying to outdo the fluorescent sparkle of her wonderful, tantalizing, ever dancing eyes.

124C 41 under this bombardment of feminine charms became as awkward as never before in his life. He could play mechanically only and as the game proceeded he became more and more confused. It was hopeless. Instead of

seeing balls, he saw nothing but waving hair, a set of wonderful teeth and a pair of almost impossible, wonderful eyes which kept him spellbound.

He was almost ready to give up when the remarkable happened.

Miss 212B 423, when she left the house, had of course not known that she was going to play tennis, and for this reason had come to the game without her usual hair-net protecting her heavy hair. It was, therefore, little wonder that suddenly, while jerking her head to catch an extremely low ball, her hair came down without warning. Nor was there any half way about it.

It became unfastened neatly and thoroughly. Down it came, farther and farther ; it passed her waist, then her knees and stopped short a foot from the ground. It completely enveloped her, and what hair it was! 124C 41, who was only ten feet away from her, had stopped short as if thunderstruck, completely flabbergasted, as it were. His racket had slipped from his hand and his mouth was far from being closed. He looked anything but intelligent. If he had ever given the subject thought, he would have come to the logical conclusion that a mass of hair, and such hair as he saw now before him, was an absolute impossibility. He would have told anyone that such hair was preposterous, a mad dream of a mad brain.

Presently, however, before his astonished eyes, a pink nose disentangled itself out of the forest of blue-black, heavy hair. Next a dimpled, well rounded pink chin appeared, followed immediately by a blushing, annoyed face, and a plaintive, embarrassed voice complained:

“How dreadful, oh what will I ever do” but catching sight of our hair-struck young friend, whose face was the very personification of amazement, she burst into a ringing laugh, which to his ears sounded much like church chimes. It furthermore had the beneficial effect of waking him up by bringing him gently back to earth. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately—who knows?—it did not stop there. No indeed. He did not turn his head for the very simple reason that his head had become turned. (This is not intended for a pun.) Consequently, he watched her. The very admiration shining out of his soul by way of his eyes embarrassed her at first, but it quickly wore off, while she began to put up her hair again.

It was not the easiest task either. 124C 41 for the life of him could not see how on earth she was ever going to get it back again in place. Besides he could not understand where all these masses of heavy hair could find shelter and he continued gazing at her, watching every move. Little by little, however, it found its way back and in a short while it once more crowned a queenly head—not in time, however,—for 124C 41 had made a solemn oath that he would never consider himself happy if he could not call himself part owner of that wonderful hair.

For the next ten minutes, he rhapsodized in ardent terms over her hair, and she became so embarrassed that he had to put a stop to it.

“You know,” he concluded, “some individuals, like Samson, are conquered by the loss of their hair ; and on the other hand, some individuals by the acquirement of other’s hair are conquered in turn !”

“Now,” he said, having become a matter-of-fact scientist again, “I will show you where New York gets its light and power from.”

A few minutes later, after both had changed their shoes, they again were seated in an aerocab and a twenty minutes’ fly brought them well into the center of what was formerly New York state.

On alighting, they found an immense plain on which twelve monstrous Meteorotowers, each 1,500 feet high, were stationed. These towers formed a hexagon inside of which were located the immense *Helio-Dynamophores*, i.e., Sun-power-generators.

The entire expanse, twenty kilometers square, was covered with glass. Underneath the heavy plate glass squares were located the photo-electric elements which transformed the solar heat direct into electric energy.

The photo-electric elements, of which there were 400 for each square meter, were placed in large movable metal cases, each case containing 1600 photo-electric units.

Each metal case in turn was movably mounted on a kind of large tripod in such a manner that each case from sunrise to sunset invariably presented its glass plate to the sun. The rays of the sun, consequently, struck the photo-electric elements always vertically, never obliquely. A small electric motor inside of the tripod moved the metal case in synchrony with the sun’s advance in the sky (or more correctly with the turning of the earth around its axis) .

In order that one case should not take away the light from the one directly behind it, all cases were arranged in long rows, each sufficiently far apart from the one preceding it. Thus shadows from one row could not fall on the row behind it.

At sunrise, all cases would be almost vertical, but at this time very little current was generated. One hour after sunrise, the plant was working to its full capacity ; by noon all cases would be in a horizontal position, and by sunset, they again would be in an almost vertical position, in the opposite direction, however, from that of the morning. The plant would work at its full capacity until one hour before sunset.

Each case supplied a current of about one hundred and twenty kilowatts almost as long as the sun was shining, and it is easily understood what an enormous power the entire plant could generate. In fact, this plant supplied all the power, light, and heat for entire New York. One-half of the plant was for day use, while the other half during daytime charged the chemical gas-accumulators for night use.

In 1909 Cove of Massachusetts invented a thermo-electric sunpower-generator which could deliver ten volts and six amperes, 9r one-sixtieth kilowatt in a space of twelve square feet. Since that time inventors by the score had busied themselves to perfect solar generators, but it was not until the year 2469 that the Italian 63A 1243 invented the photo-electric cell, which immediately revolutionized the entire electrical industry. This scientist discovered that by suitable materials of the Radium-M class, in conjunction with Tellurium and Arcturium, a photo-electric element could be produced which was strongly affected by the sun's ultra-violet rays and in this condition was able to transform heat direct into electrical energy, without losses of any kind.

After watching the strange plant for a time Miss 212B 423 remarked:

"We, of course, have similar plants across the water but I have never seen anything of such magnitude. It is really colossal. But what gives the sky above such a peculiar blue tint?"

"In order not to suffer too great losses from atmospheric disturbances," 124C 41 explained, "the twelve giant Meteor- Towers which you notice are working with full power as long as the plant is in operation. Thus a partial vacuum is produced above the plant and the air consequently is very thin. As air ordinarily absorbs an immense amount of heat, it goes without saying that the Helio-dynamophore plant obtains an immensely greater amount of heat when the air above is very clear and thin. In the morning the towers direct their energy towards the East in order to clear the atmosphere to a certain extent, and in the afternoon their energy is directed towards the West for the same purpose. For this reason, this plant furnishes fully thirty per cent. more energy than others working in ordinary atmosphere."

As it had become somewhat late both returned to the city, traversing the distance to 124C 41's home in less than twenty minutes.

Miss 212B 423's father arrived a few minutes later, and she explained to him what a delightful time she had had in the company of her distinguished host. They then repaired to the dining hall for dinner.

Shortly after termination of dinner, 124C 41 bade his guests down to the Tele-Theater. This large room was fitted up exactly like a theater; the stage, however, was only a few feet deep ; but the enclosure and curtain were exactly like those on any up-to-date stage. The rear part of the room had upholstered chairs similar to those in any theater ; in fact it was hard to realize that one was not seated in a real playhouse.

After everyone was seated, 124C 41 handed Miss 212B 423 a directory giving a list of the plays and operas that were playing on that night.

"Oh, I see they are playing the French Comic Opera, La Normande, at the National Opera to-night : I have heard and read much of it and if you have no objection I should like to hear it."

“With the greatest of pleasure,” 124C 41 replied, “in fact, I have not heard it myself, my laboratory lately kept me so busy, that I have missed the Opera several times, already, as it is played only twice a week now.”

With this he walked over to a large switchboard-like affair from which hung numerous cords and plugs. He inserted one of the plugs into a hole labeled “National Opera.” He then manipulated several levers and switches and seated himself again beside his guests.

As it was early yet, he entertained his guests for a few minutes on various topics. Shortly after, a chime rang and the lights in the room dimmed down gradually. Immediately afterward, the orchestra began and the illusion was so perfect that one was positive that the music originated near the stage, although the National Opera House was four miles distant from 124C 41’s house. A large number of loud-speaking telephones were arranged near the dummy stage, and the acoustic effects were such that the illusion was absolutely perfect in all respects.

A few minutes later, the curtain rose—the opera had started! Directly behind the curtain several hundred especially constructed telephotographs were arranged in such a manner as to fill out the entire space of the dummy stage enclosure. These telephotographs were connected in series and were all joined together so cleverly that no break or joint was visible in the rear part of the room. The result was that all objects on the distant stage of the National Opera were projected full size on the composite telephotograph on the dummy stage. The illusion was so perfect in all respects that with the best intention it was extremely hard to imagine that the actors on the dummy telephotograph stage were not real in flesh and blood. Each voice could be heard clearly and distinctly and as a matter of fact much clearer than in the National Opera itself, because the transmitters were close to the actors all the time and it was not necessary to strain the ear to catch difficult passages.

After the first act 124C 41 explained that each New York playhouse now had over 200,000 subscribers and it was as easy for the New York subscriber to hear and see the play as for the far-off Paris or Berlin subscriber. On the other hand, he admitted that the Paris and Berlin as well as the London playhouses had a large number of subscribers local as well as long distance, but New York led them all.

“Can you imagine,” Miss 212B 423 mused, “how the poor people in former centuries must have been inconvenienced when they wished to see a show? I was reading only the other day how the poor wretches had to prepare themselves for a show hours ahead of time; they had to get dressed especially for the occasion and even went as far as to have different clothes in which to attend theaters or operas. They then had to ride or perhaps walk to the playhouse itself. Then the poor things, if they did not happen to like the production, had either to sit all through it or else go home, because very likely they would not have got seats in another theater even if they had gone there. They probably could not have conceived the ease of our Tele-theaters by means of which we can switch from one

play to another in five seconds, till we find the one that suits us best.

“Nor could their sick people enjoy themselves seeing a show, as we can do it nowadays. I know when I was down with a broken ankle a year ago, my only real diversion was the Tele-theater . I cannot imagine how I could have lied through those dreary six weeks in bed without a show each night. It must have been dreadful to live in those days!”

“Yes, you are right,” 124C 41 commented, “neither would they have imagined in their wildest dreams the spectacle I witnessed a few days ago.

“By chance I went down in the elevator. and passing this room I heard such an uproarious laughter that I decided to see what caused this merriment. Entering unnoticed, I found my ten-year-old brother ‘entertaining’ half-a-dozen of his friends. You would never guess what he had done. The mischievous rascal had gone and plugged into ‘Romeo and Juliet’ playing at the Broadway—in English of course. He then plugged in at the same time into Der Spitzbub a farce playing in German at the German Theater and to this, for good measure he added Rigoletto in Italian, playing at the Gala in Milan.

“The effect was of course tremendous. Part of the time, nothing but a Babel of voices. and music could be heard ; but once in a while a single voice could be heard, followed immediately by another one in a different language, and so on. The funniest one no doubt was when at the Broadway, Juliet calls : Romeo, Romeo, where art thou, Romeo? For an answer some fat actor at the German Theater howled : Mir ist’s Wurst Schlagt ihn tot!

“Of course, everything on the stage was blurred most of the time but once in a while extremely funny combinations resulted between some of the actors at the various theaters, and these invariably were greeted with an uproar.”

La Normande proved to be a very good show for our friends and they heard and saw it in its entirety. After the close of the last act, 124C 41 bade his guests down and after everybody had attached his tele-motor coasters, the genial host proceeded to show his guests New York by night.

(To be continued.)