

RoonSteam

A Pleasurable Pastime, or Parlour-Game, for Any Number of Quick-Witted Individuals

Chapter the First,

In Which Our Reader Becomes Acquainted with the Pastime that is RoonSteam, it Extents and Relationships to Certain Other Titles, and In Which Missus Henry Routhlington Discovers an Otherworldly Civilization Residing in Her Slaking-Tank after a Hard Winter's Blow

RoonSteam is an appurtenance to, and adjunct of, the parlour game known as RoonVenture. It is an extension which relies upon certain mechanisms of play described in the aforementioned RoonVenture, such as a combat resolution system, equipment inventories, and bestiaries of fantastic creatures, &c. as might be needed to add interest and flavour to the present subject of consideration.

RoonSteam is a world in which clever chaps and demoiselles create improbable contraptions in waggon-sheds and basements employing the recently discovered powers of Natural Philosophy, such as the electric fluid, steam pressure, Bernoulli's Principle, lifting gas, and the mighty lathe. Airships drift lazily over teeming peasants, dropping empty wine bottles while their inhabitants develop weapons so mighty as to make future wars impossible. Rioting masses benighted by hidebound tradition use their sway in the halls of Parliament to oppose the development and betterment of mankind through Science, the employment of black iron machines that belch smoke while swinging walking-beams, turning gears, and making a racket. Meanwhile armies which are aided by steam power, electricity, lifting gas, &c., bring the wonders of rail transport, time schedules, and modern anti-sepsis to the dark lands previously ruled by superstition.

Strange intelligences on faraway worlds turn their opera glasses in jealousy toward the world within the game, while others the size of atomies are discovered living in the mould at the bottom of discarded tea-cups. These intelligences, both young and old, employ the powers at their command to oppose and confound the avatars within the game which are managed by the players, as do the common folk, and certain hypocrites who secretly employ Scientific powers while embroiling the masses with the rankest sort of populism in opposition to same. It is often foggy and rains in the morning, as a result of much of the action occurring in England.

To enjoy the pastime of RoonSteam, you need not fully comprehend it. However, to govern the play of a game, one should at least have spent time sitting in the parlour on an overstuffed chair with a smoking-jacket, pipe, brandy (or some suitable replacement), and a copy of the rules disposed upon a nearby table in a manner that suggests they are being read and thoroughly digested with great alacrity and sound judgement.

Chapter the Second,

In Which Many Small Details of Debatable Import are Related, with Particular Attention Paid to The Differential of Roon-Seekers in the Fantastic Mileaux to Those Employing the Powers of Natural Philosophy, Mesmerism, and Modern Mentation to the Problems of Roon-Seeking

RoonSteamers

The protagonists of our present situation are identified by the moniker of "RoonSteamer" or, in common parlance, "Steamers". They are the intrepid inventors, plucky sidekicks, tinkering mechanics, square-jawed explorers, and women who do not know their place in society who have been inspired by the Mesmeric vision, as if a dream, of the Mystic Roon. Once so inspired, they make it their life's work to travel to that

Roon to receive further inspiration and insight from it by basking in its presence, then bringing that insight to the unscientific and ill-educated world at large. Though that Roon might have its position inside the ancient sewer-pipes of the ruins of a Lost Civilization in the deserts of the Middle East, or at the heart of a Mystic mountain-top temple lost in the Gobi desert, or at the deepest depths of the sea within a piece of jewelry lost untold centuries before, in the inside-out world that lies hidden within our own, or scratched rudely upon a bare rock where it is worshipped by a strange otherworldly people residing on torrid Mercury, the wet jungles of Venus, the ancient deserts of Mars, the miniscule rocky world of Ceres, the gaseous, sea-like land of planets Jupiter and Saturn, the ice-strewn wilderness of Uranus, or the frozen seas of the most remote world of Neptune, no distance is too far to travel for the dedicated Steamers.

Anti-RoonSteamers

Opposing the Steamers at every step are the “Anti-RoonSteamers”. Used to the perquisites of power, determined that the wonders of Science be limited only to a privileged Few (selected by themselves, of course), quick to incite the fear and anger of the common mobs, they stand behind every obstacle, behind every setback, that assails the Steamers in their righteous cause. Called “Anti-Steamers” for short, this misnomer conceals that they are more than willing to use any tool that falls to hand to oppose the Steamers, even if it is the product of one of their pet inventors misusing the gifts of Natural Philosophy. Among themselves, they have also mastered the misapplication of Mesmerism to control and inflame the emotions of the masses, destroy the memories and wills of those who they target (who do not have the special mental protections which the inspiration of the Roon provides), and to make those at the highest levels of Power into their unwitting Puppets.

The Roon and Roonic Instrumentality

Through its mystic powers, it seeks to reach the minds of those who are sensitive to its sub-etheric vibrations. It not only inspires the Steamers to seek it for communion, but it instills in their living minds the ability to construct special devices of instrumentality with which to locate it and divine that it is a their own true Roon, not an impostrous construct of an Anti-Steamer. These devices replace the Majick Items of the fantastic milieux. To wit, these devices are:

The Roonic Galvanometer

The Roonic Galvanometer employs the electric current produced by a sub-etheric transducer and aerial to direct the Steamers toward their destined Roon. Also called the “Galvo”, it may take many forms once the inspired Steamer has assembled it from available parts, but its most common form is that of a short sword with a blade of damascened brass, steel, black iron, and bronze metals, an indicator meter movement at the cross-hilts, and a small sulphur ball for the pommel. When energized by the Mesmeric concentration of the bearer (known as the “Galvo-Bearer”), the meter movement will show the highest measurement upon its scale when pointed in the direction of the Roon. Without the utility of the Galvo, the adventurers will fail at their task.

The Roonic Toroidal Transducer

The Roonic Toroidal Transducer is the second item of instrumentality that is inspired in the mind of one of the Steamers. It may likewise be produced in any number of forms, but it most commonly manifests as a small toroid of precious metal wrapped about with wire in woven-cloth insulation, which is then hooked to a dual-gauge differential etheric/sub-etheric pressure transducer. By comparing the scaling factor in the difference between the two measurements, its builder and bearer (known as the “Ring-bearer” or “Toroid-porter”) may determine the precise distance to the Roon in some suitably scientific measurement of distance, such as furlongs or nautical fathoms. Without the information of the Toroid, the adventurers will fail at their task.

The Roonic Slide Rool

The Roonic Slide Rool is a bundle of specially-constructed Napier's Bones with an electric drive mechanism attached which is inspired into the mind of one member of any group of Steamers, along with a Mesmeric sensitivity to its operation. The edges may include any number of specially-formulated scales of calculation, some of which even the creator may not be aware of until need presses. These scales may be used to make nearly any incidental calculation required along the path of the adventure so long as its bearer recalls that they may use it. Also, the very sight of the Slide Rool is enough to drive most any Anti-Steamer into a livery rage of fury. They will always attack the Slide Rool bearer first, and can often detect the movements of the Steamers by the etheric and Mesmeric emanations of the Slide Rool. It is also likely to upset the mental processes of mediums and sensitives for a wide area round about it, driving them into murderous episodes. Without the operations of the Slide Rool, the adventurers will fail at their task, but be much happier.

SteamRoon Novitiates

Along their adventure's career, the Steamers may encounter other Steamers, some of whom have actually located and communed with their Roon who have returned to enact its wise counsels among an unappreciative and undeserving community of nations. These Steamers are known as SteamRoon Novitiates, or "Steam Novits" for short. They often are well blessed in years, and of an eccentric turn of behaviour. Many times, however, they can provide the Steamers with crucial clues, assistance, or a hot cuppa--from the full leaf, not with the chopped leaf as is so common in uncivil society in these troubled times.

The RoonSteam Master of Ceremonies, Rites, and Employments

The personage in the position of organizing and directing play with the accord and discord of the players who are represented within the milieau as Steamers is properly called the RoonSteam Master of Ceremonies, Rites, and Employments. However, in some circles shorter forms of the title have been adopted such as "Steam Master" or "The Isambard". The authors of this work encourage the use of the latter title, though the former may be used when conversing with children, ignorant muck-farmers, the mentally deranged, and others who are unaware of the significance of the superior title.

Etheric Mesmerism

The Majick of standard RoonVenture is replaced with the mystic power of Etheric Mesmerism, in accord with the Understanding of Science within RoonSteam. It operates in much the same way, but with different window-dressing to suit the enviroment of the place and time. Spells are now described as "fits" or "etheric impulses" or other such terminology. Otherwise, they remain the same.

Imperial Washers

Imperial Washers are commonly known to be the only "sound" currency, as the Pound Sterling is subject to the vagaries of the Market and hard-currency speculators. Most Steamer transactions will only be conducted in Imperial Washers, and the currency is accepted everywhere that the Union Jack flies, and most places where it doesn't. These take the place of ordinary Washers, but are the same except for the impression of a ruler's footprint on one side.

Rools of Governance and Priority

In all areas where particulars are not delineated in this trim document, the information provided in the original and unexpurgated document of rools under the title of RoonVenture should take hold. In those instances where there is a remark provided within this body of work, then that item shall take precedence over its more general predecessor.

Chapter the Third,

In Which an Accounting is Made of Unique Fictional Personages, & Their Equipment, Utilities, and Risible Instruments of Special Application which May Be Accumulated in Summation with Those Previously Described Elsewhere in the RoonVenture Rools

The characters of the game, or avatars within the fantastic world of The Isambard's construction, are formulated exactly as prescribed within the parent document to that which you hold within your hands or otherwise see through the action of illumination upon your optical orifices. Names and occupations should be appropriate for the setting as provided by The Isambard, such as "Mr Llewellen Eustace Hardstone, Solicitor and Prize-Fighter Upon Bank Holidays" or "Miss Phoenecia Artemis Collingstoneshawfanhough, Girl's Finishing School Headmistress and Experimenter Upon the Electric Fluid". Further examples might be, "Hrug Grog, South American Savage and Natural Mesmerist with a part time lecturing position at Oxford College", "Ifane Alloe, Himalayan shaman-women employed at a steam-powered naval block manufactory."

Ye Olde Arrow (Something) Shoppe

Arrow Shoppes are a close analogue to their fantastic-era counterparts, only to have had some other term added to their name, such as Ye Olde Arrow Steamvalve Shoppe, Ye Olde Arrow Electricswitch Shoppe, or Ye Olde Arrow Mesmerics Shoppe. They always have the addition as a single word, which is a point lost on Anti-Steamers putting up imitators. The Shoppes are located in such places as underutilized manufactories, cooling towers, and secret stations on the pneumatic train line.

Additional equipment beyond that delineated elsewhere might include the following, in addition to any designed by The Isambard:

Powderless Ten Shot Automatic Revolver with Ghost Ring Sights, price 4.

Employs lamp-oil or coal gas with lamp-black to propel its projectiles. Requires the lighting of its pilot light before firing, but once fired a walking-beam mechanism will automatically advance the cylinder and fire the next round so long as the trigger-mechanism is depressed.

Portable Steam Powered Explosive Electric Grenade Launcher, price 10

Utilizes a steam accumulator which a husky person might carry upon their back through the use of a shoulder-yoke constructed from the handlebars of a velocipede. A portable kerosene-powered steam generator and heater mechanism has been affixed to the base of the accumulator tank. The tank itself is fitted with fill valves, drain valves, a burst disk in case of over-pressure, and a sight glass to verify the loading of water prior to heating. A fitting for a large hose is provided. The hose stretches from the tank upon the posterior of the user to a steam valve mechanism held in the user's hands. The steam valve is fitted with an inbuilt pressure gauge, a valve control handle, a grenade steam fitting and guidance rod, and a Hawksbee-style electric fluid generator employed in the charging of the Leyden jar on the grenade.

Each grenade has a mating fitting to set it in the steam valve until pressure projects it toward its target. Its body is wrapped with sticks of trinitrotoluene explosive with electric initiators installed in each. The initiator is powered by the release of electric fluid from the Leyden jar that sits at the head of the grenade, immediately behind a small wire trigger that will be closed by the action of the target on the bent wire, releasing the fluid to the initiators which cause the TNT to detonate in close proximity to the target.

To employ the launcher, the user must light the kerosene heater which will heat water loaded into the

accumulator's organic holding tank. Once full operational pressure is reached, a grenade may be safely loaded onto the steam fitting of the hand-held valve. Once the valve has been oriented to present the grenade to the intended target, the handle of the Hawksbee generator is turned to generate an electric current to charge the Leyden jar. Once the user sees the mutual repulsion of the foil leaves within the Leyden jar, they may then launch the grenade by pulling the handle on the steam valve while keeping the grenade pointed at their target. The grenade is guaranteed to maintain its course for a minimum distance of the length of the guide-rod affixed coaxially to the steam fitting, after which flight may become erratic, or may continue on a ballistic trajectory.

Once the grenade reaches a surface, the wire trigger closes a circuit of conductive wire between the charge in the Leyden jar and the explosives.

Once charged, the Leyden jar can be counted on to retain an effective triggering charge for a full three minutes without further application of the Hawksbee generator.

Native Bone Knife, price 3

This device is commonly used by savages, but may also be employed by adventurers under many circumstances. Often, it will have unusual adornments of the leathers of strange creatures, carvings within its blade, feathers affixed to the hilts, &c. Available from natives, displaced natives, and curio shops.

Electrical Muscular Disabilitator, price 1

Despite its low price, the electrical muscular disabilitator is capable of rendering even the stockiest and most husky person or person-sized creature incapable of physical action. It has been known to stop charging bull elephants in their tracks when used with alacrity and dispatch when the device has been fitted with the appropriate accessories. The disabilitator uses spring power in accordance with Hooke's Law to fire a metal specimen pan and a scalpel at its target. Once in contact with its target, the user or an assistant winds the windlass of the Faraday generator to produce an electric current which will immobilize the muscles of the victim. The device does physical damage equal to one half-franc as a result of the implantation of the head of the scalpel, but this is necessary to complete the electric circuit between it and the metal pan upon which the victim has hopefully trod.

A compound windlass will increase the power of the disabilitator. The device may be fitted at an extra cost of 12 half-francs (PSTCWN). It is this device with causes faster operation of the rotor within the Faraday generator, allowing the disabilitator to affect the muscles of creatures of greater mass than 22 stone.

Lifting-gas Torpedoes, price 3

The fish known as the 'torpedo' have their relatively impermeable guts filled with lifting gas, then a powder-treated wick or "fuze" is fitted to provide a source of ignition. Once lit, the fish is thrown at a target. After a time of approximately 4 seconds, the gas will ignite explosively, performing the device's price in damage upon nearby objects. Once used, the torpedo may not be re-used, but on occasion the meat of the animal may be recovered for use in well prepared recipes. Often several fish, up to half a dozen, may be purchased as a lot for the price of only 3 or 4 half-francs, with each capable of doing 3 half-francs of damage. This keeps players from whining so much.

Aero-aqua-terra-nautic Conveyance, price 300

Taking any of several forms or sizes, the Conveyance may be built or purchased to provide a means of travel capable of dealing with any environment or terrain or flying over it in a pinch. Each Conveyance is unique, and should be described in detail by The Isambard. Special fittings for subterranean use, use in the space

between the spheres, or other special application, should come at extra cost and trouble as designated by The Isambard.

Lucifers, pack of 30, 7 half-francs

Each lucifer, or “match” (as called by the unwashed), can light a fire. The fire produced by the lucifer itself can do as much as one half-franc of damage if held against unprotected skin of a normal person. They may also be used to light pilots, amaze savages, or other purposes to which fire may yet be put in the modern Age of Science.

Bevel Toothed Gaussian Gear, heavy, price 5

When swung by an active person in a hostile fashion, the toothed gear of this design can do significant physical damage (up to 5 half-francs, under normal circumstances.) It is typically held by the user by the hub hole at the center, with the middle or index fingers placed in the keyhole to prevent rotation and reduction of damage once the target is struck.

Topcoat with Tails, woolen, many internal pockets, price 3

This valuable product of sartorial art will not only allow the wearer to be accepted into the better parts of society on a foggy night, but will carry many belongings without bagging or sagging or exposing them to pickpockets. It will also absorb its own price in damage if struck by physical force, though it may need a brush up and a bit of the tailor’s needle afterward.

Patented Collapsible Tall Hat with Goggles, price 2

The goggles supplied as a hatband for this tall hat will protect the wearer’s eyes from high winds in Conveyances of many types, and keep metal filings out when in the workshop. It will absorb its price in physical damage when worn, but only if the blow would have struck its wearer’s head. It will usually require the replacement of at least one goggle-glass afterward, at a price of one half-franc apiece.

Leather Work Apron, price 1

This handy item belongs in every workshop. It has a large “kangaroo-pocket” on the front, a hook for a watch-chain to keep the watch handy for timing reactions and other experimental processes. It provides its price in protection from physical blows, but also provides 10 half francs of protection from electricity and acid that strikes it (though it does not protect against that which goes around it.) It withstands 5 half-francs of fire.

Leather Gauntlets, Leather Hood with Glass Insert, Leather Pants, Leather Boots, Leather Sleeves, price 1 (each)

These provide protection similar to the Leather Work Apron, and may be used with it to protect areas that the apron itself does not cover. The Glass Insert of the hood may be of a special variety upon the payment of an additional half-franc to withstand some special power or influence (etheric rays, bright sunlight upon the eyes, arc lamp light, etc.)

Voltaic Pile, price 1

A quarter-stone stack of metal disks separated by damp paper squares. May be fitted with loose wires or other conductors to shock people, charge Leyden jars, or otherwise provide a small electric current. One pile will last approximately six days before losing its charge, or be discharged within moments with the release of dangerous heat and gases if shorted.

Mesmeric Disk, price 6(E)

This disk, constructed of German Silver then inscribed with Moire's patterns, about one and a half Great Inches in diameter. Used to capture attention, or conduct a Mesmeric attack upon, the unprotected victim.

Omni-Adjustable Spectacles and Lenses, price 3(E)

These spectacles include micrometer adjustments for nose bridge, temples, and inter-ocular distance. They may be fitted with numerous sets of lenses simultaneously, with different properties, such as corrective vision, astigmatism correction, and etheric ray deflection. Supplemental lenses may be flipped in and out from in front of each eye, allowing the introduction of lenses that provide microscopic, telescopic, or color-filtered vision. For an additional 3 half-francs, the spectacles can be permanently fitted to the lower brim of a hat.

Additional items to those provided may be requested by the players. The Isambard will design, price, and determine the availability of these as they desire.