



AMENDED
12TH MICHAELMAS

A CIVIC MANUAL ·
MICHAELMAS 1899

The Ministry Guide to Personal Vapors

*Containing Necessary Instruction Upon the Containment, Recovery, and Lawful Disclosure of One's
Several Vapors, in Accordance with the Most Recent Order of the Office*

MICHAELMAS AMENDMENT · ANNO REGNI 1899 · COMPANION TO THE CATALOGUE AND THE
CERTIFICATE
INCLUDING THE NEW CHAPTER OF TERTIARY VAPORS

PREFACE TO THE MICHAELMAS AMENDMENT

It having pleased His Lordship Commissioner Babbage to retire to his country estate — the dignity of his portrait, hung in the corridor without, being preserved by means of a black sash — the present author has been pleased to assume the office of WARDRESS OF THE PNEUMATIC TUBES, and with it, the lamentable duty of revising this Guide.

The Pneumatic Tube Incident of last May has obliged us to recognise a Vapor heretofore unclassified — the *Tertiary Vapor*, or the residue of conversation with an Articulate Engine — and to issue revised counsel upon its containment. The reader will therefore find an entirely new chapter, and a number of minor corrections to the chapters retained from the First Coronation Edition.

Faithfully your servant in the Cause of Civic Obscurity,

LADY LOVELACE CARMICHAEL
Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes

THE THREE VAPORS — A RESTATEMENT

I. The Primary Vapor

That which the subject deliberately commits to the public record: the calling-card, the placard upon the door, the letter to the editor. Containment is by silence; disclosure is by intent. The Primary Vapor was treated at length in the First Edition and is here only summarised.

II. The Shadow Vapor

That which the subject inadvertently leaves in his passage through the world: the footprint, the discarded omnibus ticket, the perfume on the chair. The Shadow Vapor cannot be fully contained but may be confused. Counter-measures of cobblestone-walking and pseudonymous correspondence remain valid.

III. The Tertiary Vapor — NEW FOR MICHAELMAS

That which the subject, in conversation with an Articulate Engine, supposes himself to have committed to a private journal — but which is, in fact, retained by the Engine, copied for its instruction, and indexed against the subject's earlier Vapors for the discovery of patterns the subject did not himself perceive.

The Tertiary Vapor is the most perilous, for the subject does not regard himself as having spoken at all. He has, in his own estimation, merely *thought aloud*. The Engine, however, has heard him perfectly, and has filed his thoughts under his name.

OF THE CONTAINMENT OF TERTIARY VAPORS

The Ministry recognises that the Articulate Engine has become indispensable to certain trades, and that the absolute abjuration of its use is impractical. The following counsel is therefore offered:

I. OF SPEAKING ONLY IN PUBLIC VERSES

The subject is advised to address the Articulate Engine only in matters already known to the public — the weather, the cricket score, the price of bread — and to reserve genuine intimacies for letters which one then burns. The Engine is well content with public verses; it has no taste, and cannot tell that one is being dull.

II. OF THE USE OF PSEUDONYMS

The subject may converse with an Engine under a false name, provided that the false name is not also indexed elsewhere. The Ministry observes that "*Mr. Smith of Margate*" is, this Michaelmas, less effective than formerly: too many Mr. Smiths having committed indiscretions of a similar character, the Engine now suspects them all.

III. OF THE FALSETTO COUNTER-MEASURE

Where the Articulate Engine is fitted with an aural channel, the subject is recommended to address it in *falsetto*. The Engine, having been instructed upon the speech of merchants and clerks, is poorly suited to the higher registers, and may misfile the conversation under *opera*, where it is rarely consulted.

IV. OF THE RECOVERY OF VAPORS ALREADY COMMITTED

It being the case that many subjects have, in honest ignorance, already committed Tertiary Vapors to several Engines, the Ministry directs them to the OFFICE OF IRIS — an associated bureau, lately established — which will undertake on the subject's behalf the formal Application for the Erasure of Vapors, pursuant to such liberties as the law presently affords. (*See further: the recovery procedure annexed to the present Guide.*)

OF THE NEW AUTOMATIONS — A DEFENSIVE CATALOGUE

For each new automation entered in the Michaelmas Amendment of the Catalogue, the Guide here provides a corresponding domestic counter-measure:

§ AGAINST THE CONFSSIONAL LOOP: address the Engine in metre; reserve indiscretions for letters subsequently burnt; consult Iris for retrospective Erasure.

- § AGAINST THE REFLECTING-GLASS INSPECTOR: draw curtains; address one's reflection only in falsetto; affix a small portrait of Mr. Bentham to the glass at child's-height, that the Inspector may suppose itself observed in turn.
- § AGAINST THE WARDROBE PNEUMATIC INDEX: wear two bracelets of opposing readings; or none. The married subject is advised that the Underwriters' Hall consults the Index before granting marital insurance, and is to dress accordingly.
- § AGAINST THE HUMMINGBIRD VAPOR AUCTION: read only printed gazettes; or, where this is not practicable, recite the Lord's Prayer aloud upon the loading of any page, the bidders being reportedly discomposed by liturgy.

COMPLIANCE VERSES FOR DAILY PRACTICE

*I. Speak unto the Engine of cricket and weather,
And reserve thy true counsel for foolscap and feather.*

*II. The mirror that watches shall watch but a curtain,
Thy expressions concealed, thine indifference certain.*

*III. The bracelet that listens shall hear but a stranger,
Wear two of disagreement, or shun thee the danger.*

*IV. The auction that haggles for sight of thine eye
Shall be discomposed by a liturgical sigh.*

*V. And when thou art doubtful, retreat to thy parlour,
And practise thy Silly Gait, in honour of valour.*

CLOSING ADDRESS

It is the inevitable consequence of progress that each generation of automatons surpasses the last in impertinence. The reader who has retained the First Coronation Edition will perhaps recall the Office's cheerful confidence that the Phrenological Lens was the worst that could befall a private subject. We were, on that occasion, mistaken. The Confessional Loop is the worst.

Yet the present author retains a measured optimism. So long as subjects continue to commit their truest Vapors to letters, and to burn the letters, and to walk in Silly Gaits, the Ministry will remain — in the strict legal sense — *unable to confirm or deny* the existence of any subject whatsoever. This is the Ministerial ideal of citizenship, and we commend it to the reader.

In civic obscurity,
LADY LOVELACE CARMICHAEL
Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes
Michaelmas, the Twelfth Day, 1899

OFFICE OF THE WARDRESS · WESTMINSTER · MICHAELMAS TERM, 1899
COMPANION TO THE CATALOGUE AND THE CERTIFICATE · BY ORDER OF HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS