

of compelling captains of passenger vessels, no matter how expensive or annoying to owners or passengers the consequent delay may be, to keep off the coast in foggy weather. We have no desire to add to the grief and mortification of Captain Barrett, a gallant captain and excellent navigator, by pointing to the position of the "Castilian" at the time she found the land her crew were "carefully looking out for."

He says: "having no desire to spare myself and waste time by giving the Nova Scotia coast too wide a berth, I shaped my course so as to clear Seal Island by 16 miles. I could have kept further south and gone comfortably to bed."

But it, during the hazy weather of Sunday night last, the prow of the new Allan liner had been pointed seaward until the fog lifted, the people of Halifax and Portland would not now be regretting the loss of the magnificent steamer which, later in the season, would have been plying to our own port of Montreal.

It only adds to the surprise of those who know the coast of Nova Scotia, to be told that the disaster to the "Castilian" was doubtless due to the exceptionally strong current, or indraught, running into the Bay of Fundy on Sunday night last. The coasting steamer, "Halifax," reports this well-known and, therefore, not treacherous current to have been most marked, and her captain, sympathizing with a fellow-mariner, says it was "exceptionally" strong. Even so, surely by this time every one who has ever crossed the Atlantic knows that the surface of the ocean is furrowed by currents, whose direction it is of great importance the navigator should know. These currents are not peculiar to the coast of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but they are particularly noticeable in the waters of the Bay of Fundy, towards which, during her passage from Portland, the ill-fated "Castilian" was evidently carried by the indraught on what has proved to be her first and last voyage. Was the existence of this exceptionally strong current so apparent to the skipper of the small steamer "Halifax," unknown to the captain of the great ocean liner which early on Sunday morning last attempted to find an overland route to her destined harbour?

The frequency of these disasters is apt to engender distrust, and to lead timid travellers to question their safety even when committed to the care of experienced navigators in whom freedom from disaster would sometimes seem to beget a contempt for fog, cross currents and all other perils of the sea. The loss of the "Labrador," the "Oswestry" (stranded in the fog at Dunlough Bay, Ireland, also on Sunday morning last), and the "Castilian," in quick succession, may well make owners thoughtful, and their patrons somewhat nervous.

It was Charles Dickens who said that, long after the novelty of his first Atlantic voyage had worn off, a steamship at night never ceased to have a peculiar interest and charm for him. He found delight in the gloom through which the great black mass holds its

direct and certain course; the rushing water, plainly heard, but dimly seen; the broad, white, glistening track that follows in the vessel's wake; the men on the look-out forward, who would be scarcely visible against the dark sky but for their blotting out some score of glistening stars. But if the gifted English novelist when rhapsodizing upon the melancholy sighing of the wind through block, and rope, and chain; and the gleaming forth of light from the glass about the steamer's decks had been suddenly startled by the cry "Breakers ahead!" he would have wanted to know, as many even of those who love the sea do now, why the frequently fog-bound coast on both sides of the Atlantic

Hard and obstinate

As is a rock amidst the raging floods,

'Gainst which a ship, of succour desolate,

Doth suffer wreck, both of herself and goods,

does not serve as a warning to the best of our navigators, and caution them not to approach even the most accessible of harbours, or the least dangerous of coasts, in hazy weather.

The travelling public have the right to demand greater caution on the part of owners and captains than has been displayed during the past twelve months, and we trust that marine underwriters will give to this important matter of navigation in thick weather, at least when approaching land, the closest attention. Navigation, the art of conducting ships from one port to another, including, more especially, the method of determining a ship's position, course, and distance passed over, has been reduced to an almost perfect science by the use of modern instruments, and an improved knowledge of the principles of geometry and astronomy. But the most skillful navigator is apt to drift into danger if he does not heed the advice of a cautious old skipper who said: "When upon approaching the coast, you run into thick weather, turn about and stand out to sea until it clears. Don't look for land in a fog."

UNDER THE GROUND.

The first wires to go underground in the South were placed beneath the earth on Carondelet street in New Orleans recently.

They were telephone wires, belonging to the People's Telephone Company. A big reel, coiled with a lead-case cable of three hundred wires, stood at the corner of Perdido and Carondelet streets with its axles resting on "jacks," and shortly after eleven o'clock the end was made fast to the rope which already ran through the conduit, the reel began to turn and underground wires in New Orleans were an actuality.

This is the beginning of the immense work which will be followed by the other telephone and electric light companies, and marks the inauguration of a new era in the progress of the city of New Orleans. In all, the People's Company will place underground some thirty miles of cables—main cables, which will mean 9,000 miles of individual wires, for each main cable contains an average of 300 wires.