AN OVERCOAT TRAVELLING.

A friend tells us a story of a drummer who used very keen strategy in a successful effort to oblige his employer to present him with a new overcoat. He was out on the road when the first cold snap set in, and to his dismay found that he numbered not an overcoat among his goods and chattels. In this dilemma he went to a dealer, purchased a good coat and charged it up in his expense account. When he returned from the trip the proprietor of the house looked over the items, and at once summoned the tourist to his presence.

"Jones," said he, "what does this item mean? Overcoat $38."

"Means what it says, I guess. Old Probs slung a chunk o' Arctic weather at me down in Posey the other day, and I thought it might not appear in very bad taste to hang an overcoat on this beautifully moulded frame of mine. Sensible, eh?"

With impatient gesture the merchant replied: "Oh, well, the house cannot be expected to keep you in clothing. I will charge this up to you."

"All right, governor, charge her up,"

When he came in from his next trip he turned in his orders and expense account, and after the head of the house had examined the latter, he asked:

"Do you see an overcoat in there this trip?"

"No," said the merchant, "this appears to be O. K."

"He may not see it," said the drummer to one of the clerks as he walked out, "but it's there all the same. Yes sir, the overcoat is there; but it's scattered and travelling under a number of aliases—travelling *incog.* as it were.

PROGRESS OF THE TELEPHONE.

The development of the telephone system has been almost as silent and little noticed as it is extraordinary. It is but some half dozen years since it has been in practicial existence, but statistics recently published in France relating to telephonic systems throughout the world give some idea of its progress. The compilation is necessarily somewhat incomplete as regards small and distant places, but the value of the main results is not thereby much impaired. It is in the United States, of cou: se, where telephony is less encumbered by hampering legislation than in Europe, that the development has been greatest. New York counts 4,060 subscribers; Chicago, 2,726; Cincinnati, 1,880; Boston 1,325; San Francisco, 1,300; etc. There are now in the United States more than 100,000 subscribers, and certain small towns, with populations less than 1,000 have yet 30 to 50 telephonic subscribers, some even more. Canada adds to this a very sensible increase.

As regards the absolute number of subscribers Paris comes third, after New York and Chicago; it had on October 1st no fewer than 2,422 subscribers, while London had only 1,600; Amsterdam, 700; Stockholm, 672; Vienna, 600; Berlin, 581; Brussels, 450; Turin, 410; Copenhagen, 400; St. Petersburg, 145; Alexandria 118; and Mexico 300; while the annual subscription is 600 francs in Paris, 500 francs in London, and 400 francs in the provincial towns of France, it descends to 300 francs and 200 francs in Belgium, 135 francs and 130 francs in Italy and only 120 francs in Switzerland. A calculation of the ratio of the number of subscribers to that of inhabitants for each town reveals a goodly number of small towns in the United States where there is a telephone for every twenty inhabitants; in Chicago the proportion is about one in 200; in New York, one in 5(0; in Brussels, one in 800; in Paris, about one in 1,000; in Berlin, one in 2,000; in London, one in 3,000; and in St. Petersburg only one in 4,000.

By the above it will be seen that England has been very backward in availing herself of the advantages offered by this very extraordinary invention. This is due, however, less to a lack of appreciation of its great merits than to the fact that the government has hitherto thrown every possible impediment in the way of its development. The authorities there some years ago bought up all the telegraphic companies operating within the United Kingdom, combining the telephone with the postal system. When, however, the newly discovered invention was introduced, the authorities declared it to be substantially but another form of telegraphy. and refused its free use to the public, carrying out its hostility by protracted litigation among other measures of impediment. It is understood, however, that this antagonism has now ceased, as the next annual statistics are showing so far as Great Britain is concerned.—*U. S. Economist.*