

Telephone District  
bution.

AN English scientific expert has reported upon the distribution of telephones in different countries in Europe, on which is based an article in *The Literary Digest*, N. Y. It is surprising to find the system most extended in Norway, Luxemburg, Switzerland, and Denmark. Norway has a telephone to every 144 inhabitants, while Great Britain has only one to every 636, France one to 1,332, Austria one to 1,640, Italy 1 to 2,530, and in Russia there is only one instrument for every 13,102 of inhabitants. In Luxemburg the price of a telephone is \$10, which covers everything, the consequence of this cheapness being that the whole of the Grand Duchy has a telephone service. In other parts of Europe a system has been established for bringing the villages into a circuit of telephones, a development along the lines of which there will ere long be great advances made in Canada. The lowering of rates expands the demand for telephones, so that companies can get better results from moderate prices and liberal conditions, than from excessive rates and irritating restrictions.

## Insanity Statistics.

REPORTS on the Provincial insane asylums show an increase in the year from 2,663 patients to 2,731. How far such increase is owing to the increasing facilities for placing mentally disordered persons in a public asylum is worthy of attention. To such facilities, and the greater and increasing readiness of relatives to relieve themselves of the task of caring for this class, there is reason to believe a considerable increase is due in the number of asylum patients.

Physicians are becoming more and more in the habit of taking the sick away from private houses for treatment in hospitals. Cases must be known to most persons of the removal of patients to public institutions for medical care, which only a few years ago would never have been dreamt of as requiring such a separation from the home. Of our own knowledge we have cognizance of persons of large income, capable of securing the best advice and nursing at home, having no special need of hospital appliances, who were removed to a private ward in such institution, chiefly for the purpose of securing the household from the interruptions incident to the presence of sickness. Census statistics give the number of insane under treatment in public asylums in 1891 in Great Britain and Ireland as 115,641, being an average of 31.47 for each 1,000 of inhabitants. In 1871 the number was 73,888, equal to an average of 24.03 per 1,000. The increase in ten years of 7.44 per 1,000, which is 23 per cent., would be alarming if true. We, however, are thoroughly satisfied that such an increase in the number of insane persons in the Old Country has not taken place, but that the increase shown above can be fully accounted for by the modern practice of using asylums so generally by all classes for the care of patients who in former days would have been kept at home. Not far from this city recently, a young man was desired by his physician to be sent to an asylum; on hearing of

this, his sister said, "No, doctor, he shall stay at home; and if needful I will devote myself entirely to his care," so her love stopped one more being added to the number of asylum patients. In the case named the symptoms of brain disorder were quickly alleviated, and the sufferer will be thoroughly convalescent far sooner than if he had been incarcerated in a public institution, the very surroundings of which would probably have made his permanent detention a necessity. Statistics in such matters need to be taken with a grain of salt, as they do not always so present the entire factors of the question as to justify a decided judgment being formed.

An Electric Fire In  
a Theatre

A FEW nights ago the switch-board in the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, burst into flames, threatening that terrible calamity—a theatre panic. The auditorium became pitch dark, yet no one moved. The flames were quickly put out, and the lighting restored in a minute or two. Over this incident the *Journal of Gas Lighting* makes merry, as it reflects upon the claims of electricity to be a safer illuminant than gas. The incident is certainly another illustration of the danger of defective electrical apparatus, a danger which will certainly disappear as more perfect methods are devised and adopted for the installation of an electric lighting system. There is, however, this vital advantage on the side of the newer light, electricity may start a fire, but it does not feed its offspring, as it usually puts itself out by creating a fire, as it did at the Prince of Wales Theatre. Gas, on the other hand, when it starts a fire, keeps on adding fuel to the flames, and, as firemen only know too well, many a fire is made difficult to extinguish because inflammable gas is being poured out in such a volume as to create intense heat and conditions which are exceedingly dangerous. When the fire occurred at the London theatre the audience kept still, owing, no doubt, to universal confidence felt in the safety of a building lighted by electricity. To extend and to render such confidence justifiable should be the policy of all interested in electrical enterprises.

New Class of Dominion  
Notes.

IN accordance with suggestions made a length of time ago, the Government has just issued a class of Dominion notes intended for the exclusive use of bankers in their larger transactions with each other and with the Finance Department. These notes are not negotiable by the public, indeed they cannot fall into the hands of others than the bankers and the Government officials for whose convenience and protection they are issued. Should one or more get astray in transmission, it would be quite valueless to any one but the rightful owner. The new notes for \$5,000 have a portrait of the late Sir John A. Macdonald, the \$1,000 ones that of the Queen, and those of \$500 of the Marquis of Lorne. Their chief use will be in settling Clearing House balances, in the payment of which those notes will obviate all risk from a parcel of them being lost or stolen.