

(3.) *Cables in the Atlantic Ocean.*

In order to avoid the shallow seas along the west coast of Africa, Spain, Portugal and France, it is proposed that the cable should extend from Cape Town to Bermuda, touching at St. Helena, Ascension and Barbadoes as mid-ocean stations. At Bermuda a connection would be formed with the existing cable to Halifax, and at that point with the Canadian and trans-Atlantic lines, or a cable could be laid from Bermuda direct to England.

Much prominence has been given to a proposal to connect England with the Cape by a line of cable touching at Gibraltar, Sierra Leone or Bathurst, Ascension and St. Helena. I pointed out in my letter of last December to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that there are great objections to the northern half of that route, as "the cable, of necessity, would be laid for some distance in shallow seas, where it would be exposed to injury from various causes, and where, too, the agent of an unfriendly nation, or, indeed, an evil-disposed fisherman, would have it in his power to destroy the cable with ease, totally unobserved. For hundreds of miles it would be exposed to such risks."

The route now proposed from Ascension to Great Britain is certainly less direct, but the cable would be much less in jeopardy, and to this may be added the advantage which would result in bringing the West Indian possessions within the Imperial telegraphic circuit.

In order that some estimate may be formed of the cost of such an undertaking, I submit the following approximate distances which each group of cable would require to cover:—

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| (1.) In the Pacific Ocean, from Vancouver to Australia and New Zealand..... | 7,150 knots.      |
| (2.) In the Indian Ocean, from Western Australia to South Africa—           |                   |
| Main line .....   | 6,500             |
| Branch to Singapore ....  | 1,100             |
| "          Colombo .. ..  | 1,500             |
|   | ———— 9,100 knots. |