

CABLE AND TELEGRAPH

SOMETHING ABOUT THE NET-WORK
OF WIRES AROUND THE WORLD.

How the Work First Got a Start in China

—Getting a Line Across Australia—Description of the Work of Construction—

Some of the Lines Now Operating.

It is commerce and competition which explain, as a rule, the extraordinary system of land and cable lines. They have been laid to meet the demands of business, and for the most part a business already assured. Not that there are no examples of that admirable daring which, foreseeing a chance, makes its venture, preferring to create a demand rather than to follow one. A remarkable case of just such a venture was the laying of the first cable along the Chinese shore in 1871.

Russia had finished the land line across Siberia—the line which, it will be remembered, was intended to be part of the route so long projected into the United States by Bering Straits. But the American end of the project had failed, and she found she had an interminable stretch of line across her barren steppes and now had nothing to attach the end to. In fault of anything better to do with the straggling terminus, it was carried to Vladivostock.

The Northern Telegraph Company of Denmark saw the possibility of utilizing this end for a European communication with China and Japan. Not that China and Japan had expressed any desire for such a union. The wily Danes took care not to ask permission, but slipped the land end of their cables into shore in inoffensive drain pipes, and quietly made their connections until they had a cable running from Hong Kong to Amoy, Gotz-laff, Woosung, Nagasaki (Japan) and connecting with the land line at Vladivostock.

When the Chinese wakened up to the presence of the cable it was too late to object. They simply professed themselves utterly skeptical of its usefulness and refused to have anything to do with it. However, they soon had a practical demonstration of its capabilities. An Oriental, more bold than his compatriots, resolved to act on the price of rice; telegraphed down to Shanghai from Peking, and to buy up a quantity. He did so, and made a big sum. Soon after a lottery drawing came off in Peking, in which many residents of Shanghai were interested. The lucky numbers were telegraphed down, but the majority of the holders felt it unorthodox to trust to the impious Western contrivance which disclaimed time and space, two things which the Imperial Dragon himself had always respected, and they let their skepticism go so far that they sold their tickets for a song to more progressive gamblers. The next week when the recognized post arrived the report of the telegraph was confirmed. The new contrivance could not have had a more impressive advertisement.

The success of the Danish company in laying its cable along the coast induced it to attempt to run wires inland. It made a successful beginning, but was stopped oddly enough. There are no burial grounds in China, each family making a sepulchre for its dead upon its own premises. Dead ancestors are so revered that a shadow upon the grave is looked upon as an insult which must not be passed by. Now, when the Danes began to put up poles for their wires the shadows were sure, at some time

of the day, to fall on the grave of some Celestial ancestor. There were constant disputes between workmen and natives, and the enterprise was seriously interrupted for a time. However, the convenience of the telegraph became at last so evident to the Chinese that the Government decided to go on with the work; and since, even the shadows on the ancestors' tombs have not prevented the men from setting up poles.

It was the year before the Eastern Extension carried its cable to Hong Kong that it concluded to go on to Australia, on condition that one or all of the colonies combined would lay a land line across the continent to meet it. The offer was accepted by the South Australian Government. This colony then numbered 170,000 inhabitants; it was in debt heavily for railroad and telegraph lines in the settled parts of its territory, but it bravely set aside the money for the new undertaking.

The work was begun early in 1870. The history of telegraph does not include another so dramatic chapter. All but 200 or 300 miles of the 2,000 from Adelaide on the South to Port Darwin, the cable terminus, on the north, was through a land of either the worst reputation or utterly unknown, save from the reports of the one explorer who, after infinite risk and hardship, had traversed it nearly 10 years before.

The expedition was to be baffled by nothing, however. It carted every inch of its wire, most of its poles, all of its supplies, across a country often waterless and so hot that a thermometer burst and pork melted in the brine. The men saw their cattle die of hunger and thirst. They were forced literally to crawl through miles upon miles of scrub of the most exasperating character. The natives harassed them constantly, stealing their supplies, rigging up their insulators as spear heads, to use when the native boomerangs were not up to the occasion, and threatening their finished work. The northern portion of the work was once abandoned, so hopeless did it seem. Again terrific floods drove the expedition entirely from the field. In spite of the loss and discouragement, the line was finished in two years and a half, and after October 21, 1872, the London papers were publishing daily despatches from Australia. On November 15, 1872, a grand banquet was held in London, celebrating the completion of the work, and at it was read a telegram of thanks in response to one of congratulation which had been sent to Adelaide just two hours before.

"M. Casimir-Terrier."

President Casimir-Perier has a strongly developed jaw, a look of determination and something of the aggressive appearance of a bull-dog. A clever caricaturist took advantage of the resemblance in appearance and name to portray him as "M. Casimir-Terrier," and the caricature has "caught on." Far from lowering him in the eyes of the public esteem, however, it has greatly increased his prestige as the uncompromising watchdog of the Republic.

No Use.

Kashem—Why don't you put a check to that fellow who is everlastingly dunning you?

Bilker—What'd be the use? The bank wouldn't pay it.—Buffalo Courier.

Serious Objection.

She—Do you see any real objection to these living pictures.

He—Yes; they always are given in houses not half big enough to hold the people anxious to see them.

Five Life Chapters.

Gerhardt Hauptmann's "Die Weber" is said to be one of the most impressive representations of real life ever seen in New York. It takes a strong stomach to digest some of the stupendously strong scenes in the drama.

Yet it is a marvelous work. Play, you cannot call it. It is, rather, five chapters taken out of the book of life. Such a book! it makes one shudder to think that Hauptmann has taken his scenes from nature—that such hunger, such poverty, such soul anguish can possibly exist within the pale of civilization. We have, however, the author's word for it that he has simply transplanted to the stage an all too common sample of the sort of existence led by the Silesian peasants.

Sporting Notes.

Again Miss Rose Mosenthim has defeated Tillie Ashley at St. Louis, and she is now champion female sculler of the United States.

That was an enthusiastic gathering in the Broadway theatre the other night when the Giants were presented with the Temple Cup. Gothams big nine will make a strong bid for the pennant next season.

A sale of horses in training, the property of Messrs. McCafferty & Wishard and P. Lorillard, took place in the paddock at Morris Park the other day. Judge Morrow, a Brooklyn Handicap winner, brought the top price of \$1,400, going to S. S. Howland. Kenwood, at one time a stake winner, sold for \$5.

Wheeling Time.

And now the Ziegler, the California wonder, holds the mile flying start record, having clipped 3-4 of a second off John S. Johnson's 1.50 3-4 record. With the record at 1.50 flat it is no wonder that some person bobs up and asks "What next?"

An Interesting Experiment.

A vessel containing a certain white powder is placed upon the table, where the operator advances, waving his wand and uttering some magic words coined by himself, when lo! of a sudden the room is lighted up with a brilliant light, so effulgent that it dims the eyes of the spectators. The secret is this: The powder is composed of equal weights of loaf sugar and chlorate of potash, separately reduced to fine powder, and then well fixed together. This is placed in a cup, and when the powder is touched with the least drop of sulphuric acid it will instantly burst into a flame. The end of the glass rod should be dipped in the acid immediately before use.

He Got It Straight.

A very vain preacher having delivered a sermon in the hearing of Rev. Robert Hall, pressed him, with a mixture of self-complacency and indelicacy, to state what he thought of the sermon. Mr. Hall remained silent for some time, hoping that his silence would be rightly interpreted; but this only caused the question to be pressed with greater earnestness. At length Mr. Hall admitted, "There was one very fine passage." "I am rejoiced to hear you say so. Pray, sir, which was it?" "Why, sir, it was the passage from the pulpit to the vestry."

Hard-Times Topics Tabooed.

A society among merchants and traders out west has been formed in which the members agree that they will not hold conversations about hard times, dull trade, small orders, slow collections, low prices of wheat, etc. The idea is an excellent one.