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THE FATHER OF THE OCEAN CABLE.

Twenty-six years ago, in mid-summer, the greatest steamship in the world was ploughing her way slowly across the blue rollers of the Atlantic, westward. The "Great Eastern" had left Valencia, Ireland, on July 13, 1866, carrying the Atlantic cable. On the 27th of that month she steamed into Heart's Content harbor, her task completed and the cable laid that united the Old and New Worlds. On the Sunday morning following, a message of thanks to God for the successful accomplishment of the great work was read in thousands of Christian churches in Europe and America. That message was sent from Heart's Content, by Cyrus West Field, who had throughout been the moving spirit in the enterprise. On the twelfth day of July, 1892, twenty-six years later, he passed away after a severe illness, at his home in New York city.

The story of this man's life, now closed, is one full of interest and significance. He was born at Stockbridge, Mass., November 30th, 1819. His father was the Rev. David Dudley Field, a clergyman of eminence, a citizen of Stockbridge, Mass., and who died there in 1867 at the age of eighty-six. Cyrus was the third son of the family. He received his early education in his native town, and subsequently became a clerk in New York. In the course of a few years, he had so prospered that he became the proprietor of a large mercantile establishment. In 1854, he was induced to turn his attention to the subject of Ocean Telegraphy, and was instrumental in procuring a charter from the Legislature of Newfoundland, granting the exclusive right for fifty years to use a telegraph from New York to that colony, and thence to Europe. All are now so familiar with the use of the telegraph across the ocean that they are apt to forget, perhaps, how recent a thing it is. It is only thirty-eight years ago that the project was first conceived.

On March 10th, 1854, the commencement of what is known as "deep sea telegraphy" took place. On that day was signed the agreement to organize the New York and Newfoundland Telegraph Company, the object of which was to establish a line of telegraphic communication between America and Newfoundland. The company was formed in Mr. Cyrus Field's house in Gramercy Park, New York, and it was composed of six individuals: Peter Cooper, Mr. Moses Taylor, Mr. Cyrus West Field, Mr. Marshall O. Roberts, Mr. Chandler White, and Wilson G. Hunt. Mr. David Dudley Field, Mr. Cyrus Field's eldest brother, was present as the legal ad-

viser of the Company, and afterwards went to St. John's to obtain the charter. Some small efforts had been previously attempted in Europe to transmit messages under water, first across the river Rhine, a half a mile in width, and next across the British Channel. This American Company, however, was the first to propose to span the ocean. As soon as the line had been completed between New York and Newfoundland, Mr. Cyrus Field went to London, and in 1856 he was successful in organizing the Atlantic Telegraphic Company. The first attempt to lay the cable was made in 1857, but the ships had sailed no farther than 300 miles from the Irish coast when the cable broke and the expedition had to return.

tempt to lay it, and again the expedition returned to England almost in despair. One more effort was resolved upon, and it was successful, for the cable stretched from shore to shore, and messages were exchanged between Europe and America. For only three weeks, however, could the cable be used, and not until eight years after, in 1866, when two new cables had been manufactured, one of which, after being paid out 1,200 miles, was broken in mid-ocean but was afterward "fished" up and carried to the shore of Newfoundland with success achieved.

It is needless to say that in all these efforts, at which a glance only has been taken, Mr. Cyrus Field took a prominent part. It is admitted by all competent

been resolved to lay down the cable. At a quarter past ten the guests took their places in the dining-room where the original compact was formed, and their host addressed them briefly, reciting the story of his struggles in perfecting the great cable project, and testifying to his unwavering confidence in God's goodness in bringing it to final triumph. At that time he said:

"Twenty-five years ago there was not an ocean telegraph in the world. A few short lines had been laid across the Channel from England to the Continent, but all were in shallow water. Even science hardly dared to conceive the possibility of sending human intelligence through the abysses of the ocean. But when we struck out to cross the Atlantic, we had to lay a cable over 2,000 miles long, in water over two miles deep. That great success gave an immense impulse to submarine telegraphy, then in its infancy, but which has since grown till it has stretched out its fingers tipped with fire into all the waters of the globe. Its lines have gone into all the earth, and its words unto the end of the world. To-day there are over 70,000 miles of cable crossing the seas and the oceans, and as if it were not enough to have messages sent with the speed of the lightning, they can be sent in opposite directions at the same moment. Who can measure the effect of this swift intelligence—passing to and fro? Already it regulates the markets of the world; but better still is the new relation into which it brings the different kindreds of mankind. Nations are made enemies by their ignorance of each other. A better acquaintance leads to a better understanding; the sense of nearness, the relation of neighborhood, awakens the feelings of brotherhood. Is it not a sign that a better age is coming, when along the ocean beds strewn with the wrecks of war now glide the messages of peace? But life is passing, and perhaps the completing the circuit of the globe is to be left to other hands. Many of our old companions have fallen and we must soon give place to our successors. But though we shall pass away, it is a satisfaction to have been able to do something that shall remain when we are gone.

When completed, the first message flashed through the cable was, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to-ward men."

In a recent article on this one great episode of his life, Mr. Field graphically described his position and feelings during the long series of experiments in cable-laying. So disastrous had been the result of the first experiments, financially, that even his



CYRUS W. FIELD.

The following year the attempt was renewed. The British Government supplied a war vessel, the "Agamemnon," and the United States Government a fine frigate, "Niagara," for the enterprise. It was agreed that the two vessels should meet in mid-Atlantic, each carrying one-half the cable. These were then to be joined, and the splice being lowered, the English vessel was to sail for England and the "Niagara" for America, each vessel paying out the cable as she proceeded. Before the two vessels had reached mid-ocean a storm arose, and the English "Agamemnon" had a narrow escape from foundering. When at last the cable was joined, on July 29th, 1858, it was broken several times in the at-

authorities that the success which crowned the work at last was in a great measure due to his unflagging energy. It has been stated that while the plan was in progress he crossed the Atlantic more than fifty times. Congress gave him a gold medal in commemoration of his successful enterprise and he also received a Grand Medal at the Paris Exhibition.

Perhaps no scene in Mr. Field's life will better display the esteem in which he was held by his friends than one which took place about thirteen years ago. On March 10th, 1879, Mr. Field issued invitations to a large number of gentlemen to a reception at his house, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day on which it had