

of overhead wires for motors of electric cars. So that, in addition to the rights of abutting owners, we have controversies continually arising respecting the variance in interest of the companies which supply electricity for the various purposes above referred to. In some cities further questions arise in reference to cable railways, and, in some places, the use of steam motors adds another discordant element.

The conclusion arrived at with reference to the question of interference with the use of the street in any of the ways above mentioned is, in the opinion of Mr. Keasbey, the author of the work before us, a question of fact to be determined in each case; the real question being, as he states, not whether poles and wires trespass upon what may be technically called the land of the abutting owner, but whether the use of them and of electric cars does in fact interfere with the free and convenient use of the street in connection with the land, or diminish the value of the land by changing its relation to the street, the landowner having no absolute veto upon the planting of the poles by reason of his technical ownership of the soil, but his right to compensation depending upon whether the poles are so constructed or so placed as to affect his free access to his property, and, in the case of electric cars, whether they are so run as to be inconsistent with the free and safe use of the street from and to his land for other street uses.

The nature of electricity is at present but little known, and controversies are constantly arising between those employing this agency in different ways and for different purposes, as developed by new combinations of circumstances and properties in the current not hitherto known to science. Some of the most common of these have arisen by the interference with telephones by electric wires for the use of electric cars. As we are told, the wires do not touch one another; but electricity operates at a distance, and currents are carried through the earth as well as along the wires, so that when new wires are strung along the streets, parallel with telephone wires, carrying the stronger currents necessary for light and motive power, they affect the business of the telephone companies very seriously, and there have been, from time to time, fierce fights in many American cities between those using electricity for telephones and those others using it for lighting purposes or for the purposes of motive power.

The legal position, as between themselves, of companies supplying electricity for various purposes has not yet been definitely settled by the courts. As the author suggests, difficulties are more likely to be settled through the ingenuity of inventors than by the efforts of lawyers and judges. But, he says, "it is quite certain that public convenience will demand that the streets shall be used for all the electric currents that may be required, and that some way will be found by which this can be done. In the meantime, it is the duty of the courts to protect existing property from unnecessary injury without needlessly obstructing the application of such a valuable force as electricity for new uses for the public benefit. It is certainly true, as the courts generally have held, that no one mode of public service has the right to monopoly of the earth or the air in the line of the streets for the use of electricity, and the power of injunction will only be