

"With pleasure, sir."

"I have missed some important letters that I looked for from New York and the West. I wish to communicate with my correspondents at once. Will you please tell me where I can find the telegraph office?"

"The telegraph office! I don't understand you, sir"

"I wish to send messages to my friends at those points."

"Well, sir, I know of no other way to send them than through the post-office here."

"Do you mean to say that there is no telegraph line from here to New York?"

"My dear sir, what do you mean by a telegraph line?"

"A telegraph line—a line of wire on which I can send messages by electricity."

"I fear something is wrong with you, sir," said the gentleman gravely. "No such thing exists. No such thing can exist."

"Nonsense!" said Ephraim, waxing indignant. "How do you suppose the afternoon papers to-day will get the quotations of the Liverpool markets of to-day? How will the brokers learn to-day the price of securities at the meeting of the London Stock Exchange this morning?"

"You are speaking very wildly, sir," said the gentleman, stepping close to Ephraim and using a low tone, while the crowd laughed. "You must be more careful, or persons will regard you as insane."

"Insane! Why? Because I tell you, what everybody knows, that we get cable news from Europe every day."

"Cable news! cable news! What does the old fool mean?" shouted the crowd.

"What do I mean!" exclaimed Ephraim, in a passion; "I mean that you are a pack of idiots for pretending to believe that there is no such thing as a telegraph, and no such thing as a telegraph cable to Europe."

The crowd sent up a shout of derisive laughter and rushed at him as if to hustle him and use him roughly. The gentleman to whom he had spoken seized him by the arm and hurried him away. When they had turned the corner, the man stopped and said to Ephraim,—

"You appear to be a sane man, although you speak so strangely. Let me warn you to be more careful in the future."