

eighty miles; one from England to Holland, one hundred and twenty miles; and several others, varying in length. At the end of the year 1855 the North American lines were laid as far as Newfoundland, and in Europe the lines were completed as far as the west coast of Ireland. The practicability of uniting the telegraph, by means of a submarine cable between the old and new worlds, had for some time engaged the thoughts of some of the most enterprising men of science, and in 1856 Mr. Cyrus Field left New York for London, empowered by his associates to deal with the extensive concessions possessed by the New York, Newfoundland and London Telegraph Company for the coast of Newfoundland and other rights in Nova Scotia.

In October of that year, the Atlantic Telegraph Company was registered and the capital subscribed. The British Government placed at the disposal of the Company the battleship *Agamemnon* and the United States Government the steam frigate *Niagara*.

On the 5th August, 1857, the shore end was secured in Valentia, Ireland, and on the 7th the squadron sailed. The *Niagara* commenced paying out the cable very slowly, but on the 11th the cable broke and was lost in two thousand fathoms of water, two hundred and eighty miles from Valentia. This loss proved fatal to the first attempt to lay the Atlantic Cable.

Again on the 10th June, 1858, the *Agamemnon* and *Niagara* left Plymouth. It was decided that instead of landing a shore end at Valentia, the ships should proceed to a point midway between Valentia and Newfoundland; there splice the cable, turn their bows east and west and proceed to their destinations. On the 13th the ships met in the midst of the Atlantic; spliced the cable and sailed away from each other, but after paying out one hundred and forty-six miles of cable it suddenly snapped, and the vessels had to return to Ireland for a new supply of cable.