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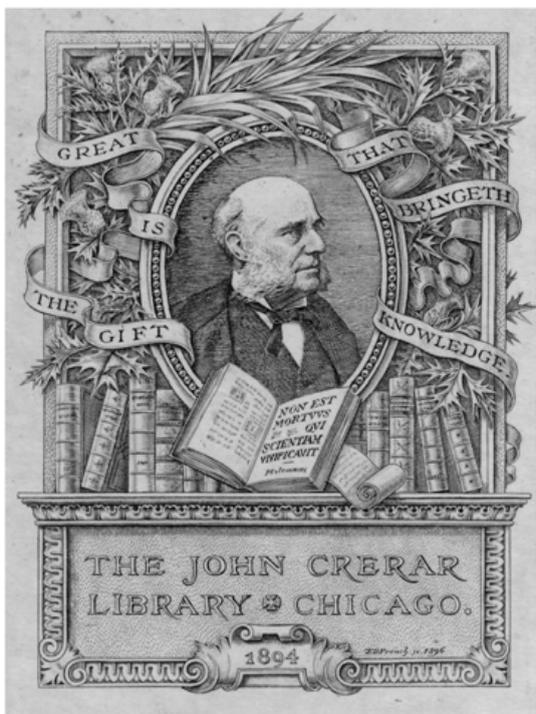
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A SKETCH  
OF THE  
CANADIAN  
TELEGRAPH SYSTEM,  
ITS  
RISE AND DEVELOPMENT.

TORONTO:

RODDY & NURSE, PRINTERS, 52 ADELAIDE STREET EAST.

1883.



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## A RETROSPECT.

“ \* \* \* Force whole regions in despite  
O' geography, to change their site.  
Make former times shake hands with latter,  
And that which was before, come after.”

*Hudibras.*

I N a single room, on what is now Front Street in this city, with a solitary operator sitting on his high stool and laboriously spelling out from his register paper the messages that came over his single wire from Buffalo or from Montreal, the telegraph business of this city and district was done. This was in 1849, and the Montreal Telegraph Company had been founded July 28th, 1847, during which year it had managed to construct single wire lines from that city to Quebec and to Toronto.

The line had been opened from Toronto to Port Hope on Tuesday, 20th July, 1847; to Cobourg on the 21st; to Kingston on the 24th, and to Montreal on August 3rd. The telegraph office at Brockville was opened on August 25th, and that at Belleville on August 27th. Moving eastward, the Quebec office was opened on October 2nd, and that at Three Rivers on Nov. 9th. It is worth noting, that the first message sent from Montreal was addressed to the late Mr. J. H. Daly, at Kingston, where he at the time had a hotel.

The receipts for August of the first year, for the entire line, averaged £7 per day; for September, £9; for October, £16; for November, £18; but decreased in the month of December to £13. Fifty dollars a day was the average then; thirty years later it was seventeen hundred and fifty. The line from Toronto to Quebec was built by Messrs. Livingston & Wells. In the same year (1847) these contractors had also built a line from Buffalo to Toronto for the “Toronto Telegraph Company.” On this latter line No. 8 copper wire was used, but not being found

strong enough, it was afterwards replaced by No. 9 galvanized iron wire. From the first, galvanized iron wire had been used from Toronto to Quebec.

By 1851 there were fourteen offices on the line between Toronto and Quebec. The following were the operators in some of them : Quebec, George W. Purkis ; Three Rivers, Chas. K. Ogden ; Montreal, William Smith, George Smith ; Cornwall, G. H. Hickey ; Prescott, Isaac D. Purkis ; Kingston, H. D. Morehouse ; Toronto, H. P. Dwight. The other offices were Brockville, Belleville, Cobourg, Port Hope, Bowmanville, Oshawa, where Dr. Irwin was in charge, and Whitby.

Mr. H. P. DWIGHT, the General Manager of the whole system of telegraphs in Canada now operated by the Great North-Western Telegraph Company, was that solitary operator we have spoken of ; and it was possible for him to report, in his *resume* made to Head Office at Montreal, that he had copied with his own hand every telegram which came to Toronto, and with his own hand despatched every message over the wires from Toronto, during the whole of the year 1849. And he has related, with a young operator's pride, how he carefully read every message over *twice* from the paper, to be certain that he had copied it correctly. Those were the old days ; for verily a telegraph company which would now consume in delivery as much time as that practice implied, would be censured by every stock-broker and criticised by every newspaper from Windsor to Cornwall. The old days, did we say ? *Juventus mundi*, rather ; since we of to-day are the "ancients of the earth," and inheritors of all those marvels of the past age which makes life better worth the living. Let us not be irreverent about the old days, therefore.

But the business world moves faster now ; eats, drinks, bargains, works, travels, thinks faster. Cowper's "helps to read" were not more necessary in his day than are now the appliances and helps to write—the phonographer and the typewriter. One-thousand-eight-hundred-and-forty-nine, however, did not consider itself by any means slow. We had railways then, though not to every man's door, as to-day. We had steamboats, and the steamboat was of much consequence ; and we had, besides the Montreal Company, the Toronto, Hamilton,

Niagara and St. Catharines Electro-Magnetic Telegraph Company, whose share certificates of £10 each bore, as the one before us testifies, the name of T. D. Harris, President, and Percy R. Marling, Secretary. There have been, since then, other telegraph schemes launched: the Provincial, for one; and the International, of which a "pattern of all the Border State virtues," Snow by name, was the head and front. But these never amounted to much. The Dominion Telegraph Company, established about 1871, attained a much greater extent, having 490 offices and about 9,000 miles of wire in 1880; but the collapse of its United States connections, the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph, which was bought up some ten years later by the Western Union for \$8,000,000, kept the Dominion Company "on the ragged edge" until it was leased to the Company last named.

The telegraph was a luxury thirty years ago; people fought shy of it who had not considerable mercantile interests. It had not "come home to men's business and bosoms," as it does to-day. From here to Montreal a message cost 3s. 9d. Halifax currency, and to Quebec 4s. 6d., or ninety cents, so that commonplace matters could not be wired about at these prices. The firms which in those days used the wires the most largely were Augustus Heward, of Montreal; F. H. & J. O. Heward, of Toronto; Hooker & Holton, steamboat owners, Hon. Luther Hamilton Holton being the head of the firm; McPherson & Crane, forwarders, of which Mr., now Senator, McPherson was the principal. In 1853 the tariff from Queenston to Quebec was 2s. 6d., and from Toronto to Chicago 5s. 3d., or \$1.05 for ten words.

Compare, however, the telegraphic performances of that day with the present. In this city, at that time, it was possible for one operator to handle all the business, keep the books and the cash, and even address the messages, which one lad sufficed to deliver, often tramping as far as the Garrison Common, forenoon, noon and night. To-day there are required in the Central Office at Toronto sixty operators for day service, about a fourth of whom are of the gentler sex, and a staff of from fifteen to twenty at night, with a small regiment of Mercuries, as messenger boys,

to deliver. Telegraphic despatches to the press were then rare and costly affairs, and the extravagance of "specials" was for the most part beyond the disposition and the means of the newspapers of the province. Now-a-days, papers like the *Globe* and *Mail* pay every week for news sent them by wire what would have exceeded the yearly salary of the sender at the early day we are now describing. In one night—that which preceded the fall of the government at the time of the Pacific scandal of 1873—there were despatched from Ottawa, over the Montreal Telegraph Company's wires, 144,296 words of press reports; while three million words, handled in a parliamentary session, is a quantity not unknown to the senders of Ottawa despatches to-day.

An amusing account is given by one who, though a lad, was observant of what passed around him, of the reception over the wires, in the pioneer days of telegraphy, of the English markets, by the then infrequent ocean steamers at Boston or New York. Newspaper reporters were seated around a table in the middle of the room, writing down the words of the report as the telegrapher read them from the tape—not the "tape" of to-day, automatically unwound and printed by the preternatural little "ticker,"—which the clumsy register, with its ponderous weight, delivered into his hands with much "whirr" and "click." In warm weather, the windows of the telegraph office were left open for ventilation, and the commencement of the market report was the signal for a crowd of excited grain dealers to gather outside the window, climbing upon each other's shoulders, squeezing and battling to secure a good position from which to hear the news read, and thus get it *free*; for there were in those days, as now, persons who wanted all they could get for nothing.

"Small were the profits of our tedious trade,  
Slowly the shillings dropped into the till."

Might have been sung, perhaps, by the alert old grain buyers of the period (Pat. Conlin, for example), who were accustomed to get their news in this way, "from the fountain-head," without cost. Their successors must now-a-days, it is true, *pay* a trifle for the hourly tissue slips that give them Liverpool and Mark Lane prices. But the plaint of the grain dealer of to-day, except,

of course, in the case of an Egyptian war or some such *bonanza*, may be voiced now, as then, in the remaining lines of the stanza :

“ Here toil and trouble are our portion still,  
And still with want our weary work is paid.”

What would be thought, by a latter-day news reporter, if it were insisted by the G. N. W. Company that he should attend at the telegraph office and copy laboriously the *viva voce* announcements from the relay as to stocks and prices? “ What are you giving us ?” might be expected as the scornful, if slangy, retort of the knight of the pencil. And yet the ubiquitous scribe of a then daily—lately and worthily elected, we believe, to represent in Parliament a Northern constituency—used thirty years ago to thus attend the call of the “ whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,” who sat in the coffin-shaped building at the angle of Front and Wellington Streets, which the Company exchanged, about 1856, for more commodious offices in the Exchange Building, of which Mr. Wiman was the Superintendent. At this time Mr. George Brown, of the *Globe*, and Mr. Hugh Scobie, of the *Colonist* newspapers, were in the habit of going to the telegraph office and copying the reports as Mr. Dwight read them off. Mr. Samuel Thompson, too, was an occasional visitor for the like purpose. There was also a tall Irishman, named Holmes, at the *Colonist* in Scobie’s time, a popular personage and a splendid reporter; also a man with one arm, but with the full complement of eyes and ears; and a young son of Auld Scotia, Gordon by name, all of whom used to come meekly to the office to copy the reports. In these latter days *nous avons change tout cela*. Four nimble-fingered operators, in Quebec or New York, transmit, per quadruplex relay over a single wire, to four keen-eyed and sharp-eared receivers in Toronto, despatches per Atlantic cable from Britain or the Mediterranean, column after column of commercial or political intelligence, during the small hours of the morning, when the rest of the world lies asleep. And from the hands of the latter go, by messenger or telephone, page after page of the manifold tissue sheets, to the desk of the vigilant night editors of our great dailies, to appear next morning in what Dickens called the glory of type, at the breakfast tables of thousands all

over the land. For in newspaper offices, the Scott printing press and the stereotype process have kept pace, in means to furnish in print the news that electricity conveys, with the strides of Field, and Stearns and Edison, in electric discovery and invention.

IN 1847, and for years afterwards, Mr. O. S. Wood was the Superintendent of the Montreal Telegraph Company, which in no great lapse of time absorbed the Niagara Falls Company, the Prescott & Bytown Line, the Grand Trunk Telegraph scheme, and some other like enterprises which we cannot now recall. An amiable and upright gentleman, Mr. Wood was at the head of the affairs of the growing enterprise for some eighteen years. "He was a beautiful writer at the key," says an old telegrapher, "and it was the delight of young operators to copy from him, his writing 'came' so plain and slow." Mr. James Dakers was made secretary of the Montreal Telegraph Company thirty-two years ago, and retained that responsible post until 1881, when the lines of that company, as well as of the Dominion Company, were leased to the Great North-Western. Any of the company's agents, who had, knowingly or unwittingly, violated one of the company's rules as to accounts or supplies, had as great a dread of being "hauled over the coals" by a letter in the peculiar hand-writing of 'DA,' as he had of being reproved for negligence or delay by a '23,' or a special message, half-stern but half-sorrowful, with the brief and significant signature, 'DW,' from the Western Superintendent, Mr. Dwight.

From such small beginnings as are indicated by a capital of \$60,000 and sixteen offices on a single-wire line in 1847, the first Canadian telegraph company grew.

In 1848, the Montreal and Troy Telegraph Co. built a line from Montreal to Troy, connecting at the latter place with the Buffalo and New York Co. Mr. H. H. Whitney, of Montreal, was President of the Troy Co., the contractor for the line was Mr. Ezra Cornell, who died in 1874 having acquired a large fortune mainly by means of telegraphic enterprises, and having founded and liberally endowed the University at Ithaca, N.Y.,

which bears his name. His son, Alonzo B. Cornell, who subsequently became Comptroller of Customs at New York, and whose term of office as Governor of that State has just expired, was the first operator at the Montreal end of the Troy line; his name is now mentioned as the probable nominee of the Republican party for the Presidency of the United States in 1884. In due time, the wires of the Montreal Telegraph Company were extended East and West, and by-and-bye North, and even South, for they penetrated to the American side of the river, with cables at different points crossing the St. Lawrence, until they penetrated what Howells calls—alluding to the classic names of its towns—the “ancient Greek and Roman portion of New York State.”

In 1850 twenty-five or thirty messages was regarded as a good day's work at the office of the company in the capital of Ontario. “In such indexes there is seen the baby-figure of the giant mass of things to come.” When the year 1881 was reached the capital of the Montreal Telegraph Company was \$2,000,000 and the number of offices 1680. Over two millions of messages were handled by this company during the year last mentioned; and now that its wires, as well as those of the Dominion and the Western Union Companies in Canada have passed under the control of the Great North Western Telegraph Company, from 1,600 to 3,000 messages per day are handled by the Toronto office alone. The contract of this Company with the Meteorological Office involves, we understand, the transmission of not less than 30,000,000 words per annum.

And the “through messages,” which, originating elsewhere, are forwarded to Toronto for transmission to points beyond that city, far exceed in number the merely local ones. In a country so extensive as this, there must be a number of repeating points, to which a telegram which is to be sent from one town to another not upon the same “circuit” requires to be sent. For example, a message sent by a shipper at Collingwood to a tug captain at Kingston, requires to be repeated at the Head Office. So, all the wires of the Company are brought into the operating room at Toronto, and at present there are in use twenty-three to the East, thirty-five West, and twenty North. In this room are

wires affording direct connection with New York, Chicago, and Detroit, for the exigencies of trade demand that instant communication shall be made of business intelligence, reports, markets, parliamentary speeches, &c. A contrivance which looks like the key-boards of twenty piano-fortes strung upon a frame and hung against the wall, enables the chief operator to make combinations of wires or circuits and so avoid repetition and economize battery power. This complicated instrument is called the switch. There are in constant use by the G. N. W. Company six sets of Stearns' system of duplex, and three sets of Edison's quadruplex telegraphy. By the latter invention the capacity of a wire, say between Toronto and Chicago, is increased four-fold; four operators being engaged at each end receiving or transmitting messages. A fast receiver, one is told, can write thirty-five words per minute in a legible hand.

To this point, from the infancy of thirty years ago, the stride is great. In the five stories of this building with its coronet of wires, one hundred and sixty persons are busy with the telegraphic despatches concerning business, politics, or social life, which the other eighteen hundred employees over all the length and breadth of the land receive from or deliver to the great public.

In the basement is the Delivery department, with five clerks copying, registering, and sealing in envelopes the messages which are shot down a tube from the operating room above. Around two sides of the room are ranged the messenger boys, some thirty or forty in number, whose coming and going is so incessant that the door-way looks like the entrance to a bee-hive.

The ground floor of the building is one large handsome room, forty feet by eighty, and lighted from three sides. The interior fitting is tasteful, and the accommodation for the public ample. At the front are the desks of the receiving clerks, enquiry clerk, check clerks, and cashier, while the rear portion of the room contains the staff of the Treasurer's department. This, as may be inferred from its name, is chiefly concerned with the receiving and paying of cash; but in addition, its chief, Mr. Arthur Cox, has control of all the stores needed for the conduct of the vast

business. In the treasurer's office there are eight clerks, while the receiving office finds employment for eighteen hands.

The second floor is occupied by the General Manager, his assistant, Mr. W. S. Battin, two shorthand reporters and typewriters; and by Mr. Toye, District Superintendent and his clerks, as well as by Mr. Thompson, the Company's draughtsman, and by Mr. Moysey or Mr. Smith, when they are in town. Behind these, and reached from the corridor by a separate door, are the offices of the Secretary and Auditor, Mr. F. Roper, well-known from having occupied a similar position in the Dominion Telegraph Company, and afterwards in the American Union Telegraph Co., in New York; a staff of twelve clerks is engaged in this important department.

On the third floor is the operating room, the whole length and width of the building, crammed with operators at low tables, sending with the key or listening and registering with the pen; the floors lined, and the walls and ceiling penetrated with concealed wires, brought into the building from every point of the compass, the very thought of which, during a thunderstorm, makes the flesh of an inexperienced person creep, even as the transmitted shock of the "real lightning" has been known to make the hair stand on end. But, now-a-days, the wires at the place of entry are protected by "lightning arresters," which conduct all natural electricity to the ground, so that in the fiercest thunderstorms, when the air is most charged with electricity, there is little or no danger to the operators in this room. Here, it would seem to an outsider as easy for a grain of wheat, that had been ground, to individualize itself, as for any operator to distinguish, amid the Babel of sixty clattering, clicking instruments, what any one of them is saying. But, as in an orchestra the conductor can discover any particular voice, so here the operator can hear the voice of his, or her, especial correspondent, and is meantime deaf to all other. In an alcove off this room is the Department of Mr. Easson, News and Commercial Superintendent, with a score of copying and distributing clerks. Here, too, is the contrivance which might be termed the "Father of the Ticker." It is a machine which supplies the power through which the grain or stock quotations of the

Chicago and New York markets are automatically transmitted to the office of the Toronto subscribers direct from the "Boards" of the two larger cities.

Ascending still another flight of stairs, we reach the Battery Room, where, so to speak, the thunderbolts are forged. In this apartment, stone-floored and dungeon-like, though some sixty feet from the ground, are ranges of shelves on every side, reaching from floor to ceiling, and in the centre more shelves. Three thousand cups of the "Callaud" form of battery, are here producing current by disintegrating zinc through chemical action by means of sulphate of copper in glass cells, the old-fashioned "porous cup" being discarded for means more simple in form and cheap in operation. These three thousand cells are arranged so as to form thirteen batteries, and on the Detroit line there are two hundred and twenty-five cups. Lines of nearly equal resistance are placed in connection with the same battery, so as to ensure economical working. Sulphate of copper is ordered by fifty tons at a time, and spelter comes in ten ton lots. These quantities are sufficient for four months consumption. About \$13,000 are spent monthly in stores. Above all is the dome, where the seventy-eight wires, some of them clustered in aerial cables, converge upon a frame a dozen feet in extent, and are passed through the battery-chamber to the operating-room below, carefully insulated by rubber, paraffine or what-not, and conducted in channels in the walls or floors.

Few persons, probably, dream, as they pass and re-pass the unpretending building we have described, that the busy life within its walls has to do with a greater amount of important transactions than any of the departments of civic or governmental control, Customs, or Post Office, or Legislation. But this one building, even, cannot contain all the machinery of the Company. The head stores are at 140 Wellington Street, and here are piled up tons upon tons of paper and stationery, hundreds of miles of wire, and everything needed in the business from a pen to a quadruplex instrument. The extent of the business is indicated when we learn that envelopes are ordered by the two millions at a time, and that an order in course of

execution for four million blank forms suffices only for about three months' consumption.

The Great North Western Company has already done and is doing much to perfect the machinery of telegraphy amongst us. Appearance, as well as convenience, has been consulted in the renovation of the offices, and the Toronto public now possesses in the receiving office of telegraphs, a room which will compare in elegance on at least even terms, with the most modern banking and insurance palaces. Not only have ventilation, drainage, warmth, and light been carefully attended to, but a neatness and harmony of color have been secured, which are restful to the eye and have a grateful hygienic effect on those whose waking hours are mostly spent in them, as well as on business visitors. In other cities, too, the telegraph offices have been refitted and modernized. The spacious receiving room in Montreal, imposing in its proportions, but marred by details and by dirt, has been so renovated as to present an appearance in harmony with the handsome exterior of the Telegraph Building. "What a noble room!" was the exclamation of General Eckert, when first he entered it with some friends on the occasion of his visit to the Montreal Carnival in January last; and so it deserves to be, for it is the telegraph headquarters for a noble city. Quebec, too, has an admirable office—that is, it has very recently, under the G. N. W. *regime*, been made so, for it was long a dingy and ill-contrived premises. At other prominent points, such as London, Hamilton, Ottawa, the "new broom" has been "sweeping clean," the new management has been taking greater pains than were ever taken before to make their offices convenient and attractive to the public, as well as healthfully comfortable for their employees.

All this re-constructing and modernizing is not accomplished without expense, one may readily believe; but it would seem to have been considered by the Company that their customers, the public, had had some claim to "sweetness and light" in bureaux so much frequented as telegraph offices. Another consideration, not less but more important, which has led to alterations in not a few points, is the health and spirits of the employees. The occupation of an operator is a trying and a responsible one, with

long hours and, often, close work. It is the more necessary, therefore, that he or she shall have a well-planned and comfortable place to work in. Telegraph operators, like other brain-workers, can do more work and do it better if they are properly housed. This economic principle may be pondered with advantage by some manufacturers who care nothing for sanitary considerations.

It is well, while congratulating ourselves on the progress we have made in telegraphy, to see how we stand with respect to facilities of electric communication as compared with other countries. There are more telegraph offices in Canada in proportion to population, than in any other country, and the telegraph wires are more used here, as shown by the number of messages per head, than in France or Germany, almost as much as they are in the United States. Canada has 35,000 miles of wire to 4,500,000 people, or just three times as many in proportion as Great Britain possesses. Then as to number of offices: Great Britain has 5,875, and Canada has 1,940; so, to be equal to Canada relatively, the "Old Country" would require 15,000 offices. Some figures are given by a German statistician, Dr. Neumann Spellart, which show the relative standing of European countries in this respect. We have added two lines to the table, showing how Canada and the United States compare:

| Country.           | Messages sent<br>per 100 inhabitants. | No. inhabitants to<br>each telegraph office. |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Great Britain..... | 80                                    | 6,417  |
| Switzerland.....   | 78                                    | 2,556  |
| Holland.....       | 59                                    | 10,254                                       |
| France.....        | 41                                    | 7,719  |
| Germany.....       | 31                                    | 4,510  |
| United States..... | 62                                    | 5,625  |
| Canada.....        | 57                                    | 2,320  |

So that, while such old countries as Britain and Germany have a telegraph office to every 6,000 or 8,000 people, this young country of ours provides an office for every 2,320 of her residents. Thus the net work of wires in the Dominion is closer, in propor-

tion to the people to be served, than anywhere else. Now as to the prices of their use: In no country has telegraphy been cheaper than in Canada, nor as cheap, if the distances covered and other conditions are regarded. The maximum charge over the lines of the Great North Western Telegraph Co. is 25 cents, for which sum a message can be sent a distance of 1,275 miles, while messages between towns within a distance of 12 miles of each other are sent at a charge of 15 cents. And the maximum charge for press messages over this whole system of wires, between extreme points, is not over 25 cents per 100 words, while the bulk of the press despatches are actually sent at a rate considerably less than this. It is worthy of note than in England the established rate for press service is 25 cents per 100 words at night, and 25 cents for 80 words during the day. Our American friends pay much more for their messages as to distance: Between certain points in the United States, if 500 miles apart, 50 cents; and if 1,200 miles apart a dollar; while a quarter dollar suffices to cover any of these distances in Canada.

It is true that the Dominion is to be surpassed in cheap rates under the new six-penny tariff recently decreed by vote of the British House of Commons, whose members are satisfied to sink nearly \$1,000,000 per annum in the experiment the first year, as pointed out to the Government, who strongly opposed the change, for that is the sum which, it is calculated, will be lost. "Why not put our rates down one half too?" exclaim some in Canada, with more enthusiasm than knowledge. Well, because, it might be answered, Canada cannot afford to imitate England in losing, by her experimental cheap rates; but any comparison of the two countries in this particular is unjust to our country, for the conditions here are much more onerous. The cost of maintaining wires and poles over so vast an extent of territory as the Dominion covers, is greater; the character of the country is different; the repairing staffs are more numerous and have to be paid higher wages for their work; the abounding forests make insulation hard to maintain; the climate offers many difficulties: not only snow storms and wind storms are to be dreaded, frozen rain is the most dangerous foe to the repairer, for its weight drags down the wire. In one sleet storm last year

scores of miles of wire and poles in the Eastern States were wrecked, and it cost the companies some \$300,000 to replace them ; operators' salaries are higher in this country too ; battery material, cups, vitriol, wire, insulators, cables, are all imported from England, subjected by our Government to high rates of duty, costing in Canada fifty per cent more than in Britain, while the wages of operators are probably double those in the Old Country. It is easy to see, therefore, that Canada is at a tremendous disadvantage and cannot compete with Britain as to relative cheapness of construction, maintainance and working. But that she not only competes with but surpasses her in the facilities offered and the work done for the same money, is surely to the credit of the Dominion.

In the building of telegraph lines, or in the duplicating of wires upon poles already placed, the construction corps plays a very important part. And it was with somewhat the kind of thrill which pervades a rural community when the coming of a circus is announced, that the advent of a telegraph construction corps was welcomed. It would require the pen of the accomplished editor of *Picturesque Canada* to effectively describe these pioneers of the modern army of commerce. Largely French-Canadian, possessing the pluck and hardihood of their class, these gangs of men made their way through swamp and forest, through town and hamlet, plainly clad, simply fed, performing their arduous work, in reliance upon orders from headquarters, with a rough strength, a sturdy loyalty, and a celerity that was almost awe-inspiring to the newly-appointed local agent or raw operator, who for the most part felt his suddenly-acquired importance eclipsed by that of these Rembrandtesque sailors-of-the-forest. JEM POUSTIE was a great personage in those days ; he is so yet, for that matter. A man of few words, whether of tongue or pen, Jem " magnified his office ; " and, like the conductor of a special train with Royalty, or the Representative of Royalty, in his charge, claimed the right of way wherever he went.

Puzzling to the un-instructed mind as is the system of electric telegraphy even at this late day, it was vastly more so a quarter of a century ago. Diabolical agency was bluntly alleged to

account for it, even by others than Indians or *habitans*, who were told that these wires would prove fatal alike to the fowl of the barn-yard and the bird of the air that should chance to alight upon them. The humming noise made by the wires was less often interpreted by the back woods maiden as the Æolian harp of the forest breeze than as the boding wail of a Spirit of Evil, whose lair was in some far-off spot connected with the lightnings and the thunder. The present writer recalls a time when the youthful but proud representative of the Montreal Telegraph Company, at what was then the most westerly office in Canada, a side line on Detroit River, having in its course a cable over the Riviere aux Canards, it fell to him to exhibit the working of *cette drole machine* to an inquisitive old lady, Madame Bondy by name. More in the spirit of mischief than in the interest of science, he persuaded the dame to place her wetted fingers upon certain parts of the mechanism, with the object of producing a shock to her system resembling that which the electric slippers occasioned to the adventurous wearer in a travelling show then prevalent and novel. "When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable," suddenly the old lady realized the unearthly something that her nerves had never felt before. "*Grand Dieu!*" she exclaimed, "*il y a quelque chose du diable dedans,*" and ran in affright till she had placed some rods between herself and the unclean thing. The story is told, too, of a certain superstitious peasant woman who, when first the wires were put up through Petite Cote, related that she was accustomed to sit on her door step at night, or in the gloaming, "listening to the sound the despatches made in passing along the wires; but although she watched closely for hours she never could catch a sight of them." Most of us have heard the yarn, variously related, as referring to an Irishman during the Crimean War, and to a New England farmer during the rebellion, about sending new boots to a son by hanging them on the telegraph wires in the evening and finding an old pair hanging there next morning—evidence to a simple mind of quick transmission and return. But it is a fact that Jimmy Harkin, whose horse was stolen by some American thieves from a farm near the frontier, and taken across the line

45°, went to the office to have *himself* despatched by telegraph in search of them.

A correspondent sends the following account of another laughable incident, which occurred in a telegraph office on Lake Erie, when it was in charge of Angus Fox: "One day two young Frenchmen came into the office; one a resident of the township, the other a Quebec man who had been buying timber. The Quebec man sent a message to that old city, instructing the remittance of a certain sum of money to his companion. Angus received the message and despatched it at once, the young man watching the operation with wonderment until completed, when the Quebecer, speaking in French, proposed that they should go. Angus noticed them talking to each other with considerable eagerness, but without understanding what they said. Presently the one who sent the message turned to the operator and asked, 'Do you know what this man says?' 'No,' said he. 'Well, he wants me to wait till the money comes by telegraph.'" After all, the poor fellow only anticipated what is now so common, the remittance of money by telegraph money order, though in a very different way from that he thought of.

But perhaps the most incomprehensible of the wonders which surprised the scientific scarcely less than the popular mind, about 1851, was the discovery of the possibility that an operator could "take by sound." That is, instead of relying upon legible signals made upon a moving strip of paper by the point of the armature, it was possible to make out a telegraph message from the sounds made by the instrument while it inscribed these characters. Mr. Ben. B. Toye, now the Electrician of the Great North-Western Company at Toronto, who began his career as messenger for the Montreal Company in this city about 1849, was probably the first person in Canada to demonstrate the practicability of receiving by sound. It was a startling novelty, even to his superior officer, who for many a day, hesitated to admit the entire trustworthiness of the system, and was wont to insist upon the tape being kept running at the same time that the ear was translating the signals, in order that a check might be had, in visible characters, upon the too precocious cleverness of this unique operator. It is something which Mr.

Toye possibly remembers with gratification, that while he was receiving by sound, the telegraph people in that "too too previous" town, Chicago, were still relying upon the clumsier mode, since become so nearly obsolete, of reading by paper. We have heard old telegraphers recount with what curious admiring interest they watched him receiving messages by sound—wondering what manner of lad he was whose *ear* could catch the significance of the mysterious dots and dashes as they rattled over the instrument, and unaided by the eye, translate them into words and sentences. During the time when Mr. Dwight made Hamilton his temporary headquarters, the Toronto telegraph office was under the charge of Mr. Toye; whose name was as familiar in the mouths of the craft as household words, not only in Canada, but in the Eastern and Western States. "Very adroit and accurate was Mr. Toye as an operator," says an old-time associate; "not only was his penmanship plain and clear, but he paid due regard to punctuation and to the proper arrangement of the message generally, which is a matter but too little observed of late days." Mr. Toye is best known as an electrician. He is, indeed, an inventor of no mean order, as various improved switches, relays and automatic repeaters, creatures of his brain, testify. One of the best repeaters extant, in use all over Canada and in parts of the Union, is of his invention, and has obtained for him a Continental reputation. Of all the numerous employees of Canadian lines, we know of no other who has given such evidence of inventive genius, or has added to the stock of telegraphic machinery appliances of such real and permanent value.

Mr. William Cassils, of Montreal, now a Director of the Montreal Telegraph Company, in whose employ he was for a long series of years as operator and Divisional Superintendent in the City and Province of Quebec, furnishes some interesting reminiscences of telegraphy thirty years ago, from which some extracts are permitted:

"The Troy line was at first operated in a room at the rear of the Oddfellows' building, in Montreal, but by 1851 it had been moved into the front office, and was operated by the Montreal Company. The operator at Troy was then Mr. Norman W.

Bethune, now District Superintendent of the Great North-Western Telegraph Co., Ottawa. He had graduated as a telegrapher in Canada, and has the honour of being one of the earliest, as well as one of the ablest, of Canadian telegraphers.

“At the date of which I write, there was no bridge across the St. Lawrence, nor were there any submarine telegraph cables. The St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers were crossed at the following points: At Bout de l’Isle the wire was strung on masts 129 feet high, in two stretches of No. 16 iron wire; one of about 800 feet and the other of 600 feet. At Lachine Rapids, as early as 1848, on masts 150 feet high, in two stretches of about three-quarters of a mile each. To maintain these crossings, and especially that at the Rapids, was an expensive and hazardous operation. Every gale of wind, or sleet storm, brought down the wire. To repair the Lachine crossing it was necessary to employ a batteau with a dozen or more men; also a canoe with two men. Interruptions at this crossing were frequent, and sometimes of long duration. On these occasions the operator at St. Johns, C. E., would shut up shop and re-open at Laprairie, whence messages from Montreal for the South were sent in the summer season per steamer *Iron Duke*, then plying between the island wharf and Laprairie several times per day.

“In connection with the Lachine crossing, I think of Mike Connors, a tall Irishman, of perhaps forty years of age, who, about 1835, had learned the trade of ship-building in the yard at Hochelaga, where Mr. Hugh Allan, then a young man, was busied with the construction of vessels for the house of which he afterwards became such a prominent member. Mike lived close to the Rapids, and, being an adept at handling craft, his services were in frequent demand by the company. He had under him a gang of men, who, for some reason into which we need not enquire, were styled ‘the forty thieves.’ Mike showed great presence of mind in emergencies, and had apparently been born to command. In his normal state, he commanded with moderation, but when under the influence of certain inspiration which he loved to ‘conceal about his person,’ he commanded in terms more forcible than elegant. My latest recollection of him is in connection with a visit he paid at the office in St. James’ Street,

when, not finding the Secretary in a suitable frame of mind, Mike emphasized his demand for money by throwing, in a fit of rage, an ink-bottle, or something of the sort, at the head of that officer. Mr. James Poustie, who is 'with us unto this day,' had, previous to the date of my joining the company, become a regular line repairer, and he has, during the thirty intervening years, built more lines throughout Canada than any other man. The company had built a batteau for use in connection with the crossing at the Rapids. In this craft Mr. Poustie, Mike Connors, and a gang of men, actually ran the Rapids in the winter of 1851—a feat which, about twenty-five years later, was repeated by others, who imagined they were doing something which had never before been accomplished. Mr. Poustie is not given to boasting, or he would have publicly claimed priority when the repetition of the feat was being noticed in the newspapers.

“The occasion for the feat happened in this way: Mr. Poustie, with Mike Connors and his gang, had hauled the batteau over the ice to a suitable point, where she was launched into the Rapids. The line from one of the masts on shore having been joined to the reel of wire on board of the batteau, it was intended to cross the current at a certain angle, men being at the reel to give out or take in slack, as might be necessary. The oars were fully manned, and what was thought to be a steady hand was at the helm; but the batteau quickly got into a whirlpool, and began to spin around as if on a pivot, the wire meantime twisting and tightening. Walls of water hissed and foamed on either side of this narrow pool, and it seemed as if the craft would be engulfed. Now, it was evident that so soon as the wire got low enough to get caught in those rushing walls, the boat must capsize. Connors had at first called out that the pool would soon fill and the whirling cease. The situation became every moment more alarming; the steersman, thinking all was lost, abandoned his post and fell on his knees in prayer. Connors, seeing this, cut the wire with nippers, thus freeing the boat. Hastily grabbing the steersman's paddle, he loudly cursed the delinquent, telling him that if he had not already settled his account with Heaven or the other place, it was now too late to do so! The pool soon filled, as Connors had pre-

dicted, and the batteau was navigated to a place of safety. Later in the day a second attempt was made to join the wires, which proved successful."

After some years spent persistently fighting the difficulty of crossing at the Rapids, permission was obtained from the Imperial Government to use St. Helen's Island, opposite Montreal, for crossing purposes. So, in 1852, masts of about 215 feet high were created on the island, and on the mainland near Molson's brewery. From these was suspended a stretch of light wire of about three-quarters of a mile in length. All the shipping entering the harbour necessarily passed under this wire. In the winter, when the river 'took,' the wire was lowered and rested on temporary poles erected on the ice. In the summer of 1852 an attempt was made to lay, under St. Mary's Current, a leaden pipe two-thirds of a mile in length, containing an insulated conductor. It was not a success. The piping stretched in the laying, and the insulation of the conductor was imperfect. It was not until 1854 that well-constructed cables came into general use, when the use of masts in crossing rivers was abandoned.

Up to 1853 there were but three sets of instruments in the Montreal office; one for Toronto, one for Quebec, and one for Troy. Messages were not numerous on either line; fifty in one day was considered a big business for Montreal, where Mr. William Smith worked the western instrument. This gentleman was an excellent operator, and had an intelligent appreciation of the importance of the business passing through his hands. He subsequently became manager at St. Catherines, a position which he held for a long series of years. Mr. George Smith had charge of the Quebec instrument; he was himself from the ancient capital, where he had learned to operate under Mr. John A. Torney; being sent to Prescott in 1852, he died there a few years later. When Mr. Wm. Cassils had learned to operate, it became his duty to work the Troy line.

As early as 1850 a fourth line had been brought into the Montreal office—that of the Montreal and Bytown Telegraph Company, of which Mr. Edward McGillivray was President—it was not considered to be of sufficient importance to have an

independent set of instruments at Montreal, where the line was usually put to earth, except at stated hours, when it was hitched to the instrument of the Troy or Quebec lines long enough to inquire if Bytown had any business to transmit. In this way Bytown had a sort of intermittent connection with Montreal and the world beyond. There was an intermediate office at Hawkesbury, where, in 1854, Mr. Angus Grant, now Division Superintendent for the G. N. W. Co. at Montreal, learned the business of an operator.

The Bytown line was poorly constructed, growing trees in some places did service as telegraph poles, and it was no uncommon thing for the line to be interrupted for a week at a time. The young, handsome, and good-natured Ben Batson, afterwards a member of a prominent Ottawa lumber firm, and whose name at the present time crops up as one of the promoters of a telegraphic schème with a name so long as to embrace in it all the continents of the globe, at that time seemed to combine in himself, writes Mr. Cassils, "the offices of operator at Bytown, chief electrician, engineer, line repairer, etc. I remember well that after a long interruption, Ben, brown as a berry, and arrayed in the easy flowing garb of a lumberman, which would have delighted Oscar Wilde, paid us a short visit, having followed the line from end to end on a repairing tour. To me, as a student, it was always a pleasure to do business with him, even by telegraph one felt instinctively that he was of kindly disposition."

In 1851 the bulk of telegraph business to or from Bytown related to lumber or provisions. Who could have foretold at that date that so few years more should bring Confederation of the Provinces, and with it the prospect of opening up the great North-West, and the selection of Ottawa by Queen Victoria as the Capital of this vast Dominion. Such humdrum matters as rafts and pork no longer monopolize the lines to Ottawa, they are now crowded with voluminous press despatches, the weighty matters of state, the movements of railway magnates, the plotings of wily politicians, the schemes of rival corporations, and the earnest cry and prayer of the office seeker and the contractor.

In the early days of Canadian telegraphing, an operator was not only expected to work the line, but to know all about wires

and batteries to fit up offices, and make himself generally useful. When the line got "down" he hired a vehicle, and, armed with repairing tools, followed the line until he found and remedied the interruption. He did not consider it *infra dig* to climb posts, dig holes, cut branches, replace defective poles or pieces of line, or in short, do anything for the good of the business.

Until the close of 1853, says an old resident, the large apartment used as the Merchants' Exchange and reading room was under the same roof as the office of the Montreal Telegraph Co. in St. James Street, Montreal, a door opening from the one into the other, consequently the Merchants on 'Change, who were the principal customers, were in the habit of writing their messages at the telegraph desks and handing them in in person. In this way they came to know and notice the operators, who, when not employed at the instruments, waited on customers. Thirty years have sadly thinned the ranks of the then prominent merchants of Montreal—Messrs. John Young, Andrew Shaw, Elisha Lane, James Gilmour, Augustus Heward, L. H. Holton, Hugh Allan, Robt. Esdaile, and many more whose faces were familiar to the early operators have now passed away. The Company removed from St. James Street to the new Merchants' Exchange building, St. Sacrament Street, about the beginning of 1854, remaining there several years, then removing to a building on the opposite side of the street, which the company had purchased. Finally, in March, 1874, the business of the company was moved into the magnificent building erected by the Montreal Telegraph Co. on the corner of St. Sacrament and St. Francois Xavier Streets. The original line of the Montreal Company was fairly well built, but being on the highway it was constantly coming in contact with branches of trees, thus causing considerable ground connection, especially during wet weather. Consequently a rain storm became a matter of much interest to operators, it meant close "adjustment," to use a technical term, and not unfrequently the repetition of messages. It was early discovered that when the wind at Montreal was from the east or north-east, rain storms travelled from the west, and the stronger the land current, the faster came the rain from the opposite direction. Such observations as these have been turned to good account by "Old

Probabilities," Vennor, Wiggins, and others, twenty years later.

The Troy line was poorly insulated, and as a rule it was with difficulty that Montreal and Troy could work direct, the operators at Burlington and Rutland were frequently called on to repeat messages from either end of the line. This defect was removed early in 1853, when Mr. Luther C. Dodge, who was in charge of the line, personally superintended the reconstruction of the most defective section.

Thirty years ago, the only railways in operation in Lower Canada, were those from Laprairie County, St. Johns, and from Montreal to Lachine; but a new era was dawning which was to afford increased railway facilities to the country, and open up new and extensive fields of usefulness to the Montreal Telegraph Co. Towards the autumn of 1853 the Atlantic and St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railways, extending from Portland, Me., to Longueuil C. E., were approaching completion, a fusion of interest had taken place, and the entire road was now known as a section of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, the next section of which was at that time under construction between Montreal and Kingston. The general commerce of the country was active and apparently healthy, and this prosperity met with no check until the serious depression of 1857. The business of telegraphing shared in the common prosperity and developed rapidly; the Montreal Company had acquired, by purchase or amalgamation, most of the lines that had been built by other and smaller companies throughout the country. In view of a fast growing business, more operators were needed. Among the new hands that had recently learned to operate in the Montreal office, were James and Stanley McNider, John Mackenzie, Stanley Patterson, Lawrence Longmore, Robert McPhie, and A. B. Dean, some of whom are still connected with the Company.

“THE Montreal Company having contracted to build a telegraph line along the entire length of the Grand Trunk Railway,” Mr. Cassils resumes, “had, by the month of September, 1853, completed a section from Longueuil to Island Pond, and I was sent to open offices between these points; having opened Longueuil and installed an operator, I proceeded to St. Hyacinthe. Finding on my arrival there that the train from Island Pond was two hours late—the delay having been caused by a wash-out at Waterville—I placed a relay on the outer sill of a window, attached the main line, finding a ground connection in a neighboring mud-hole, and reported to Longueuil the delay and its cause. This was, I believe, the first Grand Trunk Railway telegraph message.

“Mr. Unsworth was station master at St. Hyacinthe. His son ‘Jim’ was to be the operator there, but he had to be taught. Fitting up the office as quickly as possible, I began to teach my student the Morse alphabet. I think he *did* look at the letters once or twice, but he had a fine ear, and preferred learning by sound, which he did after a fashion, within a fortnight, but “his heart was not in it,” he kept a banjo close by and at short intervals took a turn at that, instead of the other less tuneful instrument. Within a year he had organized “The Grand Trunk Minstrels,” and with his company gave negro entertainments throughout Canada; a little later he went to the United States, where he became chief of “The Unsworth Minstrels,” in which capacity he revisited Canada, giving capital entertainments; later still he and his troupe performed for a long time in London, England, and I remember reading with some interest that on visiting Paris his company had been invited to perform before Napoleon III, and had succeeded in delighting for the time that unhappy Emperor. By the end of October, Richmond and Island Pond offices had been opened, when I was recalled and sent to Quebec to replace Mr. Geo. W. Purkis, who had been appointed Superintendent of Grand Trunk Railway Telegraphs.

“In 1852, Mr. I. D. Purkis had resigned his position at Prescott and had gone to Quebec as Superintendent of the lines of the British North American Telegraph Co. This company was organized in 1848, and had in that year built a line from Quebec

to Father Point, with the view of reporting vessels passing up or down on the lower St. Lawrence. Ocean steamships had not then begun to run to Quebec or Montreal, and but few masters of sailing vessels took the trouble to report themselves; the Government paid no subsidy, and the company had no revenue to speak of, and no prospect of improvement in that respect. In 1851 the line between Riviere du Loup and Father Point was taken down, the wire being used by Mr. John A. Torney, in the construction of a new line from Riviere du Loup to Woodstock, N. B., where a connection was made with a line to St. John and Halifax.

“Previous to Confederation, commercial intercourse between Canada proper and the Maritime Provinces was very limited, each province imposed duties on goods entering from every other province. With this clog on commerce the British North American Telegraph Co. had a poor territory in which to operate, its tariff was high, but messages were few in number. Under these circumstances its directors felt justified in trying to earn a dividend in a new field, and were just completing a new line to Montreal in opposition to the Montreal Company when I took charge of the Quebec office, on November 7th, 1853. It seemed at that time as if Quebec would have ample telegraphic facilities, and the Montreal Company abundance of opposition, for in addition to the western extension of the B. N. A. line, there was being built from Montreal to Quebec *via* Sherbrooke what was called the Grand Trunk Telegraph line. It had no connection whatever with the Grand Trunk Railway, although having a similar name, and was to extend from Quebec to the extreme western part of Upper Canada. There were a few shareholders in Quebec, and from these a local board was chosen. The Montreal Company occupied an up-stairs office in the old British Bank building at the corner of Arthur and St. Peter Streets in the ancient capital. The Grand Trunk Telegraph Co. hired and fitted up in grand style offices on the ground floor of the same building. Desks and counters were of black walnut, Brussels carpets covered the floors, luxurious seats and other evidences of affluence and taste filled the rooms,

Such magnificence in telegraph office furniture had never before been seen.

“The B. N. A. Co. had hitherto shared our Quebec Office, but now that they had gone into opposition they took an office on the first landing of the same building; so that, besides falling heir to all the old grudges to which a six years’ attempt to serve the public with a single-wire line had given birth, I was in danger of being cut off from public patronage in another way. No customer could reach my office without running the gauntlet of two new, innocent, and importunate candidates for public favor. As soon as possible I hired another office near the middle of St. Peter St., to which I beat a hasty retreat, leaving the two opposition companies to fight each other on the old stand.”

The Grand Trunk Telegraph Co. used the Cap Rouge ice for a crossing that winter; they never needed another; with the departure of the snow in the spring, the line, built through a wilderness, succumbed to constitutional weakness, the poles fell down, and no one learned what became of the wire.

The B. N. A. opposition was not so easily overcome. The line had been fairly well built, and the shareholders were the principal merchants of Quebec; but from the first the tariff had been reduced by the new company to a non-paying basis. The walls of Quebec and Montreal glared with posters announcing 7½d. tariff between the two cities. The Montreal Co. had to follow suit. (minus the posters), neither line earned a living; it was a case of “survival of the fittest,” and as the Montreal Co. had paying lines elsewhere, the weaker company, after a gallant fight of three years, threw up the sponge in the fall of 1856, their property passing into the hands of their opponents, and Mr. William Cassils was placed in charge of the lines east of Quebec.

“One of the best legacies left by the belligerent B. N. A. Telegraph Co.,” says Mr. Cassils, “although in himself a perfect pattern of peacefulness, is to me almost the sole reminder of three years of strife. I refer to Mr. W. J. Graham, now the popular telegraph manager at Montreal, who held a position in the Montreal office of the B. N. A. Co. up to the date of the transfer of the line.”

Allusion has been made above to the construction of a line to Father Point by the B. N. A. Co., and its removal in 1851 as a non-paying enterprise. It had been built a few years too soon; the supply was ahead of the demand. In the fall of 1853 steamships began to ply between Liverpool and the St. Lawrence, the *Sarah Sands* being the first arrival of the McLean McLarty line. In 1854 the *Canadian*, the first vessel of the Allan line, reached Quebec; during the next four years the vessels of this company, carrying the mails, ran fortnightly, they brought latest European despatches for the New York Associated Press. In 1859 this company began to run a weekly line, and it became a matter of much importance to the Montreal Telegraph Co. to secure the business of forwarding, both outward and inward, the latest press and commercial despatches; a line was accordingly built to Father Point, which was also constituted the pilot station for steamships, a lighthouse was also built there that summer, which has ever since done duty as the telegraph office. Until the lighthouse was built, a temporary office was opened in the house of pilot Chouinard, Mr. Robert Easson being the first operator; a year later Mr. S. B. Dean became operator and lighthouse-keeper, remaining until 1863, when he was succeeded by Mr. Frank Drummond, who held the office until the successful laying of the second Atlantic cable in 1866 had shorn Father Point of its importance, except as a pilot station and lighthouse.

Of the operators whom I taught at Quebec, Mr. Edwin Pope, now Eastern Division Superintendent, was one of my earliest students, having entered the office in 1854. Messrs. James Barclay and Robert McCord entered a couple of years later; both are still in harness, one at Quebec, the other at Campbellton, N. B.

Early in 1865 the Montreal company acquired by purchase all the lines on the north shore of New Brunswick, from Sackville to Campbellton, and built a new line *via* the Metapedia valley, between Campbellton and Father Point, thus forming a new route from the west to St. John and Halifax. In July of that year Mr. Wood and Mr. Cassils drove from Shediac to Father Point, taking possession of the lines lately purchased, and inspecting the newly built line. By appointment, these gentlemen

met Mr. Cyrus W. Field at Portland, Maine, and with him visited St. John and Fredericton, N. B., parting with him at Shediac, he leaving for Newfoundland in order to select a landing place for the second Atlantic cable, at that time under construction.

Towards the close of 1866 a new opposition, known as "the Peoples' line," was being built through Canada, and had reached Quebec; this line was finally absorbed by the Montreal Co.

"In November, 1866," Mr. Cassils writes, "I resigned my position and removed to Montreal, thus bringing to a close a business connection which had lasted for fifteen and a half years. In later days the old company has had to contend with other and stronger opponents. The history of the Dominion Telegraph Co. and the arrangements recently completed between it, the Montreal, the Western Union, and the Great North-Western Telegraph Companies, are matters still fresh in the public memory.

"Since the formation, six years ago, of the Canadian District Telegraph Co., which has the City of Montreal for its field, I have had much and pleasant intercourse with the old company. During the past thirty years there have been comparatively few changes in the *personnel* of the chief officers of the company. It is needless to deny that, to most people who have engaged in it, there is a fascination about telegraphy which, if not always strong enough to compel one to remain engaged in it, is yet usually strong enough to keep awake one's interest in the subject."

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MR. ROBT. F. EASSON, who still passes easily for a young man, sends some graphic memoranda of a period some might designate as "old times." He says: "I engaged with the Montreal Telegraph Co. as messenger in the year 1849. The company's wires then extended, if I remember rightly, only from Toronto to Quebec, the tariff between those points being 4s. 6d., and from this city to Montreal 3s. 9d. or seventy five cents. To points between these cities the rates were arranged according to distance, but between no two places were they less than 1s. 3d., or a quarter dollar. Mr. O. S. Wood was superintendent, with

headquarters in Montreal, Mr. Jas. Dakers, Secretary; both of them worked at the instruments in Montreal office. Mr. William Cassils was an operator in Montreal office at this time, as was also Mr. Dwight. When I went into the employ, a Mr. Parsons had charge of Toronto office. That gentleman removed to Buffalo shortly before Mr. Dwight was transferred from Montreal to Toronto: and in the interval between DW's arrival and Parson's departure, Ed. Culgan (who afterwards became a distinguished telegrapher and inventor in the United States) and a Mr. Partridge had charge. When Mr. Dwight was installed at Toronto, the staff consisted of himself as manager, Stephen Radcliffe, afterwards City Clerk in Toronto, as entering clerk, and myself as messenger. Radcliffe did not stay long, and a splendid young fellow named Robert Cowan, a brother of William and John Cowan, now prominent in the commercial world of Oshawa, took his place, Cowan fell ill about this time, and DW was left to perform the entire work of the office, sending and receiving all the messages, attending to the customers' counter—a rather dingy wicket, like those in the old Post Office—keeping the books and cash, entering all the messages, and even addressing the envelopes. Cowan's death shortly took place and left room for me to go up higher.

“At this time, 1849, there was another telegraph company hence to Hamilton and Niagara Falls, connecting at the latter place with a wire to Buffalo, owned by David Kissock. The offices in Toronto, situated, one in front and the other in the rear of Ewart's building, Coffin block, Front Street, opposite Brown's old wharf, were presently united, the Montreal Company taking possession of the other company's wires and effects. Mr. P. R. Marling, its manager, resigned shortly after this, and Mr. Dwight took charge of the combined offices. Mr. Toye, who had been in London working on a line which ran from Hamilton to London (an independent, one-horse concern), removed to Toronto. He worked the Montreal circuit, and I, who had become an operator, worked the Hamilton circuit. An opposition Company, styled the International, came into existence about this time, 1851 or 1852, and in the course of time was 'gathered in' by the Montreal Telegraph Co. In those days, a messenger

had to deliver despatches—the word ‘telegram’ had not then been added to the language—outside the city limits; and it was nothing unusual for me to make three or four trips to the Queen’s Wharf or the Garrison Common in a day (the famous 71st kilted Highlanders, Sir Hugh Dalrymple, were stationed here then) besides travelling into all other sections of the city, which however had not spread so far to the northward as to-day.”

“The connection between thought and electricity,” says a charming essayist in his *Back-log Studies*, “has not been exactly determined; but even the cat is mentally very alert in certain conditions of the atmosphere. Our intelligent Tom, on a snowy day, is charged with enough electricity to run a telegraphic battery, if it could be utilized.” There is slight fear now that even a cat’s electric resources may not be made use of; since a village can be lighted by the power of a mill-dam, and the energy of Niagara is threatened to be used as an electric motive power for mills and factories. We are but “in the morning of the times.”

“OUR GREAT COMPETITOR IS TIME,”

Is inscribed in huge letters upon the wall of the Western Union operating-room in Chicago. The dictum is attributed to that company’s president; and Col. Clowry, who is the right man in the right place as Western superintendent in that great business mart, so suggestive of hurry and bustle, probably thought it especially appropriate, both as a menace and a stimulus to his men. Mr. Dwight doubtless felt, long ago, the spirit of this inscription, for much of his busy life has been spent in efforts to economise time, and to perfect transmission. Removed to Toronto from Montreal in 1849, he made Hamilton his temporary head-quarters during a great part of 1852, 1853, and 1854, when he personally supervised the building of the wires, and the opening of new offices throughout Western Canada. The Great Western Railway was then being built, and he threw all his energy into the work of providing telegraphic facilities for this growing province.

HOW, from a single wire line of say 500 miles, in 1850, the Montreal Company's system grew to 20,000 miles in 1870, and 30,000 miles in 1880, in a country much of which was sparsely settled, is not a little remarkable. The commercial importance of telegraph communication was early discovered, however, and the effort was made to forestall the demand which slowly but surely came. Lines were built to connect interior towns; to reach the harbors on the lakes; were pushed into the North-Western peninsula of Ontario; into the lumbering districts of the Ottawa; down through the Eastern Townships of Quebec. New York State was invaded, and a network of lines established which serves that territory at the present day. Wherever a little hamlet wanted to be connected with the exterior world, or a distant port wished to be within electric hail of an interior market, its cry was readily heard, and the wished-for line soon appeared. Mr. Dwight, the indefatigable Western Superintendent, was forever projecting lines. He did not wait for the cry of the isolated communities in the fast-filling districts, but pushed out his feelers towards them. It has been claimed for him, and, we believe, with truth, that he, more than any other man, is projector of two-thirds, and the author, so to speak, of *three*-thirds of the close chain of telegraph offices in Ontario—since the people at headquarters had but a faint idea of the needs of, and not much faith in, the growing West. Not only this, but he strongly urged the construction of lines in the Ottawa district and in Northern New York, which have proved so necessary and so successful.

The railway era, too, gave an immense impetus to wire building. No railway can get on without its telegraph wire, and as there are some 12,000 miles of railway track in the Dominion, it follows that over a like length of telegraph line, railway business has precedence; indeed, there is no small proportion of it reserved for railway business alone. But there came a check to telegraph extension. Opposition arose, as was natural. The Dominion Telegraph Company was organized in 1871, and proceeded to establish a system of wires to the principal places in Ontario and Quebec. By 1878 it had extended its lines to the Maritime Provinces, and at the close of that year boasted 492

offices. This was creditable to its enterprise and push. But in an evil moment its management decided, as a bid for popularity and business, to reduce rates between its most distant points in Ontario and Quebec from 25 cents—the figure at which the older company had voluntarily placed its tariff—to 20 cents for ten words. This being too low a rate to allow of profitable working, the step was fatal to the prosperity of both companies. Both were crippled by the war of rates, and neither could afford to make further extension, however much they were importuned by enterprising places or needy districts, to build new lines. The Dominion wires were in 1880 leased, *faute de mieux*, to the Western Union Company of the United States, which paid the shareholders five per cent., and this they were glad enough to get. The competition went on, and matters were looking blue for the Montreal Telegraph Company, when, in 1881, Mr. Erastus Wiman appeared upon the scene with a suggestion for the harmonizing of these difficulties.

Various propositions and counter-propositions had been made of plans by which the losing game of telegraphic competition in Canada could be stopped. The proposal of Mr. Wiman, that a new company, the Great North-Western, should lease the wires of the Montreal Co. and the Dominion Co. for certain annual sums, and work the whole system, commended itself to the authorities of both, and a rate of yearly payment by the Great North-Western Co. was agreed upon which yields to the Dominion Co.'s shareholders six per cent., and to the Montreal Co.'s shareholders eight per cent. *per annum*. By this step, the Western Union Telegraph Co., in the States, from being an antagonist of the Montreal Co., was made an ally of the company which works its wires, as well as those of the Dominion Co.

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“I hold every man a debtor to his profession,” was one of the *Maxims of the Law* enunciated by the wise Lord Bacon, “from the which,” he adds, “as men of course do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavour themselves by way of amends to be a help and ornament there-

unto." The career of Mr. Dwight in the arduous duties of the telegraph service, discovers one of his aims to have been, to leave the telegraph better than he found it. His earlier youth and manhood showed not only an aptitude and capacity for the business, which years and responsibilities have developed, but almost an appetite for "that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood" which old Herbert, if he had lived in Charles Lamb's time, might have pronounced, in spirit, divine.

Hear what one of his co-laborers for many years says admiringly of him: "Those who know Mr. Dwight now, and are acquainted with his correct business habits, ability and energy, will easily believe that twenty-five or thirty years ago he must have been 'a whole team.' Everything he did was well done. As an operator, he was one of the best of his time. I never met one who could make so correct and legible a copy, and keep right up with the instrument, as he was able to do. It was worth remembering, to see with what alert ease and finish he could copy great 'batches' of messages and never get behind, or allow the paper 'tape' to accumulate on the instrument table unread. This, as telegraphers know, was a most difficult feat to perform. 'Registers,' not 'sounders,' were used in those days, for 'taking by sound' was as yet undiscovered; and to keep up with the sending operator, the receiving operator had to keep his eye on the tape, quickly catch the telegraphic characters, and transcribe the despatch at the same time—the eye and hand following the ear—besides keeping the great lumbering, laboring brass machine wound up as the weight ran down. In those days, what is now a common-place occurrence was a marvel even to thoughtful business men. I have seen gentlemen, Mr. Benjamin Lyman among them, admiringly watch for an hour together, the process of receiving messages from the instrument.

Whether or no the General Manager is properly "a debtor to his profession" may be questioned, since he possesses administrative qualities which would have brought him distinction in any walk of life. But that he is "an help and ornament thereunto" is certain.

In 1860, when the telegraph service in two provinces had

reached a diffusion which was, for that time and for the then Canada, really note-worthy, a testimonial library of 1000 volumes was presented to Mr. Dwight. The operators of the Montreal Telegraph Company, numbering some hundreds, responded with warmth to the suggestion of such a gift, as a fitting testimony to the qualities of the man and the abilities of the Superintendent.' The choice of the volumes was in part made by a committee. And one of the most active upon it, indeed, the most zealous—for then, as now, he put heart and spirit into whatever he undertook—was Mr. Erastus Wiman, at that time Commercial Editor of the *Globe*, and Toronto manager of the now extensive Mercantile Agency in which he has since become part and parcel. Though not an operator, Mr. Wiman was a close personal friend of Mr. Dwight. And when, not many months ago, the former gentleman became President and the latter General Manager of the company which now controls the Canadian system of telegraphy, can we not imagine the one friend saying to the other, as Carlyle said to the students, when installed Lord Rector of Edinburgh University: "After all that has come and gone in by-gone years, this is what we have come to." Could it be that, as the Quaker poet has it, the friend of twenty years ago:—

" His early fancies not outgrown,  
Had loved, the while, old friends, old ways,  
And kept his boyhood's dreams in sight."

There are a few who know Mr. Wiman's busy life somewhat intimately, who may discern a certain aptness in this quotation from "THE TENT ON THE BEACH," for it is far from unlikely that the plans of schemes—visionary though they may have seemed at the time—which have since been brought to fruition, were laid in the tent, on the beach of some Muskoka lake, which the two friends were accustomed to occupy on their summer vacations.

And there are still in Canada old operators, not a few, who will recognize in the railway, and steamship, and telegraph president of to-day, the eager, enterprising, prescient spirit which found time for such a labor of love as the selection of a library for his friend while engaged in the promotion of trade

and the performance of duties brought to him in furtherance of the "brotherhood of man" by a restless appetite for work.

" Many a noble heart,  
 Many a regal head,  
 Labors for its native land  
 Harder than the horniest hand  
 For its daily bread."

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ONE must admit that the mass of parliamentary and commercial reports, cable and other special despatches for the daily press, impose heavy labour and responsibility upon the staff. The manager of the press department of the company's business is Mr. Robert F. Easson, who was trained to the business in Toronto office, who, after listening to the hum of Chicago's youthful bustle in 1853, and to the roar of the surges off Father Point in 1863, has settled himself within earshot of the more congenial din of the operating room, through whose every grade he has passed to reach his present important post.

In 1853, there were but three operators in Toronto office, and one of the three was Lyman Dwight, (younger brother of the present General Manager of Telegraphs in Toronto,) who is now in charge of the Great North-Western Company's office in Detroit. Like all old telegraphers, he has had to wrestle with "hard-working lines" at a time when galvanometers and other cleverly-devised instruments for locating "faults" in a circuit were unknown. And he wrestled well. Reserved in manner, almost stern at times to those who do not know how kind he can be, his is a thorough-going and loyal spirit, which has earned for him in recent years the admiring title of "Old Reliable."

Well known among the old-time telegraphers of Canada is Mr. J. T. Townsend, whose connection with the business dates from 1849. First stationed at Toronto, he had charge, in succession, of Queenston, St. Catharines—then a very important office—and Brantford, from which last place he was called, about 1868, to fill his present responsible post in Toronto, that of an Inspector and Electrician. At a time when expert telegraphers were not so numerous across the Line 45° as they are to-day, Mr. Townsend had tempting offers to go to the States, but preferred

to remain in Canada. Although the position of a conscientious telegraph inspector is a difficult one to fill, there is no more popular officer in the service than Mr. Townsend. While he is strict in his official capacity, and has a genius for searching out nooks and crannies which a less painstaking officer might overlook, the operators of his division anticipate his visits with pleasure.

One of the "Old Timers" in Canadian Telegraphy sends the following jottings concerning former managers or operators, as well as other features of interest of thirty years ago:

Snow and Dwight—the latter no connection of our Mr. H. P. Dwight—were the builders of the Grand Trunk telegraph line. They were also active in going round and getting stock taken up for short circuits, and thus built several lines in Prince Edward County, up about Berlin, &c.

The Grand Trunk Telegraph Co., by the way, had no chartered right to use the Bain method of signalling beyond this province, so, to make the needed connection of St. Catharines with Buffalo, in 1852 they were obliged to use the House system—more complicated and expensive. The House Telegraph produced Roman letters on the paper tape. The mode employed by Bain was to use moistened and chemically prepared paper, which the armature discolored as it touched, and so produced the letters of the Bain alphabet, which differed from the Morse.

Henry Izard was stationed at Woodstock, going thence to Stratford; thence he became Superintendent of the old International Telegraph Line, which got into the hands of Judge Weller, of Cobourg. Speaking of Cobourg reminds me that J. L. Curry, now chief operator at Toronto, was stationed at Cobourg in 1860, and that Mortimer Duperow, now one of the company's electricians, was at that office in 1870.

At Hamilton office, I remember first Jno. Phippen and J. D. Irwin, then C. H. Whitney, and next George Black. The last-named went from Brockville, where he had been stationed as long ago as 1855, to Hamilton about 1868. He has recently patented a mode of utilizing telegraph wires for telephoning. Irwin, who was an operator in Toronto thirty years ago, is now the Express agent in Toronto.

Morehouse went from Kingston to London about 1857. W. Furniss, now of London office, used to be C. J. Brydges' secretary, and is an operator of old standing. Michael Fleming, of Sarnia, and Robt. Cooper, of Chatham, both still residents, were in charge some twenty years ago or more. So was J. B. Fairbairn, of Bowmanville, and George A. Cox, of Peterboro, now a prominent railway man.

In 1849, J. T. Townsend learned operating at Toronto, and in 1853 he was transferred to St. Catharines. When the line was first built from Toronto to Suspension Bridge there was no office at St. Catharines, so her residents guaranteed the Company against loss if they would build to St. Kitts by 1854. A company in which T. R. Merritt was a director built a line along the Welland Canal. A telegraph office was opened at Clifton in 1854, and Ed. Kilmer, afterwards the Brantford manager and since a merchant at various points, went to Clifton from Trenton to take charge of it. The connecting lines across Niagara River were iron wires on masts; from Niagara to Toronto the line was of copper wire, small size.

Stanley Patterson, I remember, went from Montreal office to Port Hope about 1862. A few years later, Chas. R. Hosmer, who had been employed by the old Provincial Company, came into the employ of the M. T. Co.; G. N. Asselstine, also one of the operators who came over to us from the Provincial, was at Gananoque about that time, and is there yet. D. H. Van Nostrand, of Watertown, and D. Dow of Plattsburg, divisional superintendents of the M. T. Co's lines in New York State, both date back as operators from sixteen to twenty years.

Colin Fox, an old newspaper proprietor—he was a young one when first he tried the fourth estate—was an operator in Amherstburg, Toronto, and Detroit, for many a day, and rose to be in charge of the Detroit office. Horace McDougall was long stationed at St. Mary's, Ont., before removing to Manitoba, where he has become manager of the lines.

“An Old-Fashioned Telegrapher's Complaint,” in the *New York Operator*, for May, makes humorous reference to the number

and variety of the modern appliances for electric communication. He relieves himself thus :

Gone are the days of innocent simplicity  
 In telegraphs and also electricity,  
 As Jew's harp to a harp of thousand strings,  
 So are the by-gone ways to present things.  
 First came those ever-to-be-cursed OHMS :  
 These for to know you must read lengthy tomes ;  
 Soon *galvanometers* came into vogue,  
 Invented by some aggravating rogue ;  
 Great sesquipedal, scientific terms,  
 And frightful diagrams—that look like worms.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, by-and-bye, up came the vicious *Duplex*,  
 The only earthly rhyme to which is "Kuklux" ;  
 As if these were not things enough to vex,  
 Next, Satan must invent the *quadruple.e*.

If these be not enough to sour and bitter  
 A deacon's temper—then there's the *transmitter*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next, among other evils, ills and dangers,  
 There are the thaumaturgical *pole-changers*.

There will no peace for telegraphers be,  
 Till they return to relay, sounder, key.

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THE enormous growth of the business of telegraphy, and the invention of the telephone, have multiplied wires in cities to a very alarming degree. The difficulty has been partially overcome by the substitution of what are termed aerial cables for close net-works of zinc wire. These cables contain a number of small copper wires, insulated from each other by ozokerit, gutta percha, or what not ; and the clever electricians of this continent are trying constantly to reach a solution of the question of an increasing number of wires. The duplex and quadruplex working of lines is, of course, a help ; the plan of underground wires is one which has received much attention, but so far with unsatisfactory results. It has been tried on a large scale in Germany, and hundreds of miles of the buried wires had to be taken up

again after a period of faulty working, so unsatisfactory was the insulation. But the newspapers keep hammering away at the idea, and advising the Corporation of Chicago and other cities to "Compel the companies to bury their wires." Such precipitate advisers cannot know what they are writing about. They might read, with advantage, the following from the *Electrical World* on the subject of "Legislation and underground Wires."

"Three hundred and fifty patented devices in this country for conveying electrical currents underground, not one of which will work—such is, in effect, the report of the committee on underground wires, representing the principal companies interested in electrical transmission in New York City—a mournful story of misguided inventive effort. So the problem of underground conductors remains about as it has been, with no indication of a speedy solution, and those municipal and legislative bodies which have been so hasty in passing ordinances and acts to compel the burying of electric conductors, are placed in the ridiculous position of legislating against a physical law; for electrical induction is apparently as little effected by the fiat of a City Council or a State Legislature as the comet in the Middle Ages was by the pope's bull."

The extraordinary "boom" in telephones, and their adoption by so many as means of communication for social as well as commercial purposes, on both continents, has made some persons fearful that they would supersede the telegraph. This fear is scarcely well founded, unless telephoning can be made more perfect as well as less expensive. The testimony of a telegraph manager in Brooklyn, on this point, is to the following effect. Being asked whether, in 1883, the telephone service had hurt the telegraph business in that city, Mr. Burton replied, "not a bit of it. Last month, for instance, we sent 65,000 messages from Brooklyn, which overlaps that of last year the same time by many thousands. The fact is, the telegraph and telephone are working together. Every one uses either one or the other nowadays instead of the comparative few who used to use the telegraph only for important purposes. We have kept cutting

down the rates from the start until now it must be only the very poor who cannot avail themselves of the telegraph."

To the question, how does the telegraph compare with the telephone in swiftness of transmission, his answer is: We find that we can transmit faster by the Morse instrument than they can by telephone, because the messages over the telegraph come in steady without the frequent interruptions of the telephone from lack of distinctness, atmospheric and other conditions. You know what time is wasted from constant repetitions of questions and answers over the telephone. There is very little of that on the Morse Telegraph. But the telegraph and the telephone do not interfere with each other, and both are constantly growing in use. The more facilities increase for rapid communication, the more will be the demand upon them. It is an electric age, and every one wants to send things speedily."

There is now a Brotherhood of Telegraphers, which is a sort of Trades Union, for its objects are combination for like purposes with the Knights of Labor, the Crispins, the Printers' Union, &c. Its Secretary, Mr. Hughes, has stated that there are about 17,500 telegraph operators in the United States, and 2,500 in Canada—15,000 railway operators and 5,000 commercial—But this proportion seems somewhat astray, eight or nine of these out of every ten, it is claimed, belong to the Brotherhood; and if this be true, it is a formidable organization. Let us trust that its officers will see that it is conducted with more intelligence than has governed iron-workers and other bodies which have made themselves conspicuous by their threats and strikes. In telegraphy, as in other occupations, the competent and trustworthy hands will be in demand, and the "plugs" will have to go to the wall. Union is strength, if the cause be just. Combination of labor is good when it is used for protection; bad when used for oppression. There are no such laws in existence now as there were 100 years ago, in Britain, compelling tradesmen to work at a fixed price, no matter whether or not that price was below the market rate. An able English writer has said, treating of free labor combinations: "Though legal, their policy as a matter of self-interest, is very questionable. It is only by means of that coercion which the law forbids, that they can ever succeed in

counteracting the law of supply and demand; and every attempt to do so must end in results calamitous to themselves."

Forecasting the future of the Telegraph in its connection with journalism, Mr. Charles Emory Smith indulged in the following statement of fact and play of fancy when addressing the students at Lafayette College, this spring. Speaking of the part played by the telegraph in the development of modern journalism, he said: "A number of journals now have their own special wires from leading points. The time will soon come when apart from their ordinary news-gatherers, they will keep the ablest men they can find constantly at the capitals to deal critically with the operations and the legislation of the hour; when the editorial comments will be written on the scene, with all the color and life and intelligence of actual presence; when they will be put upon the wires as freely as the general news—nay, further, the time is near at hand when the keenest and most experienced observer, waiting till the last moment for the freshest phases in the kaleidoscopic changes, will stand at the telephone in Washington and talk his clear, well-digested comment; when it will be simultaneously received in the newspaper office in Philadelphia, instantly converted by the type-writer into printed copy, and immediately passed on to the composing-room; in short, when the carefully gathered information of the acutest journalist spoken in Washington at 1 o'clock in the morning over the wire, will be all ready at 2 o'clock in Philadelphia to be rattled off the printing press at the rate of fifty thousand an hour."

But in order that the workers of to-day in "N" office may be mentioned, as well as those of a by-gone age, the letter of a Toronto correspondent of the *New York Operator* should be quoted. He says this of Toronto in May, 1883:—

"In the Great Northwestern office in this city business is rather dull at the present time. Only about seventy operators are kept busy. We have two sets of quadruplex and six sets of duplex, which are worked during the day by the following stars: Montreal, quadruplex, Messrs. Peden, Urquhart, Anderson, and Manners; Chicago, quadruplex, Messrs. Rogers, Hutchison, Smith, and McPhee; New York, duplex, Mr. Roger J. Mullen;

Buffalo, duplex, Mr. R. Berry; Ottawa, duplex, Mr. John Coleberry and Miss M. McDonald; Detroit, local, Mr. John Mullen; Hamilton, local, Mr. P. Velie; London, local, Mr. Charles Brooks; C. N. D., Mr. R. M. Storey. On the night staff, with Mr. Jno. Lanskail as manager, are Mr. Jas. Neilson, New York Associated press wire; Mr. Jno. Tipson, Eastern press; Messrs. Meloche and Pilon, Montreal, quadruplex; Messrs. Clevenberg and Walton, Chicago, quadruplex; Mr. A. Bennett, Buffalo, local; Messrs. Culbert, Jones and Wilson take a heavy business every night from the Parliament House at Ottawa.

Among the latest arrivals are Messrs. Davy, Napanee, Ont., and McSweeney, Oshawa, Ont. Mr. Charley Dean has left us and is now working for the W. U. at Buffalo, N. Y. Mr. Joe Hurley has also gone, and is now working for the G. N. W. at Hamilton, Ont. Messrs. Rose and Massey have gone to work for the Canada Pacific Railway at Algoma Mills. Messrs. Scott and Fink, despatchers on the G. T. R. here, also leave this week to despatch on the C. P. R. at Winnipeg, Man.

In the Canada Mutual Company's office, Mr. H. Pingle is manager, Mr. A. W. Barber day chief, and Mr. J. Annand night chief. Only two wires are worked at present, both to Buffalo."

MANY who now use the Atlantic cable in their daily business, and would feel as much lost without it as without their stenographic clerk or their telephone, have no idea of the interest and novel excitement with which the earliest attempts at ocean telegraphy were watched. The story of the laying of the first Atlantic cable in 1858—the cable weighed a ton to the mile—has been often told. The American frigate, *Niagara*, and the British line-of-battle ship, *Agamemnon*, were each laden with one-half the cable, the ends of which were united in mid-ocean and lowered into the depths on the 29th July of that year. The *Agamemnon* reached Valentia, Ireland, on the 5th August; the *Niagara* landed her end at Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, at about the same time, and on the 17th of the same month the first cable message from Europe to America was flashed along its copper conducting wires. The words were appropriate: “Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good-will towards men.” The poet, Whittier, celebrated the occasion in a stately ode, and among the voluminous contributions to ocean cable literature was the electro-chemical eclogue of Oliver Wendell Holmes. This imagines a conversation between a jack-knife-bearing, much-conjecturing Yankee professor and a Blue-nose, respecting the oracular personage, De Sauty by name, who was in charge of the transmission of signals at the American end of the cable, and who achieved as much ephemeral fame and importance as any dignitary of the day. Who *is* this De Sauty? enquires the professor; “Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal? Was he born of woman, or is he a living product of galvanic action?” And the reply of the blue-nosed Provincial is:

“ — When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,  
At the polar focus of the wire electric,  
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us,  
Called himself “ De Sauty.”

As the small opossum, held in pouch maternal,  
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,  
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,  
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced stranger—  
 Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy—  
 And from time to time, in sharp articulation,  
     Said, " *All right!* DE SAUTY."

When the current slackened, drooped the pale-faced stranger—  
 Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker—  
 Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odor  
     Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,  
 Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,  
 Till, one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,  
     There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,  
 C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,  
 Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?) Alumin. (?) Cuprum, (?)  
     Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!  
 There is no De Sauty now there is no current!  
 Give us a new cable, then again we'll hear him  
     Cry, " *All right!* DE SAUTY."

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