

Strange Collection of Antiques Found in Rome by Eager Searchers

ROME, Oct. 4.—Many years ago, when the foreign demand for art treasures and antiques had not yet reached its present proportions, I happened to pass one summer afternoon through one of the narrow and shady streets of old Rome. A plain signboard with the single word "Antiquario" hung out of a top window in a building which appeared to be half palace and half tenement house aroused my curiosity. I knocked at a door which was pointed out to me as being that of the professor, a generic term applied in Italy to scholars, pedagogues and musicians.

A voice from inside asked the usual "chi?" ("Who?")

"I answered as I knew I should "Amico" (friend), and the door was opened.

An old man, pale, gray haired and unshaven, with beady, but bright eyes, dressed in rusty black clothes of a decidedly clerical cut, stared at me while he inhaled a pinch of snuff which he had tightly between the first finger and thumb of his left hand. This performance over, he asked my business.

"I would like to see your collection," I said.

"Why?" he asked.

"I thought it was invisible," I replied, almost fearing that I had knocked at the wrong door.

"Certainly it is if I choose, but why do you wish to see it? Do you want to buy?"

The appearance of the old man and his strange questions made me almost regret that I had climbed so many steps. I had neither the money nor the intention to buy antiques and my curiosity had waned. So looking as dignified as I could I said:

"No, I do not wish to buy anything; I simply wished to visit your collection out of curiosity, as I understood that dealers like you were always willing to show their collections."

"But I am not a dealer," the man said in almost an angry tone.

"And what about your sign?" I asked, feeling I had got the better of the argument.

"Oh, I am an antiquary, that is to say, I collect antiques and buy them, but I do not sell them. I put the sign up for people to come and sell, not to buy. You are a foreigner, Signore, and foreigners do not sell. But you said you wanted to see my collection out of curiosity and I am willing to satisfy it. Come in."

He had become almost cordial and he held the door open for me to pass. I followed him through a dark corridor which opened on two large rooms, hung in black, where the collection was displayed.

I went round the rooms, walking slowly as sightseers do in museums and looking profoundly wise not to show that I felt the absence of a guide book or a catalogue, and I gazed from one object to another. There was a marble statue without a head or arms next to a carved wooden image of the Madonna and Child. A spinet was near an instrument which looked like a harp.

A shawl of old glossy white silk with a richly embroidered colored border hung from a cross pole and against it were slung several vases, mostly mediæval, all cross hilted and double basied. Helmets and headpieces of different shapes and ages, fragments of a suit of chain armour, and two small pieces of ordnance called columbines, strewn on the floor.

Church vestments embroidered in gold and silver threads and studded with precious jewels; mitres and chasubles and robes; manuscript books, missals and choir books plated with gold and silver leaf and set with gems, their colors are bright as when they left the hands of the painter who spent a lifetime of toil in illuminating them; a sword and a helmet, forfeited maybe in a tournament or picked from the battlefield where their owner fell; embroidered draperies, damasks and brocades; candlesticks of gilt wood and metal; carved wooden chests that once held the dowry of a noble; a book of hours, which had nothing about him except that he had been a priest and had not broken his vows.

He had neglected his brevity for the classics and his offices for archaeology until he had gradually drifted away from the church—followed me round the rooms, continually taking snuff and never saying a word. I attempted by praising several objects of his collection to draw him out, but my remarks were left unanswered.

I prepared to leave and, taking up my hat, began to express my thanks in the best flowery Italian I could muster. The professor then spoke. He interrupted my acknowledgments and, smiling ironically, said:

"None, here, you have satisfied your curiosity now, have you not? You have looked and looked; but have you seen?"

"If I were to ask you, very probably you will say that you have seen a fairly good collection of antiques, and no doubt you can distinguish a dagger from a sword and a statue of Venus from one of the Madonna. But what else can you see?"

"Do you know, or can you even guess, the history of any particular object in these rooms? You have looked and seen, but you have not understood, and still your curiosity is satisfied, as you are ready to go. You can go if you like, but do not say that you know my collection."

The man was excited, and I felt that I was to blame for it, though I scarcely knew why. I stood confused before the old man, blushing like a naughty school boy. The professor came up to me, patted me paternally on the shoulder, pointed to a chair and, settling himself comfortably beside me on an arm chair, closed his eyes and uttered one single word in a marked interrogatory tone.

"Lecture?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I replied. What he said ran about as what follows:

There is a grim, dark mediæval castle built of black lava stones plundered from the paving blocks of the Via Cassia by the Orsini and overlooking the bright blue waters of the lake of Bracciano. In one of its halls one summer evening several

hundred years ago sat a noble matron of full, ripe beauty. Her name was Isabella Orsini. Her fingers were idly running over the strings of a lyre while she gazed on the view before her. She was sad, and while unbidden tears came to her eyes her fingers drew from the strings a slow, plaintive melody, almost a dirge, which grew still more mournful as the sun went down.

Isabella Orsini that night was strangled by her husband, Duke Pietro Orsini, who had discovered that she had broken her marriage vow. It was no crime, they said

then, nor vengeance, but justice when the lord duke was empowered to administer within his castle, so none knew that the lady had died an unnatural death.

Her lyre has been silent ever since the day she died. The strings are not broken, as you can see, but there is no music left in them.

In the year 550 a Syrian monk named Lorenzo retired from the world and built a hermitage in the woods of Sabina, amid shady valleys and purple hills. Disciples gathered around him and the retreat in

priceless treasures. Others keep long volumes full of incantations locked in iron boxes.

Katt Legall of Carnac in Morbihan, one of the most celebrated Breton necromancers now living, has a book which dates several centuries back. One recipe—for the casting of a curse—is typical of the mediæval barbarism which inspires them all. It reads: "Procure a piece of clothing or some of the hair of the one to be cursed. Choose an animal which is the symbol of your victim. Kill it with one stroke, open the chest, remove the heart and for three days pierce it with thorns or red hot nails, repeating maledictions the while. Then the victim must feel all these tortures just as if his or her own heart had been pierced. Shortly he or she will die an unknown and terrible death."

Not much opposition to these beliefs seems to be offered by the priests. Some times the church appears even to encourage them. At Trequier a chapel still exists where an altar is dedicated to Our Lady of Hatred. Pilgrims from a distance, sorceresses and simple peasant folk, kneel there and pray for the ruin or death of their enemies.

When one sorceress was brought before the judges on the charge of having cast a spell on her husband she defended herself with this homely philosophy: "What, you accuse me of having my man under my thumb? Why, I've only given him a will and a mind in place of cowardice and stupidity!"

ment books and boxes, statues in wood and bronze of Christian saints and pagan divinities; fragments of architectural details, old furniture, and a thousand and one odds and ends gathered together from far and near, were also there.

Some of the objects were rusty like the short sword of a Roman legionary that perhaps had lain for centuries under ground. Others were incomplete like the statue whose head and arms may have been burned in a lime kiln, but many looked bright and almost new as if they had been just cast aside.

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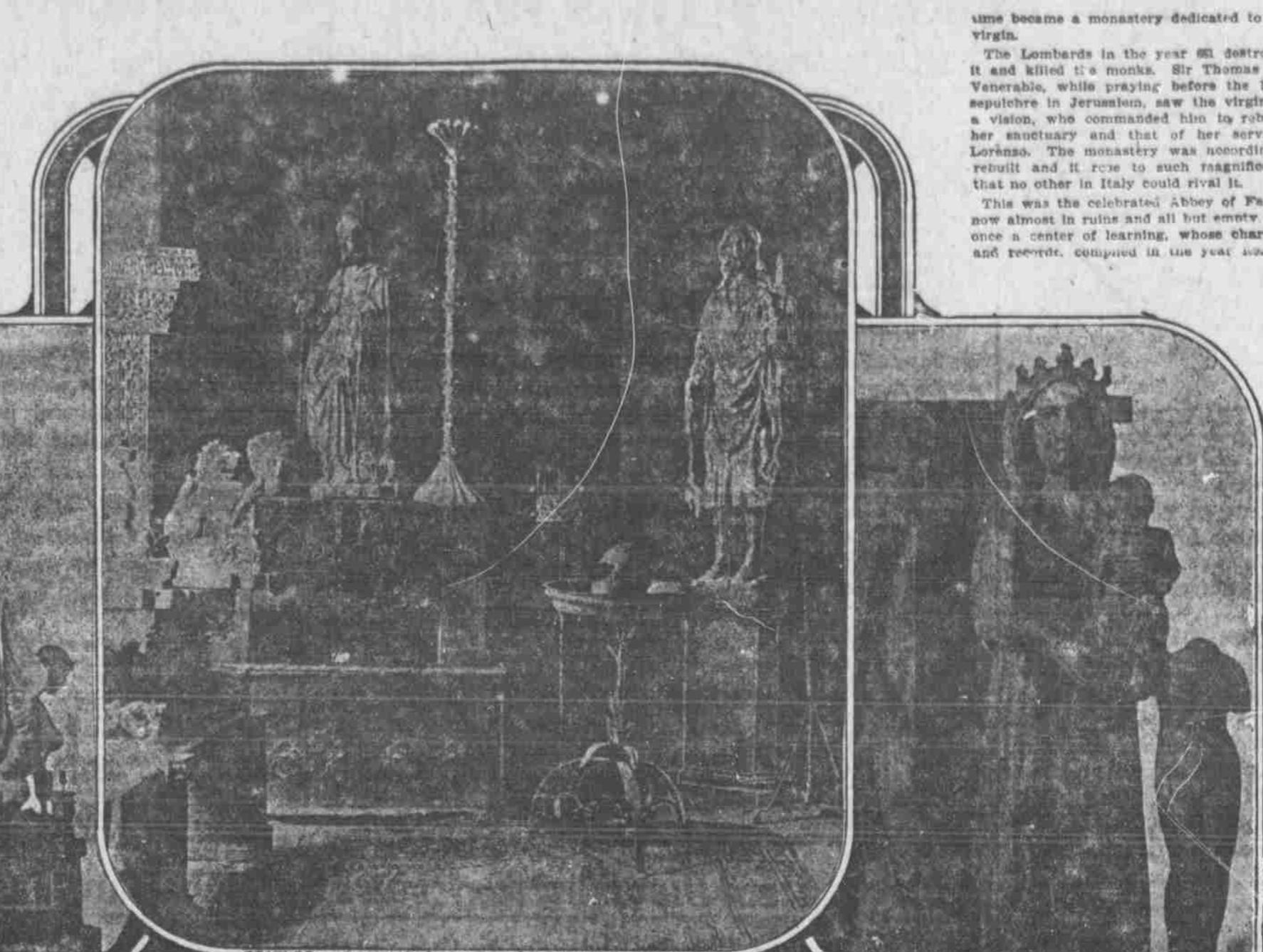
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STATUES OF SAINTS, IRON BOXES, OLD FURNITURE, ETC.

HARMONIC LYRE OF ISABELLA ORSINI.



VENUS AND THE MADONNA AND CHILD.

ASPINET.

Thomas the Presbyter, furnished the so-called Chronicle of Parfa, undoubtedly the most important work on church history.

The abbey was attacked by the Saracens in the early part of the eleventh century but not taken before a long time, as the Abbot Peter made a stout resistance. During the siege he found means to send all the treasures of the convent to Rome, the greater part of which served to restore the monastery when Hugo, king of Burgundy, came to Italy, but a small part of this treasure remained in Rome—yon iron box, for instance, which once contained

treasure, those choral books and codices, a silver candelstick and some church vestments.

There is a town uninhabited and in ruins and buried under the thickest ivy. Its streets are filled with flowers, which climb on every wall, enter every window and close every door. There are marigolds, narcissi, lilies, wild roses, ferns, myrtle and fragrant mint in great profusion.

The town is a sea of flowers whose perfume is intoxicating, hence none live there. The churches are deserted and the houses are empty. A tower rises high close to a pool which reminds one of the Syrian marsh, and out of the pool rises a spring, the only live note feature in this quiet city of the dead.

The spring is called Nymphæus and the town was once called Ninfa; now it has no name. In olden times by the spring stood a temple of the Nymphs. On the site a church was built and the Nymphs were killed, it is said.

Nothing is known about the history of the town except that repeated efforts to render it habitable proved fruitless, as everything dies there but flowers. That statue of Venus was found in the bottom of the pool.

There is a church known as Santa Maria, built at the close of the sixth century, and although shorn of all its ornaments, with its frescoes defaced and slowly crumbling into dust, still the building is standing at Toscanella. It is said that the church was built on the site of a pagan temple dedicated to Venus, where the goddess was worshipped in heathen fashion by the country folk long after grown on every side, where sacrifices were offered.

Hither came a holy man, who broke the idol to pieces, overthrew the altars, burned the gloves and in Venus's own temple set up a statue of the Virgin. Here he tarried and by preaching the gospel far and near brought over a host of converts to the faith.

In time a handsome basilica rose on the spot, richly built of marble and mosaic, with pillars and with foliage in the capitals and symbolical figures and inscriptions. The name of the holy man who destroyed the Pagan temple is now unknown and the statue of the Virgin he set up instead of Venus was lost long ago.

A peasant some time ago discovered it in a grotto and wrapping it in sackcloth he carried it to Rome, where he sold it to a dealer. He bought it, and there it is close to Venus, the goddess it supplanted.

A legend says that the holy man came down from heaven, and if this is true this statue would be considered by many as a most valuable and holy relic. But legends are not believed nowadays, so I keep the statue here and nobody except yourself knows its history.

That wooden statue represents Pope Celestine V., who reigned from 1294 to 1294. He was dragged to the papal throne from his hermitage in the Abruzzi, where, under a stone pointed out to him by God, he had dug a hole to which he lived in all the luxury of self-torture. He protested with tears, he tried to escape, but at last he was thrust weeping into the papal throne. Four years later, at the age of 81, he was dethroned and forced by his successor, Boniface VIII, to spend the last ten months of his life in a cell which was so narrow that he had not room to move. Countless miracles were told of his death. His soul was seen visibly ascending to heaven, Clement V. canonized him a saint.

Gossip and Stories About Noted People

ADmiral Walker, who is just dead, used to be called by his admirers in the navy the "Nelson of the American navy."

There was this much sense in the designation, says Harper's Weekly, that it expressed the belief that Walker had the ability and the pluck to win any sea fight against any enemy with any kind of a show, if he could have the show.

Walker was more than an object of supposition; he was recognized as head and shoulders above any navy captain of his time. The good men believed this and sat at his feet. Among the good men we can count Robley Evans, Chadwick, Brownson, Stanton, the Rogerses, a lot of people of whom the name can be proud, while Dewey used to consult "Old John" about his movements, and officers used to say that George would look in the glass and wonder what John would think of him now. He was a fine old sailor and he was recognized as thorough. No personal friendship softened his manners to a delinquent. One day when he was sailing out from Hampton Roads with the International fleet that helped us celebrate the centennial of Washington's first inauguration, his orders about weighing anchor were disobeyed by his dearest friend in the service, who was in command of the ship and as the old Commodore's flagship passed the trembling culprit, the waves of the world heard "His Whiskers" thundering out from the bridge abjurations and expressing wonder at his own moderation in not putting his old comrade under arrest. At another time, when the white squadron was sailing out of the Mediterranean bay, another old friend worked his ship so awkwardly that the admiral—then nearly a "trade-dollar admiral"—suspended him by signal in the face of the whole fleet. The punished captain, coming aboard to protest against his public reprimand, put out his tongue and said: "Why, sir, why, I never heard of such a thing." "Well," said John, smiling at his big side whiskers, "you've heard of it now."

He had been a good fighter in the war, and he had most to do in starting the new navy. He was literally the brains of the outfit. He put his stamp upon the best men in the service when he was chief of the bureau of navigation. He was a despot, but a mighty intelligent one. "Damn him," said an officer who had to go to sea against his will, and who had pleaded in vain for some more shore service—"damn him, the worst thing about him is that he's always right."

A Little Known Inventor.

A correspondent has lately visited a corner of the world but little is the public eye (Nantucket, Mass.) to invade the privacy of a very remarkable man, who divides his time between raising vegetables by intensive methods of farming and experiments in telegraphy, potential of results of great and immediate commercial importance. This man, who cares ver-

Witches Powerful in Regions of Brittany

PARIS, Oct. 2.—If the foreign motorist is venturesome enough to visit certain remote parts of Brittany and to take moonlight spins over the narrow white roads he will occasionally come across bands of peasants dancing in a circle around some decrepit old dame, white capped and holding a switch in her upraised hand. The traveler would naturally think that they were indulging in some harmless merry-making. Yet they are engaged in no less solemn a task than evoking the devil.

This is only one of the mediæval superstitions, some picturesque, some terrible, that cling to the Brittany country folk. In the less frequented districts where railways are few and the Inns uninviting to the summer tourist, local necromancers have a hold on the people unguessed by the Frenchmen of the larger towns.

There the prophecies of palmist and somnambulist are hardened to with fear and bated breath. Fishermen will tramp miles to the hut of some seeress to learn what luck the cards predict for the next expedition at sea. Strangest of all perhaps is the persistent belief in talismans, incantations and love philters.

When fishing craft are overdue it is not uncommon to find barefooted lasses standing on the rocks holding a magic amulet and waving their arms to the rhythm of some invocation for the return of their missing sweethearts.

The sorcerer and the sorceress are important members of their communities and the position is usually handed down from father to son and from mother to daughter. The majority are feared and shunned by the peasantry.

They live generally in some deserted lane, their houses isolated from the dwellings of their fellow men. Mothers still teach their children that sorceresses have the power of changing themselves into any shape, that four times a month they roam the fields at midnight in the guise of wolves, that they climb trees and destroy birds' nests, that they set fire to wheat stacks, etc.

So the boys and girls cross themselves when they meet witch or wizard, afraid of catching the evil eye. Yet those same children hurry to their village seer instead of to the doctor when they fall ill. Indeed in many districts physicians have complained to the authorities of this illegal competition.

Certain toothless hags have a recipe and a remedy for every human ill and sorrow. These have been inherited from their great-grandmothers and are cherished as

Recent Events in Field of Electricity

The Electric Home.

AR and away the most popular of the many attractions of the electric show at Madison Square Garden in New York City, last week, was the electric home. There was enough electricity in sight to make a continuous thunderstorm, and acres of machinery manufacturing electricity and run by electricity. But while the various devices drew each a line of admirers the electric home attracted all other exhibits in popular favor. Here were shown a waffle iron that did its work in three minutes. A cup of coffee made in eight minutes, or one of tea in six. An electric range not very large in size, had an oven which it is claimed will cook top, bottom and all the sides alike. Four plates on the top will take care of a breakfast and three other utensils, the same time, or only one need be run, at the cost of one.

There was an electric machine that washed the dishes, and another that made ice. Also one that played the piano, and still another kept the sewing machine in motion.

Illustrating the comforts of a modern electric home. There were ceiling lights, side lights and a special light at the head of the bed for the use of those who are inclined to pillow reading or study.

On the dressing bureau there was an electric massage roller, warranted to produce beauty in a week of use. A curling iron that can be heated in three minutes and another machine that in the same length of time will warm the baby's bottle, or heat water that may be needed in an emergency.

Cutting Down Light Bills.

The incandescent electric lamp is one of the most commonly known and simplest household devices with which we have to deal, writes G. R. Metcalf in Technical Work. The lamp in general use is labeled sixteen-candle power, and the average use of these lamps is generally contented with the mere knowledge of how to turn his light on and off. He will undoubtedly rumble at times at the amount of his monthly bill for lighting, and will often be inconvenienced by the dimness of some of the lamps, but the electrician is not particularly good by turning on another lamp, and the monthly bill is further increased. It probably would never occur to him that it would be an actual economy in dollars and cents to throw away his old lamps and provide new ones at his own expense; and that the electrician is not particularly good by turning on another lamp, and the monthly bill is further increased.

The "smashing point" cannot be accurately determined for any lamp without rather extensive tests, but in general it is not necessary to determine its accuracy. A variation of one to two candle power will hardly be perceptible under the ordinary conditions of use, but when the lamp falls off three or four-candle power, and its dimness becomes appreciable, and it is a safe rule to follow, and it will prove more economical, to buy a new lamp rather than burn an old one after its diminution in candle power becomes noticeable. By this is meant that it will be more economical for the domestic use of light obtained because as the lamps fall off candle power, more lamps must be burned to obtain the original amount of light. If the reduced quantity of light from old lamps is sufficient, as, for example, in halls and closets, it would still be cheaper to throw out the old lamps and replace them with new ones of smaller candle power.

Railroad Electrification.

The decision of the Southern Pacific to give immediately the electrification of its lines around San Francisco illustrates the extension of the use of electricity for motive power on lines heretofore operated by steam locomotives. That the more modern power has not been adopted even more widely than it has already been is accounted for by railroad men to be electrically as a motive power, but either because of lack of funds with which to make the change, or because of uncertainty regarding the best system of electric installation. Several systems which have decided on the electrification of part of their lines have been deterred from doing so for other reasons or the other of these two reasons, and in some cases for both reasons. The most important undertaking in the way of electrification of railroad lines which are now in progress are those of the New York Central, the New Haven, and the Pennsylvania line running into New York. Among the other lines serving the metropolitan district which have decided to electrify their lines for some distance from their terminals, but which have not yet undertaken the task are the Erie and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western. A number of other lines also have discussed plans for electrification, and some of these plans have been definitely adopted. Among the latter is the Great Northern, which some months ago decided to electrify its tunnel through the Cascade mountains, as well as the approaches to both the east and west ends of the tunnel. In this case the electricity will be generated by water power. The Southern Pacific, while within reach of water power electricity, has decided to put up a steam generating plant. In addition to the electrification of the suburban lines around San Francisco, the Southern Pacific has under advisement the electrification of a long stretch of its road through the mountains south of San Francisco. The line to be electrified is in connection with plans for the construction of a new second track for this part of the Southern Pacific line.

Wireless Telephones on Warships.

Installing wireless telephones on the battleships Virginia and Connecticut of the Atlantic fleet has been begun as the first step in equipping the entire fleet with these instruments before its departure for the Pacific. This has attracted great attention and is a departure almost as important as the installation of wireless telegraphy on the American ships. It is expected that the captains of the ships of the fleet during their voyage will be able to converse with one another rapidly at a distance of between five and ten miles. The decision to equip the ships with wireless telephones was not reached until there had been rather full tests to demonstrate the practicability of the carrying of the voice by means of electric waves, but the telephone on ship board has been given great attention ever since it was reported that Admiral Togo by means of some wireless telegraph was able to keep in communication with most of his ships at the battle of the Tsushima Strait. One of the most conclusive tests of the usefulness of the telephone at sea was made recently when the news of the yacht races at the regatta of the Inter-laken association, Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, from July 12 to July 20, last, were sent from a moving yacht to the shore. The operator was in each case able to discern the speaker's voice. Eight messages were sent and received with as much clearness as if the conversation were being held over an ordinary telephone. Even when the yacht Thelma was several miles from the shore there was no hitch. Experiments have shown that it is easy to understand messages even in spite of "cross talk" wireless telegraph signals and atmospheric disturbances. The instruments to be installed on the battleships are guaranteed to give complete satisfaction for five miles under any atmospheric conditions. Under favorable conditions it will be possible to communicate at a much greater distance.

THE YOUNG GIRL WHOSE LOVE WAS THE WITCH'S AID.



A BRETON SORCESS.