

CURRENT TOPICS

THE SUBMARINE CABLES OF THE WORLD amount to 252,436 miles. A writer in the New York Sun says that governments own but 15 per cent of these cables, the rest being in private hands. It is pointed out that Denmark has a more prominent place among countries whose capitalists have engaged in laying ocean cable lines than might be expected from her inferior commercial importance. Denmark ranks fourth on the list, even surpassing Germany. It is explained that the reason is that the Great Northern Telegraph company, with its offices at Copenhagen, laid and operates one of the most important cable systems in the Orient—that which connects Vladivostok with Nagasaki, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

ACCORDING TO THE SAME AUTHORITY, Englishmen opened the first cable line—across the narrow channel between Dover and Calais, on August 28, 1850—and Englishmen yet control a larger mileage than the capitalists of any other country and more than half the total of the submarine lines. The Sun writer says: "The British cables which connect London with all parts of the world have a length of 154,099 miles, of which 14,963 miles are owned by the government. Of the 139,136 miles owned by private companies, the largest mileage is in the Australian and Oriental lines. The Eastern Extension, Australasia and China Telegraph company controls 27,609 miles and the Western Telegraph company 19,880 miles. The most important of the British cable lines are the five that stretch across the north Atlantic, and also the first line stretched across the Pacific which connects Vancouver with the Fiji islands, Norfolk island, Queensland and New Zealand, and which was opened on December 8, 1903. Among the many British lines also are cables to South America and along both of its coasts."

THE UNITED STATES IS SECOND ON THE list with 44,470 miles of cable, nearly all in private hands, the government controlling only a short mileage in Alaskan waters. The Sun writer adds: "The most important are the five lines across the Atlantic and the second great Pacific cable, completed on July 25, 1903, by the Commercial Cable company, between San Francisco, Honolulu, Midway Island, Guam and the Philippines. Another great line laid down by American capitalists is that on the Pacific coast between the isthmus of Tehuantepec and Valparaiso, Chile. France has the third place with a total length of 24,010 miles, of which 10,092 are the property of the state. The most important of the submarine connections of France are the two lines which connect Brest with the United States. As already mentioned, Denmark is fourth on the list with 9,488 miles. Germany lags behind with 9,228 miles of cable, of which more than one-third is owned by the government. Its most important cable service is that between the island of Borkum, Fayal and New York city. The seventeen other countries which take a financial interest in cables, have altogether only 11,131 miles of lines, nearly all of them owned by the various governments. The country which figures to the smallest extent in this list is Bulgaria with an ocean cable about three-fourths of a mile long. Roumania beats her neighbor with a cable four and one-third miles long."

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEWSPAPER LIBEL LAW is soon to be tested, and a dispatch to the Washington Times says that the test will be made on the weekly publications in the state. The law requires that the name of the editor and owners of every paper be printed. Few papers have complied with these terms and Governor Pennypacker announces his determination to enforce the law. The Times correspondent says: "After the storm of public opinion which followed the passage of the libel bill those who were instrumental in securing its passage were very willing that no attempt should be made to enforce it. Those who attended conferences of the republican state leaders at that time say that many of the politicians were fearful of the effect which the united action of the republican papers in the state might have. The recent state campaign, however, convinced

the leaders that they had nothing to fear from subservient republican papers, but that the great majority of them could be induced to tamely acquiesce in any program the leaders might agree upon."

HENRIETTE DUPERRON, A WELL KNOWN character, died at Paris December 26. She was seventy-six years of age and during the past thirty-five years sold newspapers and magazines at one of the Paris street corners. The Paris correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean, referring to Mme. Duperron, says: "She was the especial protegee of the Americans who patronized the hotel, and thousands of them sought her advice on all subjects. The old woman's funeral promises to be one of the most notable Paris has seen for some time. Members of the Jockey club near by, one of the most exclusive clubs in the world, will attend in a body. This club for many years sent a carriage nightly to the kiosk to take Mme. Duperron home. Many gifts, from money to houses, were offered the old woman, but she never would accept a present. She contributed \$2,000 to the cause of Napoleon III., but when, after he became emperor, he sought to reward her, she proudly refused all his proffered favors. It is supposed the government's decision to close the kiosk over which she presided so many years hastened her death."

AN OPERATION WAS RECENTLY PERFORMED at Sioux City, Ia., and the Sioux City correspondent for the New York Herald says that this particular operation has no parallel in the surgical world. The operation was performed at St. Joseph's hospital by Dr. William Jepson, who has the chair of surgery at the state university. The Herald correspondent explains: "John Norstrom, of Danbury, fell from a load of hay, striking on his head and breaking his neck. He has been almost paralyzed for weeks, and Dr. Jepson decided to operate on his broken neck. Accordingly part of the third cervical vertebrae was removed, the false growth of tissue was cleaned out and the bone replaced. The patient is doing well, with every prospect of recovery. Operations have been performed for the relief of dislocation of the lumbar vertebrae, but it is said that no other case is known in which the cervical vertebrae, situated so near the medulla oblongata, the seat of vital bodily functions, has been successfully removed and replaced."

AN INTERESTING CASE IS REPORTED from Iowa wherein a man charged with wife desertion may be freed from the accusation because of the omission of a comma in the law on this point. Recently the New Jersey authorities applied for the extradition of one Fred Shivers who was charged with wife desertion, and Governor Cummins of Iowa denied the application because of the omission of a comma and the insertion of a conjunction in the New Jersey law. The Des Moines, Ia., correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch says: "The New Jersey law on wife desertion provides for the punishment of men who 'desert their wives and leave the state.' Governor Cummins points out that leaving the state must be part of the crime, therefore the crime could not be committed till the offender had left the state, and, having left the state before the crime was committed, he cannot be extradited and returned to the state."

AN INTERESTING FIND WAS RECENTLY made by a resident of Chester, Vt., while sawing logs in the woods near that place. An Indian tomahawk was found firmly imbedded in an oak log, at least ten inches in from the bark and although the tomahawk was covered with rust it was still in a fair state of preservation. On the knife was found the words "Peter Snow," and also "Gen. Starks Army, 1777," as well as some rough drawings. Speaking of this discovery, the Chester, Vt., correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch says: "In 1777 Gen. John Stark and his New Hampshire militia marched from Concord, N. H., to Bennington, Vt., and camped for two months near Lowell lake, a short distance from where the tomahawk was found. He later took part in the battle of Bennington. Many curiosi-

ties have been found near the camp, which is now marked by an old burying ground. Several years ago a resident of this place discovered, under two feet of soil, a cannon ball and a tomahawk, similar to that found by North. But it had no inscription. It is believed that one of Stark's soldiers left the weapon in the tree, and that the wood grew around it until it covered it. The oak was stunted, but in full vigor when felled."

A PRISONER WAS RECENTLY RELEASED from the Sioux Falls (S. D.) penitentiary after serving a term of fifteen years, less good time allowance, for the theft of a 2-cent postage stamp. This released prisoner had held up a mail carrier in Nebraska fifteen years ago and although he got but a 2-cent stamp, under the federal statutes the highway robbery of a mail carrier is a crime punishable with life imprisonment, but this sentence was afterwards commuted by President McKinley to fifteen years imprisonment.

SOME ELECTRIC ODDITIES ARE BEING installed in the new White Star liner 'Saltic,' now nearing completion on the other side of the Atlantic. A writer in the New York Commercial says: "One of the novelties is an electric griddle cake and waffle range. The automatic egg-broilers are designed to cook 200 eggs at once, a clock arrangement causing the basket containing the eggs to hop out of the water at any half-minute up to six minutes. Another novelty is a self-dumping oyster cooker for stews. At the end of a given time the cooker pours its savory contents into a soup plate and automatically shuts off the electricity. There are electric oyster and toast ranges, coffee urns, self-feeding tea and chocolate urns, cereal boilers, ice-breakers, butter cutters, almond and coconut graters, ice-cream freezers, flour sifters, bread mixers, egg beaters, vegetable cookers, plate warmers, batter cake cooking boxes, dumpling steamers, and pastry cookers." In spite of repeated experiments, an electric broiler for steaks and chops has not been invented. Epicures say that meat cooked on electrical rollers has a metallic taste. It is a tribute to American ingenuity that this English and Irish built ship must have nearly all her electrical equipment manufactured in this country."

DR. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, THE inventor of the telephone, recently arrived in Genoa, Italy, from which place he will convey to the Smithsonian institute at Washington, D. C., the remains of James Smithson, founder of the institution, who died in Genoa in 1829. In connection with this action on the part of Mr. Bell, a Washington dispatch under date of December 27 may be interesting. The dispatch says: "It is said here that the reason for the removal at this time of the body of the founder of the Smithsonian institution from Genoa to this country is because a stone quarry has encroached on the English cemetery at Genoa to such an extent that it has become necessary to remove the remains interred there. Mr. Bell left this country a little more than a week ago. Congress has made no appropriation for the removal of Mr. Smithson's remains to this country and it could not be learned tonight, on account of the absence of Prof. Langley from the city, whether the regents of the Smithsonian had voted money for this purpose or Mr. Bell was acting on his own initiative. The matter had been discussed in local scientific circles, where the opinion prevails that the grounds of the institution in this city are the proper site for the final resting place of Mr. Smithson's remains."

AMONG THE GIFTS RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT on Christmas day was one that was sent to him by a resident of Scranton, Pa. This present consisted of a miniature coal car carved out of a chunk of coal, the car being topped off with coal and ornamented with the national colors. It stands four inches high and is a foot in length. President Roosevelt has sent to the Scranton giver his autograph letter acknowledging the unique gift.

A VALUABLE WORK HAS BEEN COMPILED by an official in the state department at Washington. Assistant Solicitor Frederick Van