

**TELEGRAPHIC TALES
AND TELEGRAPHIC
HISTORY**

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Telegraphic tales and telegraphic history by W. J. Johnston

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W. J. JOHNSTON

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TELEGRAPHIC TALES

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TELEGRAPHIC HISTORY.

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH—ITS

USE, EXTENT AND OUTGROWTHS.

By W. J. JOHNSTON,

EDITOR OF "THE OPERATOR."

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PREFACE.

Some time ago the subscriber published a number of anecdotes relating to telegraphy, which were received with an unexpected degree of favor. They were so extensively copied in the newspapers as to set him thinking that the preparation of such a book as this would please the reading public, as well as members of the telegraphic profession. Hence the undertaking herewith put on the book market as a candidate for popular favor. No more is claimed for it than that it presents, in a methodized and compact form, a comprehensive summary of such telegraphic information as is likely to be valued by the general public, and of use to the operator because of the convenient method of its presentation—varied, as is desirable, with lighter matter. Very considerable labor has been expended upon it, in the hope and belief that it will occupy an unique place among those books which instruct without being tedious and entertain wholesomely. Should this expectation be verified, the subscriber will be justified in his confidence that the reading public and the profession will in a new instance show their appreciation of that

sort of literary work which constructs miscellaneous materials into an edifice not wanting, as he trusts, in symmetry and beauty. The well-read operator may find individual passages herein which he has met with before; but it is believed that he will be the readiest to appreciate the judgment and industry which have put them exactly in their proper places as portions of a book.

The subscriber's modesty would lead him to claim even less than he does for this his latest publication, had he been solely engaged in its production. He will add no more than his hearty acknowledgments of the valuable assistance rendered him by Mr. Henry G. Taylor, a New York journalist whose experience and graceful ease of expression give him distinction under the severe test of metropolitan competition.

W. J. JOHNSTON.

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TELEGRAPHIC TALES

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PRE-ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

When signaling as a mode of communication was first adopted, no amount of research can ascertain. We find it difficult to conceive of a time when it was not convenient, if not necessary, and when human ingenuity was incapable of providing it.

One of the earliest recorded systems of telegraphy for signaling over long distances originated among the African negroes, and has been practiced from time immemorial. The means used are telephonic, the signals being read by sound, and not by the eye.

The "ellicumbic," as the instrument used is termed, is still in existence, and used in the Cameroons Country, on the west coast of Africa. By the sounds produced on striking it, the natives carry on conversation with great rapidity, and at several miles distance. The noises are made to produce a perfect and distinct language, as intelligible to the operator as that uttered by the human voice.

It is hardly necessary to add that the existence of this contrivance, capable of such useful effects, implies evolution, probably carried on through a series of ages,