

**HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE  
ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH  
INCLUDING ITS RISE AND  
PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649254927

Historical sketch of the electric telegraph including its rise and progress in the United States by  
Alexander Jones

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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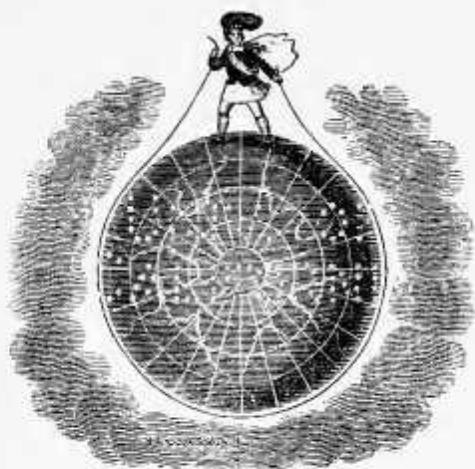




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BY  
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"I'll put a girl round about the earth in forty minutes."—SHAKESPEARE.

NEW-YORK:  
GEORGE P. PUTNAM, 10 PARK PLACE.  
M.DCCC.LII.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by  
ALEXANDER JONES,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New-York.

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JOHN F. TROW,  
PRINTER AND STENOGRAPHER,  
49 ANN-ST.

NOV 18 1852

TO  
THE MERCHANTS OF NEW-YORK,  
IN HUMBLE ADMIRATION OF THEIR PATRIOTISM, INTELLIGENCE, AND ENTERPRISE;  
THE FAME OF WHOSE DEEDS IS RECORDED ON  
THE ICY BARRIERS OF ARCTIC SEAS,  
IN THE EARLIEST AND LATEST TRIUMPHS OF STEAM,  
AND  
IN THE UNEQUALLED SPEED OF THEIR SAILING VESSELS,  
NO LESS THAN  
IN THEIR LIBERAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF WORKS OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT,  
AND TO WHOSE PATRONAGE,  
WITH THAT OF THE PUBLIC PRESS,  
THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS ARE LARGELY INDEBTED FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND SUCCESS;  
THIS IMPERFECT WORK  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.





## P R E F A C E .

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ELECTRICITY is the poetry of science ; no romance—no tales of fiction excel in wonder its history and achievements. Viewed in its terrible atmospheric manifestations, no element would seem less likely to be brought under the control of man, and, in feebler currents, made to do his bidding, than it : yet, such is the result.

We find it, in one instance, like a skilful chemist, elaborately analyzing bodies supposed to be simple alkalies, and showing them to be compounds of metals and oxygen. Again, we find it at work in attempts to manufacture diamonds. Anon, it turns physician, and endeavors not only to heal the sick, but to bring the dead to life. In another case, we find it employed in the plastic art, and, like an expert operator, making beautiful and delicate copies of works of sculpture, and engraving in masses of solid metal. Again, we find it working in the sun's rays, and on the surface of Daguerreotype plates, delineating the human features. It is, again, engaged in dissolving gold and silver, and applying them to the gilding and plating of other metals.

We find it, at another time, employed in blasting rocks from the mountain side, or in removing them from the channels of rivers and harbors. Again, it stands ready to enlist its services beneath the banners of contending armies, to engage on either side, in fearful slaughter and destruction, and then

suddenly send to the ends of the earth, the news of its own defeat or victory.

Finally, it turns its electric attention to the movements of "*Father Time*," and undertakes to give him lessons in regularity and speed. In one instance, we find it conveying messages of intelligence in advance of time over a continent, measuring the degrees of longitude, and dropping copies of its news at each hamlet, village and town, in its flight over mountain peaks,

"Where Alpine solitudes extend ;"

across valleys wide, and rivers deep and strong; and as quickly at its post again. Anon, we find it working a hall or city clock, making it accurately mark time in exact seconds, showing its slow but steady flight.

Again, we find it turned policeman; sounding its whistles and alarm bells, to arouse drowsy firemen or sleepy watchmen, calling them quickly to a raging fire, murderous assault, or marauding burglary.

Again, we find its magic power at work in securing the doors and vaults of our buildings, or it is found standing sentinel over our treasures, ready to sound the alarm on the first touch of the robber. It also is prepared to pursue the rogue, fly in advance of his steps, and drop pictures of his person and features at each station on its way. Not only so; but it stands ready to turn coast-guard, to sound whistles or bells over dangerous reefs or rocky shoals, and thus timely warn vessels of impending danger.

Where, in the most extravagant records of fancy—in the wildest dreams of the marvellous—can we find a hero, however lauded and deified, whose most astounding deeds ever compared, for one moment, with the exploits of electricity? Yet, its mighty triumphs are but half revealed, and the vast extent of its extraordinary power but half understood!