victory, a disastrous defeat,—the wire vibrates with the news, the needle jerks out the intelligence, breathless it sometimes seems by the swift run it has had from some far distant place, or palpitating at the thought of the smiles or the tears, the shout or the silence that shall meet its message.

The electric current has followed the stealthy man-slayer, outstripped his flight, cried out "He is coming!" to Justice, while he, unconscious of his danger, smiles at his own security, even as the words fly past him and the wires tremble at the news. And then, what anxieties have those wires relieved? what consolations have they borne? what joyous words have they carried? A wonderful invention, that of the Electric Telegraph!

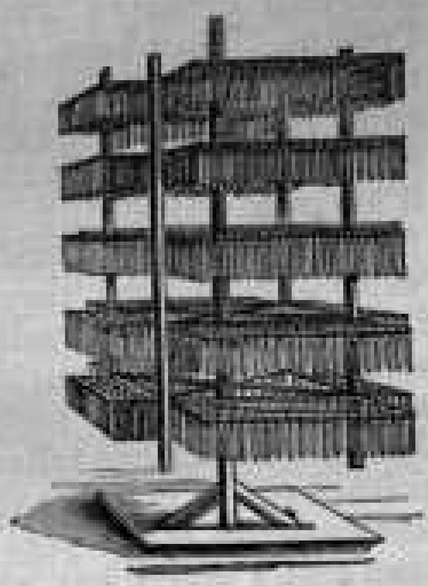
But the Electric Telegraph is only a simple application of Electricity. If we knew as little of that subtle agent as our great grandsires we should still have to employ the antiquated semaphores, that were so costly, so clumsy, and so often entirely useless.

Who discovered Electricity so as to render its application practicable? A dozen names—or more—might be given as of those who knew something of the agent; but one name is conspicuous above all the rest, and that is the name of Benjamin Franklin. The electrical discoveries of this man gave a new power into the hands of ever-active enterprise; he, the American Prometheus, brought fire from heaven, and showed that it was only the result of electricity—the Royal Society laughed, and then found it was true.

The story of the life of Benjamin Franklin is full of interest and instruction. He was born at Boston, in North America, in 1706, before the Stars and Stripes were heard of, and Yankee Doodle was sung by British girls at home as a harvest song, without a thought that the colonies would claim it for their own. Benjamin was the fifteenth of seventeen children. His father was a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler, and thus in an atmosphere unsavoury the great man began his life. Ben was to be a parson, and one may imagine that having this prospect before him his

soul rose above tallow tubs. There was an uncle, who good-humouredly offered to supply him with a large collection of second-hand sermons, which he had heard in the course of a long life, and had taken down in short-hand. But Ben's visions of the pulpit were not to be realized. The outlay of a professional education was more than his father felt himself justified in incurring; he therefore altered his plan, and the boy at about the age of ten was set to clipping candle wicks, and filling moulds with tallow. So,

CANDLE DIPPING.



COOLING FRAME.

you see, he was to cast a little light upon the world after all. But he hated candle making. He exhibited his aversion so openly that his father apprehended some serious result—running away to sea or some other ready remedy. He therefore cast about for another trade for his boy, and it was agreed that he should be bound apprentice to his cousin the cutler.

But the premium demanded was too large to suit the purse of the elder Franklin, and as James, another son, was in

UB Braunschweig http://www.digibib.tu-bs.de/?perid=00031385&imgid=00000046.jpg