THE TECH.

Phone Company has constructed two short lines of underground wires in Boston, and these furnish a basis from which to judge of the practicability and the expense of such a system.

It has already been established that retardation and induction are both obviated by the use of double and twisted wires in metallic circuit; but as the two lines constructed in Boston are only about a quarter of a mile each in length, it was thought best to try the single-line circuits, in the hope that the retardation and induction on so short lines would not be serious. It is also found that conversation over these lines is not so easily carried on as by means of the overhead wires, and, moreover, it is frequently possible to overhear other conversation. Thus, for practical reasons, the single-wire system underground is condemned. As to the cost of this system, it is estimated that for piping and chambers it would be about $50,000 per mile, and for the cables about $150 per mile, so that in round numbers we may say that one thousand miles would cost $150,000 per mile, or $150 a mile for each circuit.

The facts above given seem to indicate that the underground system is practicable in some shape or other, and if by any means the cost can be made sufficiently low to admit of its being adopted by the various electric companies of this country, it will doubtless prove to be the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty.

It was with some surprise and, we must add, with regret, that we read the account of the Yale alumni dinner as reported in the daily papers, on which occasion our much-esteemed president was forced to admit a feeling of homesickness for "old Yale," if we mistake not his language. For this we are sorry, but may be assured that, in whatever department the talents of our president may be employed, his whole energies will be concentrated there to the benefit of that department.

The designs for a small museum and amphitheatre for the study of the natural sciences, which the architects have just exhibited, were especially interesting from the variety of individual character displayed in working them up. Without exception, the drawings were excellent; each designer seemed at his best. Mr. De Coster, who received the first mention, had rendered his design in his usual artistic way, soft grays and cream colors predominating; but, charming as this rendering is, one wishes he would express his ideas in other language just often enough to give piquancy to so pleasant an individuality. Mr. Ilsley's design received the second mention, and scarcely a greater contrast could be imagined than that between his design and Mr. DeCoster's. This, too, was most characteristic. Greek doric would at first thought seem the height of the inappropriate for such a purpose, especially as regards the semicircular colonnade; but Mr. Ilsley's true Greek feeling enables him to adapt his means to his ends in such a masterly way that one feels immediately that the best thing has been used in just the best place. One of the students, speaking of this design, expressed very well the feeling one has in the presence of Greek work: "You would feel as if you were in the presence of gods and goddesses when you walked along that colonnade." Mr. Green and Mr. Schmidt received the other mentions; both had very finished designs; but, after all, it was only a matter of degree, not of quality, which made one better than another; they all, as one of the professors said, deserved mention.

It is a rather new experiment in the Institute to have a life class for the Architects. There is still something to be desired, however, in the arrangement of the class. Meeting, as it does, at present in 4 Rogers, the members are obliged to transport all their materials, boards, paper, charcoal, etc., from one building to the other, or to leave them between the meetings in the room. The latter way of getting over the difficulty has its objections, especially in the fact the drawings sometimes disappear, owing, probably, to the fineness of the students' perception of the ridiculous. If the Architectural Library could be fitted up for the purpose of the life class, the students would be saved much inconvenience.