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CABLE, a thick, large, strong rope, commonly of hemp, which serves to keep a ship at anchor.

There is no merchant-ship, however weak, but has at least three cables; namely, the chief cable, or cable of the sheet-anchor, a common cable, and a smaller one.

Cable is also said of ropes, which serve to raise heavy loads, by the help of cranes, pullies, and other engines. The name of cable is usually given to such as have, at least, three inches in diameter; those that are less are only called ropes of different names, according to their use.

Every cable, of what thickness soever it be, is composed of three strands; every strand of three ropes; and every rope of three twists: the twist is made of more or less threads, according as the cable is to be thicker or thinner.

In the manufacture of cables, after the ropes are made, they use sticks, which they pass first between the ropes of which they make the strands, and afterwards between the strands of which they make the cable, to the end that they may all twist the better, and be more regularly wound together; and also, to prevent them from twining or intangling, they hang,

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at the end of each strand and of each rope, a weight of lead or of stone.

The number of threads each cable is composed of is always proportioned to its length and thickness; and it is by this number of threads that its weight and value are ascertained: thus a cable of three inches circumference, or one inch diameter, ought to consist of 48 ordinary threads, and weigh 192 pounds; and on this foundation is calculated the following table, very useful for all people engaged in marine commerce, who fit out merchant-men for their own account, or freight them for the account of others.

A table of the number of threads and weight of cables of different circumferences.

Circumf.	Threads.	Weight.
3 inches.	48	192 pounds
4	77	308
5	121	484
6	174	696
7	238	952
8	314	1244
9	393	1572
10	485	1940
11	598	2392
12	699	2796
13	821	3284
14	952	3808
15	1093	4372
16	1244	4976
17	1404	5616
18	1574	6296
19	1754	7016
20	1943	7772

Sheet-anchor CABLE, is the greatest cable belonging to a ship.

Serve or plate the CABLE, is to bind it about with ropes, clouts, &c. to keep it from galling in the hawse.

To splice a CABLE, is to make two pieces fast together, by working the several threads of the rope, the one into the other.

Pay more CABLE, is to let more out of the ship. *Pay cheap the cable*, is to hand it out apace. *Veer more cable*, is to let more out, &c.