

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

A Visit to Portland, Maine—Propellers Preferred to Side-wheel Steamers—Sunrise at Sea—Portland a Growing and Thriving Business Place.

PORTLAND, Maine, Aug. 26, 1860.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—At four o'clock on Saturday, the 25th ult. we stepped on board of the propeller *Paptasco*, then laying at her wharf in New York, and advertised to sail at that hour for Portland. Our voyage was unusually prosperous, the sky remained clear during the whole time, and while the sun was not too hot by day, the moon-beams sparkled upon the water by night, which together made the hours pass softly and pleasantly away. Monday morning we were all up by four o'clock to see the coast of Maine, and the harbor of Portland. As we came on deck the sun was just rising, as it were, from the ocean itself, and the golden glow cast upon changing waters made us realize, what we have often before read about, but never before appreciated, the beauty and magnificence of a sunrise at sea. As we neared the coast we espied upon our left the shore of Maine, and upon our right, one of the many islands that abound upon this coast. Many years ago, it is probable that all this coast was submerged, and formed a part of the ocean bed; but the gradual accretion of time, the washing of soil from above have made the coast, and now we find it abounding in capes, promontories and islands. It is said that there are three hundred and sixty-five islands in Portland harbor, or one for each day in the year.

The presence of these islands make it one of the most magnificent ports of which the world can boast. As we turned the point which hid the city from our view, the enterprising little propeller announced our arrival by the firing of a gun from our bow, which made us feel very much like foreigners. On the whole we like propeller traveling very well, the motion is more agreeable we think than the motion of side wheel steamers; and although they may lack speed, still we know our little vessel more than paid expenses, which is an item worthy of consideration.

Portland itself is growing, its business is thriving; and if its inhabitants cannot grow rich here quite so fast, still they have the advantages of living in a place where land is comparatively cheap, and the consequence is, that all who are making any money at all, live in comfortable and in many instances elegant residences. In the number and character of the trees which shade its streets, it is second only to New Haven, and even this position is disputed by its inhabitants, and the first place claimed instead.

We passed the pier and warehouse erected solely for the accommodation of the *Great Eastern*. There it lay and like the ship itself, to all appearance unemployed. What will be the solution of the problem propounded by this mammoth enterprise, time only can reveal.

There is a question now interesting the people of Maine concerning the discovery and colonization of the State, and as one of the sister States we believe it will be interesting to all your readers. Capt. George Waymouth has the honor of being the first explorer of the coast of Maine or Massachusetts, and the question concerns the river which he is supposed to have entered in 1605, some holding it to be the Sagadahock or Kennebeck, some that it was the Penobscot, and still others give the honor to the river St. George.

Waymouth was fitted out for an exploring expedition from Plymouth, England, to discover the resources of this easterly region of our country. He arrived on this coast early in the season of 1605, and discovered and entered "a great river" which was afterwards always known or believed to be the Sagadahock, by the earlier historians; this river being again visited by Capt. Pien in 1606, and settled in 1607 by Popham. But about the year 1796, Dr. Belknap in his notice of the earlier voyages unsettled this opinion and transferred the honor from the Kennebeck to the Penobscot. All old opinions were thus set aside, and the authority of Hubbard, Prince, and other old historians were disregarded. In 1804, the subject was revised, and the remarks of Dr. Belknap reviewed, and the opinion entertained from the beginning, brought forward and defended in an able article read before the Maine Historical Society of this place by John McKeen, and since published in the collections of this society. Mr. McKeen's view is corroborated by the discovery of a manuscript history written by one

William Strackey who was for three years secretary of the Virginia Colony, namely, in the years 1609, 10 and 11; he was one of the patentees, and perfectly familiar with the early voyages. This manuscript history was prepared for the press in Strackey's own handwriting; as prepared it was copied, and both copies deposited, one in the Sloan collection, the other among the Ashmolean manuscripts. One of the copies was dedicated to Sir Francis Bacon, then Lord High Chancellor. Here they remained never having seen the light from the time when they were probably first deposited in 1616 or 17, to 1848, the time when they were discovered and published under the supervision of the Hockluit Society in London, in 1849. This history states distinctly, that Capt. Waymouth discovered "Sixty miles up the most excellent and beneficial river of Sagadahock," (now the Kennebeck). Upon this point Broadhead remarks that Strackey's authority "is conclusive, in favor of the Sagadahock or the Kennebeck," (History of New York, Vol. I., page ix, note). Public opinion seems more to favor this view of the question, and although there are able men who advocate a contrary opinion, still the weight of authority bears strongly in favor of the opinion held by the first historians, and to the effect that Sagadahock or Kennebeck is the river entitled to be considered the initial point of discovery and settlement of the States of Maine and Massachusetts.

Brunswick, where we had the pleasure of stopping a few days, is a rural village and derives its chief importance from the presence of Bowdoin College, the college building and the residences of the professors constituting the chief ornaments of the place. The college was organized in 1794, but did not go into operation until 1802, from which period its active existence may be dated. The college has quite a large library, a mineralogical cabinet and picture gallery, in which are found life-likenesses of many of the chief personages living at the time and interested in its foundation. The chapel is a fine specimen of architecture, built of stone; its interior consisting of a single nave, and the seats ranged parallel with either side. Above the seats are panels designed for pictures representing biblical scenes, one side is intended for the scenes from the Old Testament, and the other for scenes representing the principal events of the New Testament. Part of these are already painted, but as the work progresses only as individuals contribute funds for each picture; the trustees of the college conceiving it to be improper for them to devote the funds of the college for the purpose, it must necessarily be some time before all the panels are filled. Several, however, have been completed, the cost of each picture varying from two to three hundred dollars, and so far each painting has been donated by some single individual. Among those furnished we notice the picture designed to represent the Annunciation, as being worthy of special attention. Another scene represents the Wise Men of the East guided by the Star of Bethlehem, standing over the infant Jesus; and still another represents the healing of the lame man by Peter and John. None of the scenes from the Old Testament have yet been painted.

The accommodations of the students are usually good, and for this they are indebted to a fire which occurred some years since, and destroyed the old buildings including the commons; since which the present buildings which are built of brick, and are ample in proportions, have been erected. They are now *minus* the commons, the students eating their meals out, or clubbing together and employing some female to cook their food for them, in cases where economy is an object.

The village consists of one or two principal streets, on one of which there is a large mall, or public walk shaded with trees. The houses are surrounded by shrubbery, very neat in appearance, and denote industry, thrift and intelligence, as do all the houses in New England villages. The land upon which the place is located as well as that in the neighborhood is all very level, and look which way you will, you can see no hills or mountains on the horizon. This level tract, however, is confined to this locality, the northern part of the State being a desolate mountainous region.

To-morrow we start for Boston, the Athens of America, and after paying our respects to that very respectable place, we shall leave for home. WILLARD.

AMERICAN ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday evening, September 5th, the usual monthly meeting of this association was held at its room, No. 24 Cooper Institute, this city; Louis Koch, chairman *pro tem*, John C. Marriam, secretary.

After disposing with considerable unimportant miscellaneous business, the following gentlemen were elected members of the association:—John Stover, J. D. Webster, W. B. Seaden, A. S. Cameron, Henry L. Davidson and A. S. Wilson, Jr., the subjoined were then proposed for the same object, their election to be acted upon next month:—Hiram A. Farm, James Bogardus, W. Sewell and Calvin Day.

The association then proceeded to the examination of two

NEW INVENTIONS.

Improved Switch.—Mr. Merriam exhibited what he considered an improved switch, invented by Mr. Beech, an engineer employed on the New York and Erie Railroad. The advantages claimed for it are its self-acting principles, its simplicity and reliability. It works with a powerful spring, which, when a train of cars have passed the point where it is situated, resumes its former position, adjusting the track in such a manner as to render it impossible for passing trains to run off the line. There has been one in operation upon the Erie road for some time past, and it is said to work very successfully.

Patent Lubricator.—Mr. John Stover exhibited what he esteemed an improvement in lubricators. He considered the presence of acids and other foreign substances in the large proportion of lubricating oils, very injurious to the parts of engines when applied, eating them away and corroding them to an alarming extent. The novelty claimed in his invention was, that pure suet, which could be purchased for seven cents per pound, was placed in the top of the lubricator, and by compression and the proper arrangement of valves, the pure animal matter without any objectionable substance was thereby obtained for use. Several ferry boats on the North and East rivers, also the steamer *Daniel Drew* had used it some time, and the respective engineers of these vessels deem it a very useful invention. It is well to state, this lubricator is not designed for use on the main journals of an engine.

These inventions were referred to the appropriate committee, who will report upon their utility when in practical operation.

The committee on "Science and New Inventions" have had great difficulty in regularly making their reports, because of the negligence of those presenting their inventions for examination, an opportunity was not afforded for observing them in working order, and consequently, they had been incapacitated from presenting reports of inventions presented to the society many months since. The committee asked the association to make a change in this respect, after much discussion, during which various opinions were introduced, it was resolved that in future, all inventions should be put in practical operation, so that the committee might examine them without inconvenience to themselves.

An invitation was extended to the association, from the Newark Engineers' Society to be present at their weekly meetings.

The members passed a resolution thanking Com. J. H. Ward, U. N. S., for a copy of his late work on "Steam for the Million."

After a few remarks by Mr. Charles Shrimpton, of this city, explaining his peculiar theory of the high-pressure steam-engine, by economizing the heat, saving the fuel, and preserving the water. The meeting adjourned.

PATENT CASE IN CALIFORNIA.—A very important patent suit, involving large New York interests, terminated recently in California, in the United States Circuit Court, Judge McAllister presiding. The title of the suit was *Dietz vs. Bragg & Co.* The effect of the verdict for the plaintiff is, to sustain Michael A. Dietz's patent for his coal oil burner. The jury gave nominal damages. Dietz will now institute a suit, it is said, to recover the value of burners sold by Bragg & Co., since the commencement of the above suit. It is estimated that Bragg & Co. have sold upwards of \$35,000 worth of the burner which is proved to be an infringement on the Dietz patent. During the trial it was shown that coal oil can be made to burn in the common camphene lamp, though at much greater cost.