



Ocean Steamers.

None of our new steamers, nor the British either, have made so quick a trip (not passage now) from Liverpool to this city, as the Great Western once did, viz. 12 days and 18 hours. The Great Britain made the next fastest, 13 days and 3 hours. The United States the next, 13 days and 6 hours. All these trips have been beaten by both the Hibernia and Acadia to Boston. We believe that the first trip of the Niagara to Boston was one of the best ever made. It will require time, however, to test the merits of all our new steamers, both those built here and in Scotland.—Often have we sincerely regretted the accident that occurred to the Great Britain. That vessel with her screw propeller never received a fair trial. The true test of superiority in ocean steamers, or any other, is the quickest trip, the fewest repairs, and the least consumption of fuel. All these things must be taken into consideration, in judging of steam ships. The last trip of the United States was a good one, but we expect far better yet from her. A correspondent suggests the adoption of rotary engines to steam navigation, as being superior to the reciprocating and suggests Schnebley's. We have never seen that rotary which could be applied for this purpose.—In 1843 Lord Cochrane's rotary engine (perhaps one of the best in the world) was applied to a sloop of war at Portsmouth, England, and was a failure. We have no feeling in joining uproariously regarding the merits of the American and British built steamers. The fact is that we may expect both lines to be equal in point of every comfort and improvement. When one gets something new, the other dare not be long behind, and the mechanics of both countries are perfectly qualified to build the first class of vessels—the price is the main object to get good work done. In the course of five years more, we think that 10 days will be the average passage out, and 12 back—we have no hope of any less.

Underground Street.

A new experiment in street making is about being tried in Philadelphia. The street, 25 feet in width, will be excavated so that the whole can be used for cellar room, while granite blocks 12 feet in width will form the cartway, supported in the centre of the street by a wall, and resting upon the foundation of the stores that are to line either side of the street. The blocks will be slightly inclined towards the centre of the street, where the gutter is to be situated. This is a gigantic undertaking, requiring a large quantity of granite, the street being no less than 350 feet in length. This is on account of the scarcity of land on our continent, and shows the right spirit of economy.

New Marriage Act.

The following language occurs in the New Marriage Act for Scotland, to go into effect in 1849: "And be it enacted that it shall not be lawful for the Registrar to register any marriage proposed to be contracted by registration unless one or both of the parties intending so to contract marriage shall have been resident within the district fourteen clear days previous to the registration."

This must effectually prevent marriages in that country where it rains 365 days in the year and the 6 hours obscured by clouds.

Preservation of Milk.

If milk be introduced into bottles, then well corked, put into a pan of cold water, and gradually raised to the boiling point, and after being allowed to cool, be taken out and set away in a cool place, the milk may be preserved perfectly sweet for upwards of half a year. Or it may be evaporated to dryness by a gentle heat and under constant stirring. A dry mass will thus be obtained, which when dissolved in water, is said to possess all the qualities of the best milk. It is called latteina in Italy.

The Alpine Horn.

The Alpine Horn, is an instrument made of the bark of a cherry tree, and like a speaking trumpet is used to convey sounds to a great distance. When the last rays of the sun gild the summit of the Alps, the shepherd who inhabits the highest peak of these mountains takes his horn, and cries with a loud voice, "Praised be the Lord." As soon as the neighboring shepherds hear him, they leave their huts and repeat these words. The sounds are prolonged many minutes, whilst the echoes of the mountains and grottos of the rocks repeat the name of God. Imagination cannot picture anything more solemn and sublime than this scene. During the silence that succeeds, the shepherds bend their knees, and pray in the open air, and then retire to their huts to rest. The sunlight gilding the tops of those stupendous mountains, upon which the vault of heaven seems to rest; the magnificent scenery around, and the voices of the shepherds sounding from rock to rock the praise of the Almighty, must fill the mind of every traveller with enthusiasm and awe.

Republican Dames.

At Queen Victoria's drawing room, two American ladies were dressed as follows, as we gather from the Court Journal:—

"Mrs Hoffman wore a train and bodice of rich blue brocade, lined with white silk, and elegantly trimmed with hollyhock; blonde dress, over satin under dress. Head dress; court plume, blonde lappets and costly diamonds. Mrs. W. Simmin wore a costume *à la cour* composed of a rich train of *noir antique*, ornamented with Brussels point lace; a superb Brussels lace petticoat over a rich white satin slip. Head dress: Brussels point lace lappets, feathers and a parure of diamonds.—Mrs. S's costume attracted great attention. It was one of the richest and most beautiful worn at the drawing room."

Plain republican wives, we suppose. Our ministers and consuls have bravely got over the simple habits of their republican forefathers.

The Microscope and Riches.

When the oxy-hydrogen microscope was recently shown at the Newcastle Polytechnic Exhibition, a poor old woman, whose riches will never retard her ascent to heaven, took her seat in the lecture room, to witness the wonders that were for the first time to meet her sight. A piece of lace was magnified into a salmon net, a flea was metamorphosed into an elephant, other marvels were performed before the venerable dame, who sat in astonishment, staring open-mouthed at the disc. But when, at length, a milliner's needle was transformed into a poplar tree, and confronted her with its huge eye, she could hold no longer. "My goodness!" she exclaimed, "a camel *could* get through that! There's some hopes of the rich folks yet!"

Living in Common.

Several manufacturing establishments near Aberdeen, Scotland, have undertaken to supply the food of their operatives at a cheaper rate, and of a better quality than they themselves can procure. From 2,000 to 3,000 people are daily fed on this plan. The cost for breakfast and dinner, including bread, is 1½d. per meal; and the arrangements are so complete, that four hundred persons are breakfasted or dined in twenty minutes. For fifty gallons of barley broth the following are the ingredients:—43 lbs. meat, 28 lbs barley, 5 lbs peas, and vegetables to the value of 2s. or 2s 9d. The masters supply fuel, utensils, &c., and, after these items, the culinary experiment is self-supporting. The cause of this institution was the distance which the workers had to go for their meals, the poverty of their diet, and their constant inability to labor.

White Fish.

The harbor of Bridgeport, Ct., one day lately, was almost one solid mass of fish. From the beacon to the bridge, so thick were they that persons on board vessels passing up and down the harbor, and at the docks, could pull up pails full of them for some time. There was a great commotion in the harbor and no mistake. No doubt millions could have been caught with a net.

LITERARY NOTICES.

Holden's Dollar Magazine.

Our readers will find in the Scientific American of this week, a Prospectus of this really valuable magazine. It commences its 2nd volume with the July No., and presents some features which render it the best Dollar Magazine now published in this country. We say this, after taking in consideration the \$3 Magazines,—for Holden's contains double the reading matter of those, is printed on paper nearly as good as theirs, and contains in each number from twelve to twenty engravings. We have seen the July number, and with its twenty-two engravings (which number it contains,) it certainly defies competition in the world! Our readers will find some specimens of the Engravings in the circular which accompanies our paper of this week, and will readily pronounce them the most perfect of their kind. The Falls of Reydal, the portrait of Rev. Dr. Potts, and the views of Windsor Castle, bear witness to our assertions. We are glad to see that the literary merit of the magazine increases with the other improvements. The articles of this month are entirely original, and stamped with an air of originality that ensure them readers. The article on George Lippard is as pretty a piece of criticism as we have read for a long time, and the tales entitled "Bernard, a story for Hunters," and the "Battle of Eutaw Springs" we have read with great interest. Mr Holden will, we are confident, acquire a list of 50,000 names before the expiration of the volume, and we advise our readers to send in their names immediately, and thus secure the first impression of the Engravings which will, of course be preferable for binding at the end of the year. We forgot to mention that the Publisher gives each new subscriber a copy of a beautiful Illustrated work published by him, entitled the history of the Hat. It contains 27 beautiful engravings, and is well worth half the subscription price of itself. This is given as a premium to every subscriber wishing it.

Union Magazine.

The June number of this excellent Periodical is on our table and like the former numbers possesses too many important features to be all enumerated. The Union is decidedly the best three dollar monthly published in this country, and we should think almost every family would possess it.

It commences a new volume with the next number, and now is a favorable time to subscribe for it. Address Publisher of Union Magazine, 140 Nassau St. N. Y.

The American Architect.

No. 13 of this useful, excellent and cheap work is just published by Saxton, 205 Broadway. It is published in monthly parts, at 25 cents each. It presents some excellent architectural designs Jones & Newman in this building are the able artists and it is produced at a price which comes within the reach of all.

The Playmate.

An interesting and instructive periodical by Berford & Co., No. 2 Astor House, has just been issued, and we pronounce the number before us the most interesting and instructive for young people of any that we have seen.

Mysteries and Miseries of New York.

The last number of this work has just been issued, and it is full of strange scenes and adventures. Those who have read the previous numbers will doubtless not lose the opportunity of reading this one.

Convict Labor.

D. D. Spencer, editor of the Ithaca Chronicle, and one of the board of Prison Inspectors, says that the laying aside of the 'cat,' in the punishment of convicts, has been attended with happy results. Contracts have been let at an advance of 25 to 30 per cent on old prices—showing that contractors find their hands more faithful under the new order of things, than when they were subject to the lash.

Man has 226 bones; the head and face 63 the trunk 39, the arms 64, and the lower extremities 60. There are in man 201 muscles or pairs of muscles.

Railroad Chairs.

Nothing is more acceptable to the Yankee mind, than a suggestion of a new idea, in manufactures. It often saves cordsof sticks and invoices of whittling knives from destruction.

The health and comfort of travellers will be promoted, as well as economy of material, by substituting for the solid cushions that now line the backs and seats of railroad cars, a cloth made in the fashion of net-work, and so rounded that they do not present any sharp surfaces.

A base of iron ribbon net-work would also give great elasticity to the seats and backs, and save depth to the fabric of cloth.

To Stop Bees from Fighting.

A gentleman, a tetotalter, writes as follows:—"I will make known the best use to which spirits can be applied. Put a little alcohol, or almost any kind of spirits, on the bottom boards around and under the hive of belligerent bees, and it will allay their fury like a charm. Having heard of this remedy, I was induced to try it, and I found it to be a fixed fact."

New Cave.

A cave has been discovered at Mr. Clemmon's lime kiln, Cass Co., Arkansas, surpassing in beauty if not in extent, the Salt Petre cave. It has not yet been explored sufficiently to know the size, but it is wonderful. The discovery was made while blasting the rock for lime.

Anthracite in Russia.

Prof. Murchison informs us that all the coal fields in Russia have the same bearing (N. E. and S. W.) as ours. And several of them whose veins are bituminous at one part of the basin, become anthracite at the other as in Wales.

He finds as an invariable law, that as the coal seams run from the soft to the hard variety, the accompanying limestones thin out, and all the grits and shales become harder. Hence the transition can be readily foreknown by inspection of the surface. He therefore deduces that it is to the nearer approach of igneous rocks to the surface, that we owe the conversion of bituminous coal into anthracite.

Caution.

Never enter a sick room in a state of perspiration, as the moment you become cool, your pores absorb. Do not approach contiguous diseases with an empty stomach, nor sit between the sick and the fire, because the heat attracts the thin vapor.

A Nice Point of Law.

It has been suggested to our friend Mr. Briefless, says Punch, that his opinion would be very valuable on the question, whether a man who dies before he has settled with his creditors, may be considered to have shown an undue preference in paying the debt of Nature before his other liabilities.

The favorite U. S. Frigate Constitution, which has been in the Dry Dock, Charlestown, since February last, was taken out on Saturday, having been thoroughly repaired from stem to stern. She is to be fitted for sea with all despatch.

Orders have been received at Birmingham, England, for 30,000 stand of arms for France and 30,000 for Denmark, to be supplied with all possible expedition.

The steamship Niagara had a severe passage out, and on the 26th ult. shipped a heavy sea which carried overboard two of her crew.

A few weeks since, a gentleman in Enford, England, shot a pigeon, to the neck of which was attached a label of red morocco leather bearing the words, "Boston, Jan. 6, 1848."

Some sound beams formed of the wood of the mulberry tree, have been found in the ruins of Nineveh, where they are supposed to have been placed at least seven hundred years before Christ.

The territory we have acquired from Mexico by the late treaty is said to abound in gold, silver, quicksilver, pearls, iron, coal, corn and wine.