

MISCELLANEOUS.

The New Bible House.

The above building, which is situated in the upper part of this city, and has been erected by the American Bible Society from the want of sufficient accommodation in their present abode, is the largest edifice that New York contains. Its area is about three-fourths of an acre, and the shape of the building is irregular, with irregular sides, having been planned of a corresponding figure to that of the ground on which it is situated. The height of the building, from the sidewalk, is over seventy feet, and it is divided into six stories, the different departments of work being so arranged that the process of manufacture commences in the upper part of the building, and the books descend by a progressive movement from one department to another, as they approach completion, until received, as completed work, in the Depository on the first floor. The following are the dimensions of the building on its several sides—198 feet 8 inches on Fourth avenue, 202 feet on Eighth street, 96 feet 11 inches on Third avenue, and 232 feet 6 inches on Ninth street—making a total front of over 700 feet. The depth of the building is 50 feet. The ground floor will be occupied as stores, and the part not required by the Society for their own operations will be let out as offices, several religious societies and the Society Library having taken the vacant parts of the building.

In a niche over the principal entrance, in the Fourth Avenue, stands a large-sized draped female figure, carved in brown stone, representing Religion. The rest of the building is plain, without much decoration, and cannot boast of any architectural beauties, more attention having been paid to internal comfort than outside decoration. In the centre there is an open area, forming a large yard, where the steam boiler will be placed, as the most commodious position, and which will prevent any danger from fire. Ample provision against accidents of this kind has, however, been made in the general structure and arrangement of the entire building.

Massachusetts Coal.

Prof. Hitchcock's late Geological Report on the Coal fields of Bristol, Mass., states some interesting facts. It has long been known, he says, that coal exists in Rhode Island, and the southern part of Massachusetts. Geologists have been slow to settle its exact position in the geological scale. It is a genuine coal field of the carboniferous series, however, and is of the same age as the great coal deposits in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio. The only difference seems to be that the Massachusetts coal field has undergone a change, occasioned by the action of the fire. The strata seem to have been subjected to lateral pressure, which has thrown them into undulations. The coal field covers an area of some five hundred square miles, and has been wrought in fifteen or twenty different localities, but generally without a remunerating profit. In the instance of the Mansfield Coal and Mining Company, a shaft of ten feet in diameter has been sunk to the depth of 171 feet, at the bottom of which they have driven a tunnel laterally to the distance of over 700 feet, with branches and other tunnels of an equal distance. In sinking the shaft and driving the tunnel, they passed through sixteen or seventeen layers of coal, varying from one to seven feet in thickness. From one of the tunnels 2,500 tons of anthracite coal of a fair quality have been extracted, although the Company have sunk in the operations \$100,000. There are three modes of ascertaining the existence of coal in a series of strata. One of these only has been employed in Massachusetts, viz.: that of sinking a shaft and then carrying tunnels across the strata. The second method is to cut a trench through the loose deposits over the rocks, and the third is by boring. The people in Massachusetts know but little about the expenses which some of the proprietors of the coal mines in England have incurred in sinking shafts to the depth of 100 fathoms (600 feet), and there is one which, if we recollect aright, is 1200 feet deep.

Trade and Commerce of St. Louis.

We have received a pamphlet carefully prepared in the "Missouri Republican" office, which presents an annual review of the trade and commerce of that city for 1852. There was a falling off in the grain trade of 100,000 bushels of wheat, which was attributed to a low state of water in some of the rivers, but a new era has opened on the commercial enterprise of that city, which is an evidence that in many instances a city placed at a distance from water communication may be as prosperous, commercially speaking, for internal trade, as one placed advantageously on a river or sea. We refer to the influence of railroads. This pamphlet states that the opening of the Alton and Springfield railroad during the past summer produced an immediate and satisfactory effect in every department of Industry in St. Louis. Although St. Louis is placed advantageously on a noble river, and has grown into greatness without the aid of a single line of railroad or mile of canal it is stated in this review that the good effect of the opening of the railroad mentioned has impressed the citizens of that place of the necessity for an extensive system of railway communications, and preparations have already been made for the construction of important works. St. Louis, from its superior position with respect to navigation, and sitting in the lap of the fertile valley of the Mississippi, is yet destined to be a second London.

Potato Rot.

As the period for planting potatoes is now at hand, we request the attention of our agricultural readers, who have our last volume, to the remarks of J. R. Chapman, Esq., on page 259, wherein he shows how the disease may be obviated. Since what has been termed "the potato disease" has broken out, in 1845, we believe, the best quality of potatoes have almost disappeared from our tables, and the price has arisen to more than double of what it was ten years ago. Although the disease has not been so virulent, as it was in 1846-7, still it is bad enough; the very soundest potatoes grown, spot during winter, and those which are considered to be "the best quality," can scarcely be preserved. We hope that much attention will be devoted this year, to the rearing of good potatoes; they are an essential vegetable to the mass of our city population, who find themselves, deprived of a great blessing when the price of them is so high. The following is said to be an excellent mixture for the protection of the potato vine:—"Take one peck of fine salt and mix it thoroughly with half a bushel of Nova Scotia plaster or gypsum (ground plaster is the best), and immediately after hoeing the potatoes the second time, or just as the young potato begins to set, sprinkle on the main vines, next to the ground, a table spoonful of the above mixture to each hill, and be sure to get it on the main vines."

The Steam Fire Engine.

Another trial of the steam fire engine took place at Cincinnati a few days ago. Steam was raised in four minutes from the time of lighting the fire, and in twelve minutes it was throwing a stream of water through an inch and three-quarter nozzle, from 50 feet of hose, a distance of 238 feet. Six streams of water were thrown at one time, each of them better than firemen generally put upon a fire. The "Enquirer" says that the engine will throw water in sufficient quantities to do efficient service at a fire, no one who has seen her work doubts for a moment. The great difficulty appears in the getting of her to fires. Being so cumbersome and heavy it is almost impossible to get her through the streets without cutting them up and destroying the bowldering. If one could be built lighter it would no doubt answer the purpose.

The "Invention," a foreign scientific and mechanical journal, published in Paris, has the following paragraph, in the number for March, respecting Ericsson's Caloric Engine:—"The Scientific American, whose competency no one in the United States would dare to dispute upon such subjects, continues to exhibit much reserve respecting Ericsson's engine, which is now being subjected to experiment." [That reserve, the "Invention," will see, is completely removed.

Miscellaneous Items.

The "Panama Star" says that the largest pearl in the world is in the possession of Victor Plise, Esq., of Panama. The pearl is much the shape of an egg, without a single flaw in its entire formation; in color it is what judges consider perfection, and it weighs one hundred and fifty-six grains. It is valued at five thousand dollars, and if a match could be procured for it, the pair would be considered almost invaluable. Mr. Plise has a large assortment of beautiful pearls, all of which he has collected at his fisheries on the Pearl Islands.

The plate in the cabin of the steamer Victoria, wrecked near Howth, on the coast of Ireland, has been recovered by a diver; but the man protests that nothing in the world would induce him to go down a second time, as the scene in the cabin was the most horrible he ever witnessed. He thought he had entered a wax-work exhibition, the corpses never having moved from their positions since the vessel went down. There were some eighteen or twenty persons in the cabin, one and all of whom seemed to be holding conversation with each other, and the general appearance of the whole scene was so life-like that he was almost inclined to believe some were yet living.

Mr. Walter, the architect, it is said, has been authorized by President Pierce to repair, embellish, and procure furniture for the White House under the late appropriation.

Louis Napoleon recently bought for the Empress a piano, exhibited at the London Exhibition, for forty thousand francs.

A firm in Cincinnati has contracted to build one hundred and fifty wagons for a company of English Mormons, who are now on their way from Great Britain to the Salt Lake.—They will land at New Orleans, ascend the Mississippi, and cross the plains to their destination.

It is said that the English Ivy can be successfully cultivated with us. Washington Irving has a vine brought from Melrose Abbey, Scotland, which covers his house, at Sunny Side. Mr. Breckenridge, the successor of the late A. J. Downing, in the employment of the Government, on the Capitol Grounds, informs a correspondent of the "Waterbury American," that it can be cultivated with success in Connecticut. The ivy is found to preserve the building it grows on.

Bermuda papers say there have been imported into that island 16,000 bushels of potatoes from this country, for seeding the present crop, which bids fair to be twice as large as any hitherto.

Seven hundred hands are at work, raising and widening the levee at Cairo, at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, for the protection of the city against inundation. These levees will be raised twelve feet above the point reached by the flood in 1844, and eighty feet wide on the tops.

Some enterprising manufacturers of New Jersey and New York have purchased a large estate in New Jersey, opposite Bedlow's Island, having a water front of about a mile. The intention is to lay out and build up a new city for manufacturing purposes. Already two large manufacturing establishments are projected.

In Paris, in 1852, the oyster eaters consumed 1,678,926 francs' worth of those animals, the average price was 2½ francs the hundred, and the total number devoured was 70,000,000.

The Peninsular and Oriental Company have only about a year's stock of coals in the India and China seas. There is the greatest difficulty in keeping up a stock of coals at these stations, in consequence of the colliers getting no return freights. Sailing ships in India and China are being rapidly superseded by steamers in everything but the conveyance of coal.

New Rolling Mill.

A new rolling mill has been erected by Messrs. Bailey & Patterson, at Harrisburgh, Pa., the engine for driving the works is from the establishment of Messrs. Neall, Matthews & Moore, Philadelphia, it is of 90 horse power, boilers, two in number, 30 feet long and 4½ feet in diameter.

The Crystal Palace.

It is not improbable that, after all, this great undertaking will prove a stupendous failure. Certainly, unless some new leaf is turned over in the association's books of management, the main objects for which it was projected will be defeated. Quite an attempt was made, not long since, to create an impression that applications for space in the building exceeded the limits of supply. So far is this from the truth that those to whom space has already been assigned are sending in notices of withdrawal of their applications. This is due to the insane policy of the managers determining to charge an entrance fee to exhibitors. Exhibitors when they know and understand this, very naturally, protest against being so fleeced.

The completion of the building before the first of May is an impossibility (as things now go,) and whether it will be done before the Fourth of July is a matter of serious doubt. The engineers and architects are at loggerheads; much of the material has to be fitted after it reaches the ground, beams being found too long, and girders too short; and, to use a homely expression, "the very old Harry is to pay all round." Theodore Sedgwick, Esq., the President of the Association, is a most excellent man, and does the best he possibly can, but he does not possess the tact and management indispensable for carrying out the erection of a building like this.

What the Association most need, is a thoroughly practical and experienced managing head—such a man as Barnum, for instance—who can pull, push, coax, or drive, as occasion requires; and who is accustomed to the control and direction of numbers of workmen. Such a man of leisure would not be caught with his work half done at the time when, as he had told all the world, it should be finished; and least of all, would he allow the saving or expenditure of \$20,000 or \$30,000 to drive the opening of an exhibition into midsummer, which might reasonably be expected to yield an extra \$100,000 if opened on the day and hour it had promised.—[New York Sun, April 2nd.

[The above statements are correct, and the comments sound and sensible, as those of the Sun, respecting such matters always are.

Railroads in the United States.

On the first of January, 1853, there were in the United States, 13,227 miles of completed railroad, 12,928 miles of railroad in various stages of progress, and about 7000 miles in the hands of the engineers, which will be built within the next three or four years—making a total of 33,155 miles of railroad, which will soon traverse the country, and which, at an average cost of \$30,000 (a well ascertained average) for each mile of road, including equipments, etc., will have consumed a capital amounting to \$994,650,000.

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|---------------------------|---------------|
| 13,227 miles completed | \$306,810,000 |
| 12,928 miles in progress, | 387,840,000 |
| 7,000 miles under survey, | 210,000,000 |

33,155 Total - - - \$994,650,000

Or, in round numbers, one billion of dollars. In all human probability, by the end of the next five years the United States will have more miles of railway than all the rest of the world. There are now in operation in the United States about 24,000 miles of telegraphic wires, or more than double the amount in other parts of the world.

Lead Mining in Missouri.

Notwithstanding the rise in the price of lead, the tables made up, show a deficit in the amount procured in the above State during the past year compared with those preceding. The following are deduced as the causes: 1st. The number of the mining population which the California emigration has carried off, amounting to at least one half. 2d, The failures in sinking for ores below the water level of the small beds of rock. 3d, The mining population being citizens of foreign birth, who take no interest in mining except for wages. 4th, Want of sufficient economical machinery to drain the wet grounds. 5th, Want of a sufficient capital, and a more general knowledge of the geology of the lead basins.

A lump of gold weighing 247 ounces, was picked up at Yankee Hill, in the vicinity of Sonora, valued at about \$4,250.