THE ROYAL CHARTER AND THE AUSTRALIAN ROUTE.

The Melbourne correspondent of the *Times* has the following remarks:—

"The principle upon which the Royal Charter is built and equipped seems to me to be that which is most likely to reduce the voyage from England to Australia to as near an approach to a certainty as is possible. She is, in the first place, a fully rigged clipper ship, capable of the greatest speed which has yet been attained by clippers of the first class, and best construction. She is built of iron, and of 3000 tons burden. Her greatest day's run under canvas was 352 miles, being an average of 14 2-3rds knots per hour. The best run of the Lightning on her first voyage 336 miles, or 14 knots per hour. The Lightning also ran 2086 nautical miles in seven days, or nearly 300 miles a day."

During the voyage of the Royal Charter steam was resorted to on 14 days. Her best day's run under steam was 252 miles, with a consumption of only 10 ½ tons of coal ; her worst day's run under steam was 166 miles, with a consumption of 14 tons, and 8 cwt. of coal. Her total consumption of coals was only 193 tons 17 cwt. The pressure of steam was 11lb.

Thus her remarkable voyage was made principally by means of her extraordinary sailing powors, and her screw propeller was emphatically *auxiliary*.

Her engines are only of 200-horse power, and, with all the fuel that she can possibly require, occupy but a moderate porportion of her tonnage, thus leaving ample space for cargo as well as passengers. Contrast this with the Great Britain, the first great experiment of the same enterprising firm. She was under-rigged as a sailing vessel, and her screw, which could not be unshipped, was always in requisition. Her consumption of coal was from 35 to 50 tons per diem. She consumed about 1,200 tons from Melbourne to the Cape, and must have consumed about 2,500 on the homeward voyage. She had to seek for and take in coal at Algoa Bay, at Simon's Bay, at St. Michael's (Azores), and at Vigo Bay in Spain. Large as she was, she had little room for cargo, and although she had plenty of passengers, her voyages must have entailed loss on the owners.

After the failure of their first great experiment, one cannot but admire the thorough English pluck of the owners of the Royal Charter in thus trying a new venture. I firmly believe they will succeed. The Ship is "booked full" for the homeward voyage already. She will have a full cargo, and will most likely carry home every ounce of gold accumulated for shipment up to the date of her sailing, namely, the 22nd of May.

The prevailing character and direction of the winds between the coast of England and Melbourne seem to me to prove that the auxiliary screw fitted to a ship of the best sailing powers fulfils all the conditions upon which a rapid voyage depends. The north-east trade is a fair wind, the south-east trade is now made a fair wind by the present method of great circle sailing, or rather the "Composite course," as it is called; which is as near an approach to the great circle as is practicable. The westerly winds which prevail to the southward of the latitude of the Cape are always fair all the year round. With these fair winds, which cover about five-sixths of the voyage, steam is only an incumbrance. Auxiliary steam power is useful and necessary in three localities. 1. From the port of departure to the northern limit of the north-east trade. This is not always necessary, as the wind that blows has often, I may say generally, plenty of northing in it. 2. Steam is necessary in crossing the belt of equatorial calms. Thisa lso is greatly narrowed by the courses steered in recent tlmes. Ships used to cross the equator as far to windward as possible, say, about 22 west longitude—they now cross much further west—say 32. As the belt of calms narrows gradually to the westward, it is frequently only three or four degrees. By crossing well to the westward, ships have carried the north-east trade to 4,30 north latitude, and have met the south-east trade even north of the line, varying with the season of the year. 3. After losing the south-east trade, there is the "belt of variables" to be crossed, until the ship is run into the prevailing westerly wind. In all the above three localities, the auxiliary screw comes into play. Four, five, or six days run the ship into the north-east trade; two days (and perhaps even less than one, under good management) push her across the belt of equatorial calms. Four, five, of six days more carry her from the southern edge of the south-east trade across the variables to the latitude of the westerly winds—a latitude which also varies with the seasons. Sometimes even in the generally constant northeast trade, there will happen an unusual or abnormal check. In the south-east trade, this is less unusual; a south-east gale will sometimes overpower the prevailing westerly winds. These would, of course, increase the demands upon the screw; but, on the other hand, these anomalous winds will be sometimes compensated by a fair wind out of the Channel, and by equal luck across the belt of variables. On the whole, I do not think the screw will often be needed during more than 15 days. The voyage must, in fact, be made by the sailing powers of the ship ; the screw must be treated as *auxiliary*.

It would not surprise me, if the Lightning, the James Baines, and the Donald M'Kay, with some of the fastest of the rival line, should be at once fitted with auxiliary screws. If the London owners wish to maintain their position in the passenger trade, they must resort to the same expedient, and with ships of a larger class.

FRIGHTFUL EXPLOSION.

Another of those frightful and desolating explosions of coal gas which have so frequently occurred in the Welsh basin of late, took place on Tuesday morning at the Cymmer colliery, near Pontypridd, Glamorganshire, when the loss of human life was most frightful. About 180 men went down to their hazardous occupation, and in a short time after, the harrowing intelligence of an explosion of "fire-damp" spread through the works. The news ran like wildfire through the district, and hundreds of wives, children and friends, rushed to the colliery, as quickly as possible, took all the necessary precautionary measures for preparing to descend to examine the state of things below. When the "damp" had been somewhat cleared away, a part descended to their work, and a truly horrible spectacle met their eyes in every direction. By eleven o'clock, 24 black and lifeless bodies were exhumed from the pit, and during the day, continued exertions on the part of the courageous men who were ened in their perilous search, succeeded in bringing 62 to the surface. The scene around the pit's mouth was most distressing. Hundreds of women were there in agonising suspense, examining the countenance of the dead to discover the lineaments of a husband or a son ; and when this frightful recognition took place, the screams were most painful. During the whole of the day, this dreadful state of things continued, and even in the following night, amidst the storm of rain and hurricane of wind, the poor creatures hung about the mouth of the pit, still awaiting the dead. By Wednesday, no less than 110 dead bodies had been taken from the pit ; out of 116 who had gone down, only six were saved, and these in a frightful state.

FURTHER PARTICULARS.

Mr. George Owerton, of Merthyr, commenced his inquisition on Wednesday morning at the Ty Newyed, or Newhouse Inn, at the upper end of the valley. The jury then proceeded to view the bodies, which lay amid their sorrowing relatives, at their homes in various parts of the valley. The spectacle, in the great majority cases, was frightful, the major part of the unfortunate deceased having met their deaths from the fire, not the choke-damp, the former causing the body to become charred and literally scorched to almost a cinde[r] while the "damp" causes death by suf[fo]cation, and leaves but little upon the co[un]tenance, except an expression like th[at of] sleep. It appears that on Tuesday mo[rning] 117 men and boys went down int[o the] Cymmer pit. The two firemen, [whose] duty it was to examine the pit, to a[scertain] if there was any foul air or gas in the pit reascended at about six o'clock, pronouncing the pit safe. In less than an hour after—indeed, before some had stripped off their clothes to commence work—the terrible gas exploded, and the affrighted people ran hither and thither for a few moments. Then one fell in the dark, and others staggering along stumbled on their dead companions, and fell dead also. Here, some were struggling amid the tortures of the fire. There was a tram full of boys all dead; and in other places, in sidings or niches in the level, men had sat down to await their fearful doom, and had died with their elbows resting on their knees and their faces buried in their hands. Some had struggled forward, no doubt hoping to reach the airway and possibly escape. Workmen were immediately put on to supply coffins for the dead. There they were, working hastily with the saw and plane, to construct rude shells in which to deposit the unfortunate dead in their untimely graves, amid the crowds of eager people, still waiting to see the last of the dreadful catastrophe. There were in the pit at the time of the explosion about thirty horses, which have been also killed.

A VALUABLE TIMBER SHIP IN SEARCH OF OWNERS.—We learn from Thomas Ryan, Esq., Vice-Consul for France at this port, that he has received a letter from the French authorities at the Island of St. Pierre (off the coast of Newfoundland) containing the following statement:—On the 6th September, 1854, the French steamer "La Vesta" met with a British built vessel of some 400 tons burden, with a poop-cabin, laden with timber, abandoned and waterlogged, at sea, and brought her into St. Pierre harbor. The name of the vessel had been broken off, and no papers or other means of ascertaining her ownership or port of departure were found on board, excepting that some of the timber in her bore the mark of "I. E. & Co., Madawaska." The circumstance was duly reported to the Imperial Minister of Marine and the Colonies, b[y whose in]structions the St. Pierre autho[rities now], through Mr. Ryan, advertise the [facts of the] case, that the owners of the vessel [or cargo, if] belonging to Canada, may take s[teps for their] recovery. The mark on the timb[er (John Egan] & Co.) would almost certainly [indicate Que]bec as the port of departure of t[he abandoned] vessel.—*Montreal Herald*.

A SKETCH.

Not long ago, as we car[ne] slowly down Broadway, we hailed an o[m]nibus and stepped in, the better to enjo[y] that gay spectacle.

In that omnibus sat a s[inner]. We do not mean, that there was on[ly] one person in it, nor need you smilingly add that when the omnibus started again, there were two sinners sitting in it. T[he] question is not of abstract human sinfu[l]ness, but of concrete and recognized sin. The individual offender was one of the o[utlawed] sinners, a man whom stock spec[ul]ators would not have acknowledged ; w[hom] traders who swear to false invoices would not have spoken to; whom gentlemen whose creed is, that every man must look out for himself, and that the seller is by no means the keeper of the purchaser, would have overlooked ; whom, in fine people who swear, lie, and steal, in the recognized and conventional ways—if, ha[p]ply, any such there be—would have utterly discountenanced.

For this sinner was a gambler, a professional gambler ; a man who occupied a ha[n]dsome house, of a very modest exterior aspect, furnished with luxury, and at whos[e] hospitable board a seductive supper wa[s] nightly spread. This sinner was a gent[l]eman whose acquaintance was immens[e], who could easily have told the nam[es] of many of the passengers in the omn[ibus] and have added some little private pe[c]uniary details. This sinner was perfe[c]tly well dressed and modest and gentle[m]anly in his deportment ; his boots, in truth, were of unusual polish, and his hat of an unparalleled gloss. This sinner, when ladies stepped in or out, was very attentive in passing up their money and in protecting their dresses. This sinner, when Irish women carrying baskets came plunging in, took their baskets carefully and helped them to seats and passed their money, holding his hand for the change. This sinner, whose vocation in life was winning other people's money, pretended to do nothing else but win their money. By his side sat a merchant who sold liquors, that he knew were adulterated, or into the fact of whose adulteration he would not inquire. Opposite sat two ladies who smiled sweetly, and Mary told Maria, she was delighted to see her, while all the time in her secret heart she was rejoiced at Maria's unbecoming bonnet, because she knew they would both meet Adonis when they walked up, and she was not sorry, therefore, that Maria's bonnet should be unbecoming. On the other side of the sinner sat a gentleman who had "made an operation" intentionally to put a fellow speculator into "a tight plaee."

The sinner knew both the gentlemen. Both the gentlemen had supped with him. They had both cashed little notes with him One of them had privately implored the sinner for the sake of his wife and children not to be hard with him, and the sinner had listened to him. Both the gentlemen could not possibly know him in a public conveyance. Morality, decency, and social order required that they should not sell—we mean should not recognize in an omnibus—such a public sinner. This sinner did not claim any acquaintance. There was not even a sly wrinkle about the mouth or crushing of the eye—nothing that betrayed any kind of consciousness.

This sinner was a gambler, but in every gambling transaction there are two parties. When men go at night to quiet houses with the blinds drawn, and with no remarkable illumination, and tap gently or ring and nod to the porter tranquilly, and take a little supper at the hospitable board, and also take a pecuniary interest in the cards which are dealt, and stay until one or two o'clock in the morning, or, sometimes, even later, they go as intelligent and responsible parties to a contract, and if the host is a criminal, a blackleg, and no gentleman, they are criminals, blacklegs, and no gentlemen.

The question in our mind was how to treat this sinner. He was a sinner; granted ; but so was every body in the omnibus. He was a criminal, he had broken the laws of the State ; true, but so had our worthy friends who visited his modest mansion. He was, so to say, a professional sinner ; true, but the wrong is in the sin, not in the profession. He lived upon men's credulity and weakness ; yes, but the same may be said of many pursuits esteemed reputable Patent medicines, hack books, political newspapers, are in the some category. In one word, this sinner was a gambler true, and he was also a man and a brother.

It is singular, to the mind of a Chinese philosopher, that in a Christian country the Christian view of people and things is the one which is uniformly omitted.

Let us only understand the rule. Let it only be clearly settled, that we are not to bow to any man whom we know to have sinned, or to have sinned up to a certain point, and the matter is easily arranged. We shall then have some palpable measure of virtue. It might be understood, for instance, that no man's hand was able to be shaken who had defrauded to an amount beyond twenty thousand dollars. Gamblers should be acknowledged by a ceremonious nod, the nod as being of itself indicative of intimacy. Forgers should receive a cold bow ; and murderers the cut direct.

But who are to be considered murderers? The other day one gentleman killed another by way of repairing his honor, which had been insulted in a drunken spree ; and a workman killed a fellow workman who had wronged his sister and refused reparation; and Deacon Schiedam sold five hogsheads of that pure old Bung brandy which lasts such an enormous time. In the same paper it was recorded, that a boy had slain his employer and robbed the till, and that a girl had killed the baker who had refused to give her a loaf of bread except upon his own conditions.

Who of all these has committed murder.

That may be difficult to decide. But it is not difficult to decide, for we all know it, that Reginald and De Courcy went to Bob Shaftoe's last night and gambled, and that they will go a great many more nights and gamble ; and if that point be clear, and it be conceded that we must not speak to Bob Shaftoe when we met him in an omnibus because he is gambler, then we must not speak to Rignald and De Couracy, who are also gamblers, whenever and wherever we meet them. What is sauce for Shaftoe is sauce for the Emperor of Siam.