GLEANINGS FROM LATE PAPERS.

PERILOUS POSITION OF ST. PETERSBURG.

It is melancholy to contemplate the constant danger in which this brilliant capital is placed. If Mr. Koul's picture is not overcharged, the occurrence of a strange westerly wind and high water, just at the breaking up of the ice, would at any time suffice to occasion an inundation sufficient to drown the whole population, and to convert the entire city, with all its sumptuous palaces, into a chaotic mass of ruins. The Gulf of Finland runs to a point as it approaches the mouth of the Neva, where the most violent gales are always those from the West; so that the mass of waters on such occasions is always forcibly impelled towards the city. The islands forming the Delta of the Neva, on which St. Petersburg stands, are extremely low and flat, and the highest point in the city is probably not more than twelve or fourteen feet above the average level of the sea. A rise of fifteen feet is therefore enough to place all St. Petersburg under water, and a rise of thirty feet is enough to drown almost every human being in the place. The poor inhabitants are therefore in constant danger of destruction, and can never be certain that the 500,000 of them may not, within the next twenty-four hours, be washed out of their houses like so many drowned rats. To say the truth, the subject ought hardly to be spoken of with levity; for the danger is too imminent, and the reflection often makes many hearts quake in St. Petersburg. The only hope of this apparently doomed city is that the three circumstances may never occur simultaneously, viz., high water, the breaking up of the ice, and a gale of wind from the West. There are so many points of the compass for the wind to choose among, that it would seem perverse in the extreme to select the west at so critical a moment; nevertheless, the wind does blow very often from the west during spring, and the ice floating in the Neva and the Gulf of Finland, is of a bulk amply sufficient to oppose a formidable obstacle to the water in the upper part of the river. Had the ancient sages in Okhta kept meteorological records, one might perhaps be able to calculate how often in a thousand years, or in ten thousand years, such a flood as we are here supposing might be likely to occur. As it is, the world need not be at all surprised to read in the newspapers one of these days, that St. Petersburg, after rising like a bright meteor from the swamps of Finland, has as suddenly been extinguished in them like a mere will-o'-the-wisp. May heaven protect the city!—*Foreign Quarterly Review.*

HUNGARIAN EXILES.—Kossuth and Pulszky are both residing in London with their families. Kossuth's two sons, aged 10 and 13 years, are attending school. The family live in a very plain and economical style. Pulszky and his wife, by their joint writings, it is stated in a London letter, have made this year about $2000. They have five children. Madame Pulszky's father is a wealthy banker of Vienna, but is forbidden to give his only daughter a cent. Her mother is also living. Pulszky's splendid estate in Hungary was seized by the Austrians at the time of his arrest, and his beautiful castle subsequently converted into a hospital

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A British peer, when dining with the Queen, was challenged by a royal duchess to take wine with her. His lordship politely thanked her grace, but declined the compliment, stating that he never took wine. The duchess immediately turned to the Queen, and jocularly said, "Please your Majesty, here is Lord——, who declines to take wine at your Majesty's table." Every eye was turned to the Queen, and not a little curiosity was evinced as to the manner in which the total abstainor would be dealt with by royalty. With a smiling and graceful expression her Majesty replied, "*There is no compulsion at my Table.*"

(From the Herts Guaradian.)

MR. HOLLOWAY'S NEWSPAPER MUSEUM.—At Mr. Holloway's establishment, near Temple Bar, there is the most extensive, the most complete, and the most extraordinary collection of Newspapers in the world. Mr. Holloway, it should be known, advertises his Pills and Ointment in about 2,000 foreign Newspapers, and in nearly every English paper,—Probably the year of the Great Exhibition, and the calls of foreigners from distant climes, first gave him the idea of collecting the papers sent him; but be this as it may, it is now carried out by his own private enterprise, in a manner compared with which, the collection in the British Museum is a mere ridiculous farce. In a suit of lofty apartments are the newspapers of every civilised country in the world, properly and systematically arranged in convenient port folios: and the stranger in London, whether from the United States, New Zealand, the Cape, Australia, China, Hindostan, Persia, or elsewhere, may be visiting Mr. Holloway's museum, at once become acquainted with the latest intelligence from his own country. There is every facility and accommodation for reading and extract. Several clerks are kept constantly employed in receiving, sorting, and arranging the papers, and the whole establishment is conducted in a manner which for order, comfort, and celerity, is a perfect contrast to the arrangements at the British Museum. Any Gentlemen from the country wishing to look at newspapers from any part of the globe where newspapers are printed, may by calling at Mr. Holloway's, be instantly put in possession of the requisite intelligence. Of course this museum, so useful and so unique, attracts great attention, and many distinguished men are often to be seen there,—members of Parliament, newspaper editors, foreigners of eminence, &c., &c. It is a striking instance of what individual energy and enterprise can effect.

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS IN A COAL PIT.—On Saturday, Professor Airey, the Astronomer Royal, paid a visit to the colliery district of the Tyne, in pursuit of curious and important astronomical observations. For that purpose he was taken by Mr. Mather, a scientific gentleman belonging to South Shields, down Horton pit, the deepest in the Tyne, 1260 feet deep, to examine if it were possible to make arrangements in it for a series of delicate experiments and observations in reference to the pendulum, and the earth's action upon it there, simultaneously with similar ones on the surface, with a view to determine the weight of the earth and planets.

NOTHING GROWS IN VAIN.—The *National Intelligencer* says:—"We understand that an enterprising German is about to secure a patent for his discovery of flax, or its equivalent in fifteen different kinds of common weeds. The discovery is to be turned to account in the manufacture of numerous articles of which flax is the principal, but especially in the manufacture of paper, which is a matter of deep interest just now to the publishing world, the scarcity of rags being a great embarrassment to business."

From late American Papers.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—Members of Congress are now too well paid. There are perhaps thirty men in the two houses who are worth more than the regular pay; but the great majority don't know how to earn 8 dollars per day anywhere else or we should have not eight months' sessions. If the pay could be cut down to 1,000 dollars per session, with ten cents per mile for actual travel computed by the shortest route to and from Washington, with 10 dollars per day deducted for each day a member fails to attend, and a like sum for each failure to answer at a call of the yeas and nays, we should have short sessions, and every way improved legislation. Then men of character and ability, whose time is worth at least 100 dollars per week, would accept nominations, knowing that the public business would be promptly despatched, and they be permitted to return to their own, but now they can't afford it, because the small people spin out the sessions and use up better men's time in order to pocket their 5 dollars per day for the longest possible period. The present system is a very bad one, and is in such hands that we apprehend it will not soon be better.—*New York Tribune.*

CHEAP MILK.—A New York milkman, who testified before the Still-Slop Investigation Committee, made the following very candid avowal:—"Some," he said, "he sold for *four cents* per quart; some for *five*; and some for *six*; if people wanted cheap milk, *he put in water.*"

RECOVERED TREASURE.—On Saturday last there was deposited at the Mint in Philadelphia, about five thousand dollars worth of the melted gold taken from the recently raised wreck of the unfortunate steamer Erie, which was burnt and sunk on Lake Erie some thirteen years ago. There was found mixed in with the melted money part of an old German lock, the material parts of which were in a pretty good state of preservation. On raising the wreck, it was found burnt nearly to the keel, and to be broken forward, near where the gold is found. It is believed that a considerable portion of the gold has been lost through the break.

DISTRESSING CALAMITY AT LOUISVILLE.

A most distressing calamity occurred at Louisville, Kentucky, on the last Sabbath, from the blowing down of the Third Presbyterian Church, during a terrific storm which occurred about noon, whilst the congregation were assembled. About twenty-five persons are said to have been killed, and a number wounded. The church, we believe, is that of which the Rev. B. M. Hobson was formerly pastor; but it had been vacant for some time, and providentially it was not generally known that there was to be service there on that day, or a much larger congregation would have been in attendance, and many more would probably have been hurried from time to eternity. The Rev. Mr. Morrison, who was in the pulpit at the time, escaped unhurt.

"During the sermon, which had been commenced later than usual, the storm came up, and the main door of the basement room, where the services where held, was blown open. An elder of the church immediately rose and closed it again. The door was forced open a second time, and again closed. A third time the door was forced open by the violence of the wind, notwithstanding the elder was pressing against it at the time. Instantly the whole house was filled with particles of sand. The speaker and the audience had their eyes filled with the fine dust. This caused some disturbance in the assembly, and most of the persons rose to their feet, some jumping out of the windows near where they were sitting.

"Mr. Morrison said he had not time to recover from the effects of the gust of wind that struck him with particular fury, before there was a cracking sound over head, and in a moment after the tempest blew open the door with such violence, the walls had fallen in. Immediately about the pulpit in which he was standing the plastering was not broken, and to his right several old ladies escaped unhurt. He expressed himself as being greatly shocked at the suddenness of the calamity, and when he fairly recovered from the blindness caused by the ascending dust, a most terrible sight presented itself before him. He saw two men already dead; the head of another man greatly mangled, just appearing among the rubbish; a lady clasping her child in the agony of death, and a young lady with her body bent across one of the seats and her face most horribly distorted. From different parts of the building he could hear the groans of the dying and the stifled screams of the crushed."

CALIFORNIA.

The markets at California have continued much depressed, and most of the staples are declining.

The Hock Farm Digger tribe of Indians a few years ago numbered over five hundred: at present there are but fifteen living.

Two Frenchmen were drowned in a mill pond above Foster's bar, California.

A band of robbers has been organized near Sonora, and a part of them have gone on to Marysville for the purpose of murdering and robbing.

Salt has been discovered in Los Angeles county in a lake about seventeen miles from Los Angeles. A company has been formed for the purpose of manufacturing it.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.

The Polynesian, the first steamship from the Sandwich Islands had arrived at San Francisco in 14 days from Honolulu, with dates to July 29.

The Russian frigate Diana cruising off the Islands. By the last arrival, it will be remembered, we had intelligence that the Russian frigate Diana, of sixty guns' left Honolulu on the 1st of June, on a cruise, supposed to be to the northward. By the papers received we learn that she gave the British frigate that was dogging her the slip, and put back to Honolulu. In response to the inquiries of the British and French Consuls, Mr. Wyllie, the Minister of Foreign Relations, communicated a resolution adopted by the King and Privy Council, which declares that the privilege of asylum in the ports of that kingdom is not to be extended to vessels armed, on private account, or the prizes taken by them, whatever may be the flag under which such vessels may sail.

Arrangements have been made between the Governments of the United States and the Sandwich Islands to incorporate these Islands with the Union. It is alleged that the time of effecting these arrangements is favorable, as England and France are too deeply occupied with the Russian war to "forbid the banns."

Private accounts from Maine state that in the vicinity of some of the burning forests, quite a number of persons, chiefly females have become insane, in consequence of excitement, the result of a belief that the general conflagrations in the woods there is a sign of the speedy ending of the world in accordance with the prediction of the Millerites.

The City Authorities of Boston have decreed that all the names of non-residents, who come to Boston and get drunk and are arrested, shall be published.

The Government of New Brunswick have lately appointed Dr. Ryerson a Commissioner to inquire into the management of King's College, Fredericton, with a view to its improvment. The other Commissioners are the Hon. J. H. Gray, of St. John; and J. W. Dawson, Esq., the late active Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia.

SALARIES OF COLONIAL GOVERNORS.—A return of the names of all Governors and Lieutenant-Governors of the British Colonies, with the amount of their salaries, dates of their appointment, &c., has just appeared. There are 45 places at which we have Governors, Lieutenant Governors, or persons acting in that capacity. Their aggregate salaries amount to £118,846 per annum. The highest salary is £7,000, which is given in two cases only—viz, to the Earl of Elgin, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of Canada; and to Sir G. W. Anderson, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Ceylon. From this point they range downwards as low as £500, which is the salary at Montserrat, Nevis, and Heligoland There is one £6,000 salary, to James Macaulay Higginson, at the Mauritius; and £5.000 is given at Jamaica, to Sir H. Barkly, at Gibraltar, to Lieutenant General Sir R. Gardiner; at the Ionian Islands, to Sir H. G. Ward; at the Cape of Good Hope, to Lieut.-General Cathcart; at New South Wales, to Sir C. A. Fitzroy; and at Victoria, to Captain C. Hotham. The salary at South Australia is £2,000. Amongst the present Governors there are twelve holding military, and four naval rank. The remainder civilians. The Earl of Elgin is the only peer.

THE ALAND ISLES.

These Islands form an archipelago, situate at the extremity of the Baltic, at the entrance of the Gulph of Finland. The group is composed of 7 islands occupying an area of 90 square kilometres, with a population of 15,000 inhabitants. The Island of Aland, properly speaking, which has given its name to the Archipelago, is 9 leagues in length and 7 in breadth, and has a population of 10,000 inhabitants. The Russians have built the extensive fortress of Bomarsund, which is protected on the sea side by strong fortifications. It possesses a good roadstead, well sheltered, with a depth of 20,30, or even 50 fathoms. In time of peace it is continually visited by the Russian fleet of evolution. The interior of the island is intersected by calcareous hills, and watered by a great number of rivulets, from which it derives its Scandinavian name of "Aland" (Country of Rivers.) Its coast is deeply indented, and offers excellent anchorage. The soil is fertile, and here and there are to be seen good pasture ground and forests of birch and pine. The inhabitants are mostly farmers and fishermen. The climate is wholesome, although rigorous in winter. The snow melts early, and the harbour freezes over late in the season, on account of the rapid current produced by the meeting of the waters of the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland. Independently of Bomarsund, the Archipelago contains several other fortified places, the principal of which are in the Islands of Siguisklar and Prœstœ. The Islands of Aland are very important in a political and military point of view. They were wrested by Russia from Sweden in 1809, by the treaty of Frederikshamn, which secured to that power the remainder of Finland and Eastern Bothnia. Russia had already acquired the other part of Finland by the Treaty of Abo. The loss of that fine and rich province was a dreadful check to the Swedish power.

SYDNEY SMITH'S WIT.—One of our London contemporaries, in noticing a new edition of the Rev. Sydney Smith's Works, thus takes occasion to speak of the incompetency of his wit to accomplish his work as a minister of Christ:—"From the influence which they have exerted, as well as on other grounds, the productions of the witty canon of St. Paul's possess an enduring interest. Worthy as they all are of the highest praise for their admirable style, they differ widely in intrinsic moral worth. Sydney Smith did good service as a writer against political tyranny and social injustice. When, however, he touched that subject with which his vocation should have made him best acquainted, but of which he really knew least, he showed how utterly incompetent is the keenest wit, combined with the most genial humour, yet unaided by personal piety, to appreciate emotions and efforts which have their source in the spiritual perception of the eternal and invisible."

OBJECT OF LIFE.—Remember that God sent you into the world for religion. We are but to pass through our pleasant fields, or our hard labours; but to lodge a little while in our fair palaces, or our meaner cottages; but to bait in the way at our full tables, or to spare diet. But then man does his proper employment, when he prays and does charity, and mortifies his unruly appetites, and restrains his violent passions, and becomes like to God, and imitates his only son. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must dwell or abide, either in an excellent, beautiful country, or in a prison of amazement and eternal horror. Without much time, a wary life, and a dilligent circumspection, we cannot mortify our sins, or do the first works of grace. I pray God we be not found to have grown like the sinews of old age, from strength to remissness; from thence to dissolution, and infirmity and death.—*Jeremy Taylor*

An imposing scene—a mock auction.