

POSTAL TELEGRAPHY.

THE discovery of Professor Morse, by which the electric spark was made to observe the wants of man, was one of the most important, from its vast utility, the world has yet seen; but from the fact that this great invention has hitherto been controlled solely by private corporations, it has not accomplished anything like the good of which it is capable. The tariffs on telegraphic messages have been, and still are, far too high to be within the reach of the bulk of the people.

At the present time the cry for reform in this direction, is making itself heard throughout the country, and at the next session of Congress it is almost certain that measures will be introduced, which, if not defeated by lobbying, will lead to a reduction of the tariffs through the purchase of the entire net-work of the telegraphic lines in the country by the Government.

Already in some countries of the continent of Europe, this plan has been carried out, and instead of being owned by private companies and corporations, the lines of telegraph have been purchased, and are now controlled by the respective governments, and the same policy is being pursued as in the postal system,—namely, a reduction of the tariffs to the lowest possible rates, so as to place the benefits of this great invention within reach of all classes.

This plan is now in operation in Belgium and Switzerland, and is said to work admirably. In Great Britain the preliminary measures have been adopted for carrying the same system into effect, the government having already purchased all the telegraphic lines in the country, and in January, 1870, will assume their sole management and control. There can be no doubt that this new order of things will be of great benefit to the people generally, and though the tariff may be lowered, owing to the fact of its being within the reach of nearly if not all classes, the net proceeds are likely to be greatly increased, as in the case of the penny-postage system invented by Mr. Rowland Hill.

If the postal telegraph system, as it is called, be likely to work so beneficially in the countries of Europe, with their small extent of territory, it effects in this country, with an area exceeding the whole of that continent, would be much more beneficial and widely felt. The matter is being agitated, especially on the Pacific coast. A lecture on the subject was recently delivered, before the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, by Gardner G. Hubbard, Esq., who, some time last year, was appointed by the Postmaster General to examine and report upon the merits or defects of the different telegraph systems of Europe, with a plan for the union of the postal and telegraph service of this country, if thought feasible. His report was submitted to Congress during its last session, with the draft of a bill for the establishment of a postal telegraph system. Mr. Hubbard is sanguine of the success of such a movement, and is lecturing at various points, advocating the practicability and necessity of the scheme. One dollar was talked of at the lecture in San Francisco, as the tariff on a message of twenty words, including the address and signature, from that city to New York, which would, in fact, place the lightning messenger within the reach of all.

The following were among the resolutions introduced at the above meeting by the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, which were laid over for consideration at its next meeting:

Resolved, That the transmission of correspondence by telegraph is too important an interest to be intrusted solely to a single private corporation, but should, like other correspondence, be under the control of the Postoffice Department, and managed for the benefit of the people.

Resolved, That we approve of the Postal Telegraph system as explained by Mr. Hubbard, and we believe that at one dollar for a message of twenty words, including address and signature, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the telegraph would become the common means of correspondence, to the unspeakable benefit of the community.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to labor for a reform in the telegraph system until the Postal Telegraph becomes one of the institutions of the land.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to our Senators and Representatives in Congress, published in each of the daily papers, and that they one and all be requested to advocate the adoption of the Postal Telegraph system.

The matter may be said to be now fairly before the country. Like all great reforms it is sure to meet with opposition.

It aims to break up and destroy an enormous monopoly, and will, in all likelihood, encounter every obstacle that wealth can place in its way. Like all monopolies, this one has helped, by its abuses, to bring about its own defeat and overthrow,—now merely a question of time. The efforts of the postal telegraph reformers may be thwarted for the present; but the popular wants demand that for which they are agitating, hence it must be speedily conceded.

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT.

The following description of the appearance of Alexander von Humboldt is from the pen of Bayard Taylor, who saw him in November 1856, three years before his death. It was at this interview, it is said, that Humboldt remarked that Mr. Taylor had travelled further and seen less than any man he ever met:

"As I looked at the majestic old man, the line of Tennyson, describing Wellington, came into my mind: 'Oh, good gray head, which all men knew.' The first impression made by Humboldt's face was that of a broad and genial humanity. His massive brow, heavy with the gathered wisdom of nearly a century, bent forward and overhung his breast like a ripe ear of corn; but when you looked below it, a pair of clear eyes, almost as bright and steady as a child's, met your own. In these eyes you read that trust in man, that immortal youth of the heart, which made the snows of eighty-seven winters lie so lightly upon his head. You trusted him utterly at the first glance, and you felt that he would trust you, if you were worthy of it. I had approached him with a natural feeling of reverence, but in five minutes I found that I loved him, I could talk to him as freely as with a friend of my own age. His nose, mouth and chin, had the heavy Teutonic character, whose genuine type always expresses an honest simplicity and directness. His wrinkles were few and small, and his skin had a smoothness and delicacy rarely seen in old men. His hair, although snow white, was still abundant, his step slow but firm, and his manner active almost to restlessness. I could not perceive that his memory, the first mental faculty to show decay, was at all impaired. He talked rapidly, and with the greatest apparent ease, never hesitating for a word, whether in English or German, and, in fact, appeared to be unconscious which language he was using, as he changed five or six times during the conversation.

"You have traveled much and seen many ruins," said Humboldt, as he gave me his hand; "now you have seen one more." "Not a ruin," I could not help replying, "but a pyramid;" for I pressed the hand which had touched those of Frederick the Great, of Foster, the champion of Captain Cook, of Klopstock and Schiller, of Pitt, Napoleon, Josephine, the Marshals of the Empire, Jefferson, Hamilton, Weiland, Herder, Evette, Cuvier, La Place, Gay Lussac, Beethoven, Walter Scott—in short, of every great man whom Europe had produced in three quarters of a century."

The Panama Star of September 2nd has the annexed account of a strange phenomenon which occurred near the town of Apanaca:

At about noon on the 3rd of Aug., the atmosphere being heavily charged with electricity, there came down from the Volcano of Ahuachapan, near which the above town is situated, a dry whirlwind toward the place called Sisiniapa, about five blocks distant to the southwest of Ahuachapan, and increasing in its course it finally became so large as to cover a circumference of thirty yards. This phenomenon, which appeared like an enormous and blackened column of the height of 200 yards, lasted fifteen minutes, in some places, raising large logs of wood, and the branches of trees that came under its control, and a vapor of thick smoke arose from the south, causing a fearful noise, similar to the oft-repeated detonations of a heavy storm. This strange phenomenon, the majestic appearance of which made all the inhabitants tremble, lasted two and a half hours, and took the course of the road to Ataca, leaving behind it openings in the woods and hedges, and even in the hard earth; and was followed by a heavy rain, which did not permit us to see the end of the monster.

Eugenie is to have \$2,000,000 pin money for her Eastern tour.

A SINGULAR WALL.

Walls formed of human bones are not unfrequently to be met with in some of the ancient cemeteries in the south of Ireland. A remarkable one, the remains of which may still be seen, was some years ago in the avenue leading into the Franciscan Abbey of Kilcrea, in the county of Cork. The ditch was composed of the bones of the legs, arms, and vertebrae, the interstices being filled up with the smaller bones. It was about forty feet long, seven feet in height, and six broad. At present these remains have become partly dissolved from rain and exposure to the weather, and covered with moss, nettles and other rank vegetation. These bones owe the regular order in which they are placed to the following cause:

About eighty years ago, an aged woman of extremely weird aspect, and it is said of unsound mind, suddenly made her appearance in the vicinity of the abbey, and after a short time took up her abode in an unclaimed and untenanted vault, which she appropriated to her own use. She always seemed to avoid intercourse with the people around and though she scarcely ever spoke to any person, yet the hospitable and good-natured neighbors occasionally supplied her with cooked potatoes and a little milk. She was often seen to drink of the Bride, the brook that ripples by the ruin. Seldom seen in the daytime, when darkness set in and silence reigned around, she emerged from her charnel-house, and occupied a considerable part of the night season in collecting the bones of generations long passed away, that lay scattered up and down through the abbey, and arranging them in the order we now find traces of them in the ditch. The skulls she disposed of in the small Gothic windows of the choir and chancel, the frontal organs looking on the outer world.

A more ghastly sight could scarcely be conceived; yet she fitted them in so compactly that one window remained intact till within a few years ago, when, on a stormy night, it was blown in, and these fragments of frail mortality were scattered by the wind. The only tradition that the country people possess of this mysterious woman—for some old people, lately deceased, remember her in their earlier days—is that she came from the North (this is that quarter of the compass from which is supposed to proceed much that is supernatural). After living here entombed some two years, surrounded with a vague reputation for sanctity, and much respected—for she had always refused money, and scarcely ever roamed beyond the precincts of the abbey—she suddenly disappeared on a Christmas morning, and was never after heard of.

NAPOLEON'S COAT OF MAIL.

Just before Napoleon set out for Belgium (before the battle of Waterloo), he sent for the cleverest artisan of his class in Paris, and demanded of him whether he would engage to make a coat of mail to be worn under the ordinary dress, which should be absolutely bullet proof; and that if so, he might name his own price for such a work. The man engaged to make the desired object, if allowed proper time, and he named 18,000*f.* as the price of it. The bargain was concluded, and in due time the work was produced, and the artisan was honored with a second audience of the Emperor. "Now," said his Imperial Majesty, "put it on," the man did so. "As I am to stake my life on its efficacy, you will, I suppose have no objection to do the same?" and he took a brace of pistols, and prepared to discharge one at the astonished artist's breast. There was no retreating however, and, half dead with fear, he stood the fire; and, to the infinite credit of his work, with perfect impunity. But the Emperor was not content with one trial. He fired the second pistol at the back of the artist, and afterward discharged a fowling piece at another part of him with a similar effect. "Well," said the Emperor, "you have produced a capital work, undoubtedly. What is to be the price of it?" "Eighteen thousand francs were named as the agreed sum." "There is an order for them," said the Emperor; "and there is another for an equal sum, for the fright I have given you."

William Penn's old family carriage has come into the possession of the Michigan Central Railroad. The relic is over one hundred and sixty years old. A gentleman of Jackson, Mich., either purchased or fell heir to it, but on its arrival he failed to pay express charges, and so the company took possession in default.

BREVITIES.

An indignant orator, at a recent political meeting, in refuting an opponent, thundered out: "Mr. Chairman, I scorn the allegation, and I defy the *alligator*."

In connection with the reports concerning Napoleon's health, it is said that His Majesty had long been told that his immoderate use of tobacco (at one time he smoked sixteen cigars a day) would superinduce paralysis or softening of the spinal marrow; and, although he has for some years restricted himself to six cigars a day, his medical advisers think they can discover injurious effects from this number. He is now obliged to use catheters almost constantly.

A clever old dame, who resides a short distance from New York city, was recently astonished by her husband, who came in hurriedly with the remark: "I have got a present for you!" "A present for me," says she; "what is it?" "A tooth-brush," responded the old gent. "What good will that do me—you know that I have not got a tooth in my head!" retorted his spouse. "Just the thing," replied the venerable joker "there ain't a bristle in it!"

A Turkish tiler, being at work on the roof of a house, fell into the street upon a man, whom he killed, without any serious injury to himself. The son of the deceased caused him to be arrested and conducted to the Cadi. The tiler, confessing the accident, stated that he would willingly afford the son an opportunity to retaliate on him. "Ascend the roof where I was," said he to the son; "I will place myself where your father was, then you may fall upon me and kill me if you can."

A successful business man, of New Albany, Indiana, was recently urged to take charge of a class in a Sunday School, and said: "No, indeed, sir; I will not teach a class." "Why not?" asked the superintendent. "For an excellent reason," he answered. "I once had a class of three boys in a Sunday school. After teaching them a short time, one of them was sent to jail, and another arraigned for a crime in the police court. To save the other from a similar fate, I gave up the class, and I will never teach another, for Sunday school teaching is evidently not my forte."

From Damascus came the damson, blue plums, and the delicious apricot of Portugal, called the damasco; damask, our beautiful fabric of cotton and silk, with vines and flowers raised upon a smooth, bright ground; the damask rose, introduced into England in the time of Henry VIII.; the Damascus blade, so famous the world over for its keen edge and wonderful elasticity, the secret of whose manufacture was lost when Tamerlane carried off the artist into Persia; the beautiful art of inlaying wood and steel with silver and gold, a kind of mosaic engraving and sculpture united—called damasking—with which boxes, bureaus, swords and guns are ornamented.

They who attempt to outwangle quarrelsome neighbors go the wrong way to work—a kind word, and still more, a kind deed, will be more likely to be successful. Two children wanted to pass by a savage dog; the one took a stick in his hand and pointed at him, but this only made the enraged creature more furious than before. The other child adopted a different plan; for by giving the dog a piece of bread and butter, he was allowed to pass, the subdued animal wagging his tail in quietude. If you happen to have a quarrelsome neighbor, conquer him by civility and kindness; try the bread and butter system, and keep your stick out of sight. This is an excellent Christian admonition: "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger."—*Pro. xv. 1.*

Mr. Emerson, in his lecture on "Works and Days," says many things worthy to be repeated a thousand times. Among the numerous striking passages that lodge in our memory is the following: "The days are God's best gifts to man, but like many other gifts pass by unheeded and unappreciated. We ask a friend, 'What are you doing now?' and are answered, 'I have been doing thus and so, and am going to commence some other work soon, but just now I am not doing anything.' And yet we complain of having no time. An Indian Chief of the Six Nations once said a wiser thing than any philosopher. A white man remarked in his hearing that he had not time enough. 'Well,' replied Red Jacket, gruffly, 'I suppose you have all there is.' He is the wisest and best man who can crowd the most good into now."—*Ex.*