

THE EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, September 21, 1876.

THE STRASBOURG CATHEDRAL.
CLOCK AND LIBRARY.

One of the most lamentable results of the siege of Strasbourg, leaving out of view the loss of life, is the injury which the bombardment has inflicted upon the noble cathedral and its wonderful astronomical clock. The vast cathedral, which, perhaps, more than any other one thing, has made the name of Strasbourg celebrated, is one of the finest Gothic buildings in Europe. It was founded A. D. 804. The choir was built by Charlemagne, probably about A. D. 800, though it was not completed until 1439. The material of which the cathedral is built is a brown stone, very much resembling our Connecticut Portland freestone, so extensively used in Fifth Avenue. It was obtained from a quarry at Wasseboone, in the valley of Couronne, a few miles from Strasbourg. The architect of the existing edifice was Erwin von Steinbach, of Baden. One John Huels, of Cologne, was the architect of the peerless tower. Its spire is the loftiest in the world. Its height, 469 feet, surpasses St. Peter's, and is about equal to that of the Great Pyramid. The greater part of the entire structure was destroyed by lightning in 1007, and the restored edifice was begun in 1015 and completed in 1439. The cathedral is in every part richly decorated with sculptures; and the western front, rising to a height of 280 feet, is, or was, particularly fine with its wealth of statues, ornamental carvings, and bas-reliefs. It has a circular window 48 feet in diameter. The Prussian heavy artillery has made, it is said, a ruin of part of the vast building.

The astronomical clock, the product of a German clockmaker, in about the year 1550, is a marvel of ingenuity and mechanical skill, and has no counterpart. It performs not only the ordinary service of a clock, but exhibits the days and the months and the years; the process of the seasons; the signs of the zodiac; and the names and movements of the heavenly bodies. At each quarter-hour an angel comes out and strikes one stroke on a bell; at every hour another angel comes and strikes twice; and at twelve, meridian, a figure of Christ appears, accompanied by the twelve apostles, all of whom move around a central point and pass in, out of sight, by another door, the stroke of twelve being given, and a clock flaps the wings and crows. The clock is enormous in size, like everything else connected with the vast cathedral, and is invisible from the outside street—the spectator passing through the nave of the Cathedral to see it. It has suffered from fire and violence before the present year, having been out of repair and motionless since the revolution of 1793, until the year 1842, when it was repaired by watchmakers of Bas-Rhin, and has been in operation since. It is to be hoped that this ingenious piece of mechanism has not been irreparably injured by the present bombardment.

The loss of the Strasbourg Library—a vast collection of 800,000 volumes, including many collections of rare and curious monkish parchments—is total and irreparable. It can never be replaced by any collection hereafter made. It was the slow result of a thousand years and its destruction by fire, caused by the Prussian hot shot, is like the burning of the Alexandrian Library. In this, of a great number of the works destroyed no duplicates can ever be obtained.—*Hartford Times.*

COMMON ROAD LOCOMOTIVES.—The British War Department has investigated a recent invention of a locomotive without rails, and it is pronounced in official reports far more useful than any horse. The Superintendent of Machinery says he has "come to the conclusion that the question of steam traction on common roads is now completely solved;" that the application of the India-rubber tire is a perfect success; that it opens up a new field, and that he looks upon this application as a discovery rather than an invention. In the course of experiments witnessed by Anderson, the engine went up a zigzag labyrinth of curves, and it can describe any figure almost in the space of twice its length. The boiler employed is an independent invention adapted to the carriage. Its chief peculiarity is the copper pot used for holding water within the furnace, and it is so contrived that if the boiler contains any water the pot will have a full supply. This arrangement keeps the centre of gravity low, and always allows the engine to run up hills of one in ten, or go along an angle of thirty-five degrees. The wheel and its tire may be described as consisting of a broad iron tire with narrow flanges, upon which is placed a ring of soft vulcanized India-rubber. This ring, about twelve inches in width and five inches in thickness, which thus surrounds the iron tire, is kept in place by the flanges; then over the India-rubber there is placed an endless chain of steel plates, which is the portion of the wheel that comes in actual contact with the rough road, the reticulated chain being connected by a sort of vertebra at each side of the wheel. The India-rubber tire and this ring of steel plates have no rigid connection, but are at liberty to move around as they please without consulting each other, or even without the concurrence of the inner ring of the wheel, which they both inclose.

A TARTAR CITY.—The common idea of Tartary is that of a succession of vast plains, over which hordes of barbarians wander at will with their cattle and tents. R. B. Shaw, in his report of a visit to Yarkand and Kashgar, says that he found the reality widely different. It is a well-cultivated country, containing flourishing cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, where many of the arts of civilization are carried on. Security of life and property exists, commerce is protected, markets are held on a fixed day of the week, even in the smallest villages. In the towns extensive bazars, covered in against the rays of the sun, contain rows of shops, where goods of every kind and from every country are exhibited. In Yarkand alone there are sixty colleges, with endowments in land, for the education of students of Mussulman law and divinity, while every street contains a primary school attached to a mosque, where turbaned rows of boys may be seen daily at their first lessons in reading and

writing. There are special streets for the various trades. In one street will be found spread out the silks of China. In another the cotton goods of Russia, while a third will contain robes made of both materials, three or four of which make up the ordinary dress of the Turkish inhabitants. In some streets all kinds of groceries are sold; others are set apart for the butchers, who offer a choice of horseflesh, camel, beef, or mutton; the first is rather a luxury, but the last two are most abundant, selling at about one penny per pound. The bakers make most excellent light loaves by a process of steaming the bread. The grocers present abundant supplies of vegetables in great variety, besides cream nearly as thick as that of Devonshire, and delicious cream cheeses. Every where sherbet made of fruit is sold, which you can get cooled at any street corner, where there are stalls for the sale of ice. There are tea-shops, where the great urns are ever steaming, and eating houses in abundance. Such is the manifold life of this little known nation, living a life of its own, making history very fast, and looking upon European politics with the same indifference with which its own have been regarded by us.

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