

NEWS ITEMS.

THE benefactions of Mr. Peabody amount to over £600,000.

THE Philadelphia mint is producing about 2,000,000 pieces of the new five's per month.

RIVERS and canals are fast closing with ice. At Dubuque, Iowa, Dec. 11th, the mercury was eight degrees below zero.

THE American institution of horse-railways has been introduced in Hamburg, and is considered a great convenience for the public.

ONE of the most eminent physicians in London says that three-fourths of the ardent spirits consumed in the gin shops of that city are drunk by women.

"THE work of a thousand men for four years" is the inscription placed prominently on the new bridge over the Susquehanna at Havre de Grace.

THE *Rocky Mountain Gazette* of Dec. 22, published in Helena, Montana, reports three men killed and three wounded in Cave Gulch, in a quarrel about a mining claim.

THE Detroit Free Press estimates the total yield of grain, of all kinds, in Michigan, during the current year, at 23,866,638 bushels, against 24,458,531 bushels in 1865.

THE English commission of artillery officers, of which Sir Richard Davis is president, has unanimously decided to resort to muzzle-loading rifle-guns for field artillery.

THE following is one result of the Prussian campaign: Out of a total of rather more than 130,000 Belgian householders, 85,000, or 60 per cent., were unable to pay the house-tax due in July.

THIS year Egypt has produced a cotton crop estimated at twenty million sterling, and it is credibly told that the condition of the common people has begun to be sensibly improved.

CHINAMEN with their families are emigrating to the Sandwich Islands, where they propose to become farmers, and the *Honolulu Advertiser* thinks it likely that in a few years the Chinese may outnumber the native population.

THE London *Sunday Times* states that several persons in this current year of grace have been fined five shillings for not attending church!

Mohammedans, Brahmins and various other sects have fixed upon the year 1867 as a period to be marked by some great and marvelous change.

THE Ohio Penitentiary has now eight hundred and eighty-two convicts confined within its walls, being about one hundred and fifty more than this time last year. There has been a steady increase in the number of inmates of the institution since the close of the war.

A splendid meteor was visible at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., on the evening of Dec. 11. It was about the size of a ball from a Roman candle, and of a red tint. In its progress from West to East it divided into several parts, continuing in the same direction, the larger portions keeping the lead until out of sight. It consumed about ten seconds of time in its progress.

THE town of Coburg, C. W., was, on the 1st inst., lighted with a new gas, made from pine wood, bones and refuse vegetable and animal matter. The light was quite brilliant, surpassing that manufactured from coal, which had been formerly used, while it will be more economical.

AN improvement on the plan of smelting iron has been made in the foundry of the Philadelphia Navy-yard. By this improvement, where it occupied before three hours in smelting a few hundred pounds of iron, it is now accomplished in one hour.

THE negro actor, Ira Aldridge has had a great success at Versailles in "Othello"—the only tragedy he can appear in. The theatrical performance was preceded by a dinner, given to the stars of the literary world, at the Hotel des Reservoirs. Alexander Dumas was among the last to arrive, and sat next to M. Barriere. The prince of romancists was in full force, and related more anecdotes during the hour devoted to dinner than an ordinary man would have remembered in a month. The Versailles Theatre was crammed to suffocation.

A COMMISSION appointed by the Legislature of New York, and consisting of the Governor and other State officers, met at Albany on Monday to locate four new Normal Schools for training teachers in various parts of that State. Eight sites were selected, the towns being put in pairs of two each, and the first one of each pair that gives security for the cost of buildings at \$70,000 is to be selected. Potsdam, Plattsburg, Genesee and Buffalo are the places that will probably secure the schools. This commission requested the Legislature to make appropriations for six additional schools, so that the State of New York will have ten Normal schools in all.

A PARIS correspondent writes concerning the Paris Exhibition building:—"This building is now almost terminated, and rises in the midst of the surrounding park like a gigantic colosseum. In connecting the various parts of the iron framework no less than six millions of rivets have been used, and fifteen millions of holes bored. It has taken forty-five thousand metres of glass for the windows of the great machine gallery alone, whilst the skylights contain twenty thousand metres. One of the most remarkable features in connection with this building is the rapidity with which the works have been carried on. In the month of August, 1865, nothing had been done beyond the adoption of the plans, and the first contracts were not concluded till the following month of September. In October military exercises were still gone through in the Champs de Mars, and now the palace, with roof and windows complete, stands there as a mighty monument of modern science and industry. In a short time the interior fittings and decorations will be finished, and the whole aspect of the Champ de Mars changed as if by magic."

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Chicago Advertiser* gives the following report of the success of the co-operative foundry in Troy, N. Y. "Everything, the Superintendent informs us, works harmoniously. They have three patterns of stoves of their own, but can as yet find little time to work them, having now more contracts on their hands than they can profitably fill. They employ in the foundry altogether fifty hands, melt about seven tons of metal per day, and turn out about eighteen hundred stoves per week. Their capital at the present time, in stock and real estate, is fifty thousand dollars, and all this has been accomplished by a few working-men in a few months. On inquiring the average amount of each man's earnings for the usual day of ten hours, we were informed that the average rate is \$30 per week, and that scarcely any one works ten hours per day in the foundry, and but a little more than eight on an average. We saw hundreds of tons of coal and iron on the premises, and everything necessary to carry on the works, and as far as our observation goes, we must pronounce the Molder's Co-operative Foundry at Troy a perfect success."

Among the antiquated laws and customs of some of the smaller German States which will be abolished on their annexation to Prussia, not the least curious are those relating to marriage. In Electoral Hesse no man was allowed to marry if under twenty-two years of age, and no woman if under eighteen. The result of this somewhat severe law was that while in other countries girls try to make people believe they are "sweet seventeen" for many years after they have left school, the Hessian young ladies often declare themselves to be eighteen years old long before they have reached that age. The Prussian authorities, however, will change all that, the law of Prussia making the minimum marriageable age eighteen for a man and fourteen for a woman. In Wurtemberg, men are not allowed to marry under twenty-five, except by special dispensation. A curious law, said to date from the time of the Visigoths, also exists in that country, forbidding any woman to marry a man twelve years younger than herself. In the other German States similar anomalies occur. Thus in Saxony, the minimum marriageable age for a man is twenty-one; for a woman there is no restriction. In Austria a boy of fourteen may marry a girl of twelve; while in Baden, marriages, where the bridegroom is under twenty-five, or the bride under eighteen, are not allowed unless sanctioned by the police authorities.

A rifle match recently came off at Point St. Charles, Canada, to test the relative endurance and rapidity of firing of the Ballard and Palmer rifles. At the 316th round the Palmer rifle gave out. The Ballard continued to fire until 1,023 rounds had been fired in one hour and forty-five minutes.

The melter at the United States Mint has made an important discovery, which will save the government a vast sum of money. Recent experiments have demonstrated that in future coinages of gold, \$2,500 out of every million converted from dust will be clear profit to United States. The new process will not be made public.

A large number of persons still continue to visit the Madoc gold mines in Canada, and prospecting is going on lively. A California miner professes himself satisfied with the "show," and there are rumours rife of the discovery of precious metal in other sections of the back country.

Fourteen cars loaded with ingot copper from Lake Superior, valued at \$84,000 each, lately went east from Chicago, by the Michigan Central Railroad. A mass of virgin copper, perhaps the largest ever brought to Pittsburg or any other city, arrived from Lake Superior, by the Cleveland and Pittsburg Railway. It was brought by itself on a platform car, and appeared quite load enough for one set of wheels. It was stamped as weighing 15,180 pounds.

THE *Galveston News*, alluding to the rapid progress making by that city, and the spirit of enterprise everywhere manifested, says a large portion of our active trade is now carried on by men who were not here before the war, and we believe it is but just to them to say that they have set an example of enterprise which is at the foundation of our present prosperity.

A Liverpool paper speaks of the diversion of labor to other countries, caused by high wages exacted in England, as follows:

Recently, orders to a large extent for locomotive engines have been executed in Belgium and Switzerland, that formerly would have been executed here; and it is believed the day is not far distant when foreigners will undersell us on our own soil, if they are not actually doing it now. This high rate of remuneration is telling on the London ship-building trade, for on the Thames no fewer than 27,000 men connected with that craft are at present out of employment. The masters cannot compete with the low scale of wages paid to workmen in other countries.

MONTANA DISREPUTE.—A correspondent of the *Napa Reporter*, who signs himself "Typo," and writes from Soda Springs, Idaho Territory, over the date of Nov. 23, gives rather a gloomy picture of the Green River, Wind River and Sweetwater River mines. He says: Six hundred or more prospectors have spent the past summer in opening the country from Snake river in this territory through the Rocky Range to the valleys of Dakota. Their empty pockets and long faces upon their return indicated the "prospect," and upon questioning them, "humbug" and "played out" are generally received as answers. There is something peculiar about the country, and I presume never known in the gold fields of other countries. At one place for a distance of sixty miles in length and ranging from three to ten miles in width, is found evenly distributed, "float gold" in a quantity that will pay from one and a half to two dollars per day when all the ingenuity of the miner is applied. Other portions of the country present a like prospect. Such a quantity of fine gold and no course seems to surpass the comprehension of the oldest miners. These parties had but little trouble with the Indians, except that of capturing innumerable animals which had been stolen from freighters and emigrants on the Bosman and Bridger roads, and upon whom the Cheyennes, Crows and Sioux have no mercy. It was hoped, Wind river would offer a new resort for the "floaters" (generally applied to rebel soldiers) who have swarmed into this country and depend upon new discoveries for a support. The surrounding mines are fast failing; the placers of Montana are defunct. Arizona, from which we often hear flattering reports, will soon take the lead. Many are now emigrating to that Territory.

Varieties.

—There is one advantage in being a blockhead, you are never attacked with low spirits or apoplexy.

—The lady who did not think it respectable to bring up her children to work has lately heard from her two sons. One of them is a barkeeper on a flatboat, and the other is a steward in a brick-yard.

—It is not everybody who knows where to joke, or when, or how; and whoever is ignorant of these conditions had better not joke at all. It is neither good manners nor wise policy to joke at anybody's expense—that is to say, to make anybody uncomfortable merely to raise a laugh.

—A Dutchman once wanted to wed a widow, and his manner of making known his intention was as follows:

"If you is content to get a better for a worse, to be happy for a miserable, and if you smokes and drinks ale, I shall take you for no better and much worse." Upon which the lady said, "Yaw."

—The pompous epitaph of a close-fisted citizen closed with the following passage of Scripture: "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." "Dat may be," soliloquized Sambo, "but when dat man died, de Lord didn't owe him a red cent."

—"Where are you going so fast, Mr. Smith?" demanded Mr. Jones. "Home, sir, home; don't detain me: I have just bought my wife a new bonnet, and I must deliver it before the fashion changes."

—"Sambo, am you posted in the natural sciences?" "Sartinly—ob course I is." "Den you can tell me de cause of de rot in potatoes for de las many years gone by?" "O, dat's easy 'nough for the merest chile in scientific larnin." De great rot in potatoes is all owin' to de rot-tater-y motion ob de earth."

—"J——j——, Esq., is not only a good lawyer, but an able superintendent of a Sabbath School in New Haven. A few Sabbaths ago, in the midst of some remarks on the authenticity of the Bible narrative of the creation, he was interrupted by a skeptical listener, who propounded the question, "Who was Cain's wife?" Mr. S. instantly replied: "If you were going to write the history of the United States on your thumb nail, there would be a great many things you would have to leave out!"

—Dr. Mary Walker said in London that the Bloomer movement all died out some years ago, because the ladies who favored it then were for the most part incapable of appreciating and explaining the physiological, hygienic, and moral bearings of the question. If the petticoat were cut in one way the ladies were accused of a desire to show their ankles; if in another, of "looking like a squaw."

—Two raftsmen were caught in the late severe blow on the Mississippi, when so many rafts were swamped and so many steamboats lost their sky-riggings. The raft was just emerging from Lake Pepin as the squall came. In an instant it was pitching and writhing as it suddenly dropped into Charbydis, while the waves broke over it with tremendous uproar. Expecting instant death, one of the raftsmen dropped on his knees and commenced praying with a vim equal to the emergency. Happening to open his eyes, he observed his companion, not engaged in prayer, but pushing a pole in the water at the side of the raft.

"What's that yer doin' Mike?" said he; get down on yer knees now, for there isn't a minute between us and purgatory!"

"Be asy, Pat," said the other, as he coolly continued to punch with his pole; "what's the use of prayin' when a man can touch bottom with a pole?"

Mike is a pretty good specimen of a large class of christians, who prefer to omit prayer as long as they can "touch bottom."

SOUTHERN TEA.—Southern tea is spoken of by the *Southern Cultivator* as something worthy of attention. It has tested a sample raised by Mr. W. Jones, of Liberty county, Ga., and pronounced it to be in fragrance and flavor precisely the same as a fine article of black tea.