SCANDINAVIA.

Iceland and Its People.

Since the researches of the Danish Antiquarians established the fact that New-England had been discovered five hundred years before Columbus landed upon Hispantola, that the coast of Massachusetts had been visited and in some degree settled by the Vikings and their descendants as early as the tenth century, there has been a gradually increasing interest among the people of this country and England to see and learn more of the present representatives of those hardy adventurers from the North. Denmark and Sweden have been explored, and curious travelers have flocked to the almost unknown fiords and hamlets of Norway, have dared the snowy precipices of the Dovrefjeld, watched the midnight sun from the North Cape, and heard music in the roar of the Maelström. Denmark is Germanized and modernized so far, that the superficial observer can see nothing of the characteristics of the Vikings who once made Jutland a name of terror to all Europe, and it is only in her mounds and her decaying archives, that the ethnologist finds traces of the olden time. Sweden is much the same: the overthrow of Odin and Thor, the destruction of Sigtuna, and the consequent substitution of the Roman religion, propagated with a zeal satisfied only by the utter destruction of all traces of the old Paganism, has left little of interest, save the barrows of the chiefs, and the rune stones which mark the resting places of their followers. In Norway, while monumental remains are less common, there lingers far more of the old spirit of the Heathen period, and the songs and legends of the Eddas and Sagas are still vocal, and many of them still believed. But while the introduction of Christianity and the southern civilization changed the whole aspect of life in Scandinavia, there was one spot left where for hundreds of years the worship of Odin was undisturbed, and where the blood and the character of the ancient Vikings has been preserved comparatively unchanged to the present day. This was in Iceland; a land of snow and fire, in an ocean of storms and icebergs. To this remarkable land, the attention of some few American travelers has recently been directed; and among them PLINY MILES, Esq. of Jefferson Co., N. Y., who has lately read two papers embracing his observations there, before the Historical and the Geographical Societies of this City. Mr. Miles spent some months in Iceland and traveled over a considerable district of the Western and Southern portions of the country. He found the people hospitable, intelligent and happy. The climate was delightful, and his whole sojourn one of unalloyed enjoyment. The physical features of Iceland are already pretty widely known. The country is about as large as the State of New-York, of an oval shape, lying between 63 and 66 degrees north latitude and 13 and 24 degrees west longitude, being just below the Polar Circle. The climate, however, is much milder than might be supposed, being less cold in the winter than in the northern New-England States. The volcanic character of the country is its most peculiar feature. The whole island seems to be upheaved over a lake of fire; there are dozens of volcanoes, and thousands of hot springs constantly sending up evidences of the terrific force of heat beneath. The awful eruptions of Hekla and Skaptar Jokull have never been equaled by Etna, Stromboli, or any of the American volcanoes. Not more than 70 years have passed at one time, since the settlement of the country, without an eruption of magnitude from Hekla, and often there have been a dozen eruptions within such a period. Its last was in 1845, and when Mr. Miles was there (in 1852) the long black river of lava which ran out in '45 had not done smoking. But Hekla had never equalled Skaptar Jokull in its effects, or in the amount of matter thrown from its crater. In May of 1783 a new volcano rose from the sea seven miles from land, off the south-west coast, 150 miles from Skaptar. An island of considerable size was formed, and there were thrown out vast quantities of pumice, and a light substance which floated over the sea for 150 miles in such quantities as to retard the progress of ships. Hearing of this new island, the King of Denmark sent a ship to annex it to Iceland. It was taken into Danish possession, but the year afterward it suddenly sunk into the sea, and has never since been heard of. In 1783 Skaptar began to be troubled, and threw up such clouds of smoke and ashes that for several days the whole region was in darkness. Ashes, sand and sulphur filled the air, covered the land, and destroyed the vegetation. Fortunately, (the volcano being in the southern portion of the island,) a strong north wind drove the stream of ashes out to sea, and it is recorded upon the best authority that the ashes fell over the Faroe, Shetlands, Orkneys, Great Britain, Holland, and even as far as Switzerland. Skaptar itself was a terrible and sublime spectacle. Lightnings and flames filled the air; the ice that had rested for centuries on the mountain was melted, and produced a flood in the river Skapá, whereby much land was submerged and whole farms washed away. On the tenth day after the commencement of the eruption, Skaptar threw up a torrent of lava, which took the course of the Skapá, completely drying up that river, and filling its bed, which was in some places 600 feet deep and 200 wide, and overflowing a large tract of country. The earthquakes, explosions, hissing of steam, cracking of cooling lava, and over all the terrible roaring of the volcano, with its smoke, and fire, and lightning, made up a scene that might fitly have represented the Ragnarök, or Destruction of the Universe, as pictured in the Mythic Edda. The flow of lava continued for three months, and of hot stones and ashes for a much longer period. The effects of this eruption were very disastrous. Much of the adjacent country was ruined; the fish that usually frequented the coast were frightened away and never returned; a famine ensued; 190,000 sheep, 20,000 horses and 11,000 cattle starved to death, and 10,000 people perished from want and exposure. The amount of matter thrown up by Skaptar during this eruption it is estimated would have covered 500 square miles 300 feet deep, while the lava alone would have filled fifty channels of the size of the Hudson River from New-York to Albany. Skaptar Jokull is more than 300 miles in circumference at the base, its highest point being 7,000 feet. It is covered with eternal snow, and its top is almost inaccessible. Mr. Miles saw Skaptar from the summit of Hekla. It looked like an immense glacier, as it contains in the hollow at the top a great lake of water or ice, called Vatna Jokull. This account of Skaptar is measurably true of many other smaller volcanoes in Iceland. There are some noted mountains which are not volcanic. There are also lakes and large rivers, some of which are very little known to our geographers. Among the lakes, Myvatn is the largest, situated in the interior. It is about 40 miles in circumference, situated in a barren region which has been covered with lava from Liebrunkir and Krabla, two neighboring volcanoes. There are several small lakes, some of them on the tops of mountains. One large mud lake is thus situated. Our maps show a large lake between Hekla and Skaptar, called Fiska Vatn, (Fish lake) but no such lake exists, having been drank dry by a volcano a great many years ago. The hot springs, or Geysers, a feature peculiar to Iceland, are too well known to need description. They generally appear at the base of hills, and are almost innumerable, and of every size, from the mere oozing of steam through the mud to the great Geyser, (Stookr) with its column of dancing water 10 feet in diameter and 90 feet high. The eruptions in the large springs are periodical, happening two or three times a day, more or less. They are preceded by subterranean explosions, like distant cannon; then there is increasing agitation in the water, then louder explosions, and finally a shooting up of the water, which plays like a fountain at irregular elevations for five or six minutes, then gradually settles back, sinks into the basin, and sometimes quite out of sight down the tube, and then all is quiescent. These springs maintain a uniform temperature; that of the great Geyser being now 208° Fahrenheit—the same as recorded in 1810. Some of the smaller springs, of manageable size and action, are used for domestic cookery, bathing, &c. There are also mud springs, which operate in the same manner, except that the earth is too heavy to be thrown up. In the south-west part the island are the Sulphur Mountains, where the clay is full of bubbling sulphur sent up by the heat below in enormous quantities. From the side of one of these mountains there issues a singular jet of steam, at an angle of 45 degrees from the ground. Mr. M. compared this jet with a drawing made in 1810 and found it not changed in the least particular. It rushes out with a noise much greater than the blowing off of a steam boiler. The rivers of Iceland are narrow and rapid, running through deep channels in fields of lava. Those running north are as nearly as long as the Hudson, but do not contain so much water. All the streams rise in the southern mountains. There are vast glaciers in the southern ridges, in one case covering thousands of square miles in extent without a sign of life. The moving ice mountain, on the southern coast is a great curiosity. It is an immense mass of earth and ice, which moves at irregular intervals, forward or backward, sometimes for several yards. The cause of its motion is not explained. The interior of the island is barren, being mostly covered with lava, broken with chasms, so as to render it impassable. There are no roads, as we understand the term, in Iceland. The best are merely well-worn paths. All traveling is done on foot or on horse back, there being not a wheeled vehicle in the country. Horses are plenty, and the Icelanders use them constantly, even for the most insignificant distances. Along a road leading northeast from Hekla, one may travel for thirty-six hours without seeing a blade of grass or even a drop of water. The general aspect of the region is the most dreary and desolate imaginable. The air, however, here as everywhere, is remarkably pure. Mountains and other objects thirty, fifty and seventy miles distant are as sharply defined to the eye as if they were within as many hundreds of feet. The Westmann Islands, sixty or seventy miles from Hekla, are seen from the top of that mountain as distinctly as if within ten miles in an American climate. There are storms in Iceland much as here—heavy rains, &c.—but when clear, the air is always like crystal. The inhabitable portions of the island are near the sea, in the valleys between the mountains, and on the banks of the fjords or gulfs. There grass grows well, some easy vegetables are raised in gardens, but no grain can be brought to maturity. All the flour and most of the other vegetable food is imported. There is an abundance of winged game, and many reindeer, the latter having sprung from a few imported a century ago from Norway, found unfit for domestic use, and turned loose by the owner. Sheep, horses and cattle are abundant. Fish can always be had in any quantity. The carrying trade (except for fuel), is confined to Denmark. Wood is furnished mainly by drift timber thrown ashore in large quantities, chiefly on the northeast coast. Coal is imported from England. The currents of the ocean are peculiarly favorable in this respect. One from the south (supposed to be the gulf stream) sweeps around the northern shore and meets a current coming from the north and east; so that is not uncommon to find among the drift wood, pine from the St. Lawrence, fir from Norway, and mahogany from Honduras. These currents also prevent any such disaster as happened to Greenland, viz: the blockade of the coast by icebergs. The largest town is Reikjavik, on the Western coast. It has 1,200 inhabitants, and is the seat of the government. The other towns are mere hamlets. The physical characteristics of Iceland are thus, in many respects, the opposite of almost any country usually visited by travelers. In other lands there are forests; here not a tree the hight of your head. In other countries you visit large cities and old ruins; here you see Nature unadorned. In other lands, you find large and comfortable houses and palaces; here, huts of earth scarcely distinguishable from the earth itself. In other lands, "fruits of fragrance blush on every tree;" here, no fruit will ripen, no grain mature. In other lands, summer and winter alternate; here they mingle—the beautiful green of the grass and the purple bells of the heather being reflected forever in the glistening mirror of the jokull (ice mountain.) No country is more lovely during the summer than Iceland; none more dreary during the winter. No cultivated land yields more grudgingly the fruits of the earth, yet no people can be more attached to their homes than the Icelanders. To them, in spite of earthquakes, geysers, volcanoes, barrenness and sterility, "Island er hinn besta land sem solinn skinnar uppá." (Iceland is the best land that the sun shines upon.)

The History of the Settlement and Progress of Iceland is a remarkable chapter in the chronicles of Europe. The existence of a well-ordered and flourishing Republic for the four hundred years when Europe was in the deepest gloom of the Dark Ages, is of itself sufficient to attract attention and stimulate inquiry; but when it is considered that at this period of brutish ignorance on the Continent, there was on this inhospitable island a high standard of intelligence, and a literature at once elegant, poetical and profound, the subject becomes one alike pleasing and important. At the era of the formation of this Republic, Europe was in a condition of anarchy. The Saxon Kings of England were vainly contending against the irruptions of the piratical Danes; the Normans had just established themselves in France, and Charles the Simple lost his daughter and the fairest provinces of his kingdom; Germany, which had been in much trouble, was beginning to improve under Otho the Great. the Eastern Empire was full of internal broils, usurpations and wars; Venice was taking a semi-republican form, and Genoa was following in its wake; Spain was partitioned between the Christians and the Moors; Denmark was passing over from Paganism to the Catholic religion, and the parent country of Norway was the prey of ambitious and rapacious tyrants. The great distinguishing feature of the Scandinavian character, indeed of the whole Gothic race, is an unconquerable attachment to personal liberty, and next to this a fondness for dangerous and difficult enterprises. The former element has preserved to this day in those countries a degree of freedom in personal rights and privileges little known in nations of the other great original stock of Europe—the Keltic. The latter element carried the ships of the Vikings to the Atlantic, to the Mediterranean, to the Black Sea, to the Icy Ocean, and to the bays and gulfs of the then unknown New World. Iceland was discovered in 860 by Naddod, a sea-rover from Norway, who was driven upon the island in a storm. Finding it uninhabited, he named it Snoland (Snowland) and left it. In 861 Gardar Svafarson, a Swede, was driven there also by a storm. He circumnavigated it, named it Gardarsholm (Gardar's Island) and returned to Norway. He spoke so favorably of it, that Floki, another sea-rover, went there with the idea of settling; but his cattle perished during the winter, the spring was severely cold, the bays full of ice, and he abandoned it, giving it the opprobrious name of Island (Ice-land) which it has since borne. In 870, Ingolf, a Norwegian Jarl, spent a winter in Iceland, and was so pleased with the climate that he resolved to establish a settlement. At this time, Norway was suffering under the tyranny of Harald Harfagra, who had conquered many of the petty kings, and was fast consolidating the government in his own hands. The independent Northmen, unable to withstand him, fled to the Faroe, Orkneys, Shetlan'd and Hebrides, and to Scotland, where they formed colonies. Ingolf induced a large number of the noble families of Norway to go with him, and thus, in 874, established the first permanent settlement in Iceland, all the settlers being purely Scandinavian, true worshipers of Thor and Odin. In a little more than half a century, the whole coast was settled and the land partitioned among the adventurers. Until about 928, they remained nominally subject to Norway, but were quite as free as could be desired. In 928, the Icelanders established a regular Republic; divided the country into elective districts, establishing subordinate governments in each, with a regular gradation of courts from mere referees to a Court of Appeals; and lastly a General Assembly or Congress of the Nation, called the Althing. This body made the laws; it was composed of elected Representatives embracing the best men in the land, was presided over by a Lögsögumadr (Law-saying-man) and held a session of sixteen days each summer. Their place of meeting was called Thingvalla, one of the most picturesque spots on the island. All the sessions were held in the open air. This Republican Government, founded upon principles of the most perfect liberty, lasted unimpaired for four hundred years, more than half of which period was under Christian dispensation—the Roman Catholic religion having been established in the year 1,000. But Norway, now become a united monarchy, (although the people enjoyed most of their old freedom) was a jealous enemy of Iceland, and about 1,265 the island was voluntarily placed under the rule of the mother country, but stipulating to retain all their ancient laws. The intervening distance and the character of the climate kept tyranny afar off; the Althing was regularly held, and the Icelanders did very much as they pleased. In 1387 the island (with Norway) became subject to Denmark, and Iceland still remains in that position. But the ancient usages remain in a great degree; there has never been an attempt to coërce the people, and no military force has ever set foot upon the island. The Althing was abrogated in 1800, after enduring nearly nine hundred years, and its place is supplied by the Supreme Court at Reikjavik.

The character of the people thus descended is extremely simple. They are of the ordinary height of the people of this country, of florid complexion, and light hair. In one respect they differ widely from their ancestors. They lack ambition. The policy of the Danish Government in shutting up their ports has completely isolated the people from the rest of mankind. Satisfied at home, they have gradually lost the roving disposition of the Vikings, and few of them now leave home, and those few chiefly to attend the German or French Universities. Yet they still retain that love for the sea which marked the race in earlier years, and which their brethren infused into the English character. Their language, dress and ordinary life has remained for nine hundred years unchanged. In a large district in the north-west of Iceland, all the men wear their beards, a practice that has been in vogue for hundreds of years. They always seem pleased when a stranger appears among them who has adopted a fashion so much in accordance with their own philosophy, with nature, and the laws of health, and, at the same time, that adds so much to the personal appearance of the lords of creation. All goods taken to Iceland are duty free, and letters and papers are carried there in Government vessels, free of postage, and sent through the island by Government messengers. There is not a post-office, a custom house, a police officer, a fort, a soldier, or a lawyer in the whole country. Dried fish, goods, and valuables are left out of doors unguarded, with impunity, stealing being almost unknown. Taxes are very light, and do not amount to as much as the expense of carrying on the Government, paying the officers, and transporting the mail. The Islanders are universally educated to that extent that all can read and write. There is only one school or institution of learning, in Iceland—the college at Reykjavik; this has about eight professors and tutors, and usually about eighty students. The boys educated here are nearly all intended for the church, or else to fill some of the civil offices in the island; or they expect to go abroad, or live in Denmark. This institution is endowed by the Danish Government, and was formerly at Bessestad, a few miles south, from whence it was removed a few years since. Its President is Bjarni Johnson, Esq., a native Icelander, a gentleman of rare accomplishments and learning, and one of the first linguists in Europe. The Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Danish, French and English languages are taught here, as well as most of the sciences. It was during college vacation that Mr. Miles was in the country, and he used to meet in the interior, at their fathers' houses, young men who were students of the college, and who could converse fluently in Latin, French or English. The Bible or Testament, and often many other books, are found in nearly every house in Iceland. The population being sparse, it is impracticable to have schools, so that education is confined to the family circle. During their long winter evenings, while both males and females are engaged in domestic labors, like spinning, weaving or knitting, by turns one will take a book—some history, biography, or the Bible—and read aloud. The length of their night can be seen, when we consider that the sun, in December, is above the horizon only from two to three hours. While traveling in the country he used frequently to ask the children in poor families to read to him in Icelandic, and he never saw one above the age of nine years that could not read in a masterly style. Their writing, too, is almost invariably of great elegance. This is partly owing to the practice of multiplying copies in manuscript of almost all the historical and poetical works written in the country, copying them in advance of their publication, and often afterward. They write and publish more books according to their population, than any other people. The Reformation spread over the island in 1551, and since that the religion has been Lutheran. Of their literature we have not space here to speak. It is well known to embrace the original Eddas and Sagas which record the remarkable mythology and the eventful history of the Gothic race from the earliest time. Much of it has been brought to the outside world by the Society of Northern Antiquaries, at Copenhagen.

Such is a very hasty outline of the history and character of a country and a people the most stationary, and for that reason among the most interesting of civilized nations.

The Aurora Borealis and the Electric Telegraph.

G. P. B., a telegraphic operator, writes to *The Boston Traveler* the results of six years' experience in determing what effect the Aurora Borealis exerts upon the Telegraphic wires. We copy:

On the House, Morse, and other *magnetic* telegraphs, the effect produced by the Aurora is generally to increase or diminish, the electric current used in working the wires; sometimes it entirely neutralizes it, so that in effect no fluid is discoverable on them. As however, the Bain, or *chemical* telegraph, is much the best adapted for observing the precise effect produced by the Aurora, I shall confine myself principally to it. In this system, the main, or line wire, is brought into direct contact with the chemically prepared paper, which lies on a metal disc, connected with the ground; any action of the atmospheric current is therefore immediately recorded on paper.

During a thunder storm, the atmospheric electricity attracted by the wires passes over them to the chemically prepared paper, and thence to the ground. As it passes from the wire to the paper, it emits a bright spark, and produces a sound like the snapping of a pistol. Atmospheric electricity never remains for any length of time on the wires; it will, however, sometimes travel many miles before discharging itself; I have seen discharges of electricity from the instrument, which emanated from thunder storms forty or fifty miles distant.

The effect produced by the Aurora Borealis on the wires, and the record on the paper, is entirely different from that of the atmospheric current. Instead of discharging itself from the wires with a flash and report, and without the aid of a conductor, as is the case with the latter, it glides along the wires in a continuous stream, producing the same result on paper as that produced by the galvanic battery. It is well known that only the positive pole of the battery produces the colored mark on the paper—the negative having the contrary effect of bleaching it; the same is also true of the two currents from the Aurora. The current usually commences lightly, producing a light blue line just perceptible on the paper—and gradually increases in strength, making a dark blue, and then a black line—till finally it becomes so strong as to burn through several thicknesses of it; it then gradually disappears, and is followed by the bleaching process, which entirely neutralizes the current from the batteries.

In my diary of September 29, 1851, I find the following account of the effects of the Aurora on the evening of that day: "All the lines leading from the city are so strongly charged with atmospheric electricity this evening as to prevent operation. The surplus current on the Chemical Line is equal to one hundred and fifty Grove's cups; and the same seems to be the case on the House and Morse wires. The weather is cloudy, but through the clouds we can occasionally see the brilliant scintillations of an Aurora Borealis." The next day I ascertained that the Aurora, as seen from Providence, New-Haven and other places, was very brilliant. February 19, 1852, I find the following description of the effects of the Aurora of that date, in my journal: "Toward evening a faint blue line appeared on the paper, which gradually grew stronger and darker, until at last it burned it; then gradually grew fainter until it disappeared, when it appeared again in a new form, bleaching instead of coloring the paper. This singular phenomenon continued until we closed, at a late hour in the evening. The Aurora was very brilliant in the evening."

Mr. Rowe, Superintendent of the Boston and Vermont Telegraph Company, showed me specimens of paper taken from instruments on that line, at 12 o'clock at night—three hours after the batteries were taken off—which were covered with light and heavy blue lines and bleachings. These were caused by the Aurora of the 19th February.

Our troubles from the Aurora are not confined to the evenings entirely, though they are more frequent then. On several occasions I have predicted in the afternoon that we should have an aurora in the evening, judging by the effect on the wires at that time, and I do not recollect that I have ever been mistaken in my predictions.

Thursday, April 22, 1852, we were much troubled by an atmospheric current; sometimes preventing our working for half an hour or more, and then disappearing for about that time; the current was constantly changing during the whole evening. We had a very brilliant display of the Aurora.

The Aurora Borealis seems to be composed of a vast mass of electric matter, resembling in every respect that generated by the electro-galvanic battery; the currents from it change, coming on the wires, and then disappearing—as the mass of the Aurora rolls from the horizon to the zenith—sometimes so faintly as to be scarcely perceptible, and then so strongly as to emit one continuous blaze of fire—yet very different from what we commonly term atmospheric electricity, and which we cannot relieve ourselves from, as in the latter case, by placing ground wire conductors in close proximity to the line wires.

☞ One of the New-Jersey papers talks as follows in relation to the election of the latest chosen Senator of the Camden & Amboy Co.:

"We are of opinion that very few members of the Legislature from any quarter were bought outright with the funds of the Essex millionaire. It was the lobby borers who were Wright's hirelings, and they were depended upon to worry and dragoon the members into his support. These mercenaries were brought there from every County in the State; they numbered in the aggregate over one hundred strong, and were employed at a cost of somewhere between $30,000 and $50,000. One lobby operator, who hails from this County, and who is regarded as unequalled in that corrupt vocation, is alone reputed to have marched into Billy to the tune of $4,000. This corps of purchased borers were the instruments of Mr. Wright's success; *they* "decoed the Golden Ass," leaving the members of the Legislature to do the voting, and sneak to dinner with empty pockets. Doubtless, there were some few of the latter who made the thing pay. It would be strange if none of them held out a platter while the golden shower was descending.

A good Democrat, who was in the State House at the time the caucus was in session, tells us that when the Wright faction found themselves desperately in need of two more votes, in order to swell the amount to the essential number of twenty-six, they waxed exceedingly wroth because $3,000 was asked as the price of the aforesaid coveted votes. But whether this sum was paid or not, the general fact remains, that the great body of the members who voted for Mr. Wright in the joint meeting, got very little, if any, of the large consideration for which the lobby interest sold the Senatorial office.

Thus much we have felt impelled to say upon this disgraceful topic, in vindication of the members of the Legislature. More we might unfold, but for the present we forbear. Everybody is convinced that Mr. Wright's election was brought about by the basest means. Indeed, it is perfectly safe to declare, that the whole transaction stands without a parallel in the annals of political corruption."

☞ On Monday evening Officer Sleeper, of South Boston, arrested a woman named Williams, who was lighting in Second-st. She was quite intoxicated, and was committed to the Watch-House. In about an hour after the commitment, the husband of the woman brought to the Watch-House his three children, respectively four years, two years, and three weeks of age. The infant was crying for its mother, the second was shivering with cold, while the oldest seemed to be suffering from some illness, and was perfectly stupid and insensible. The youngest was appeased when given to its mother, the second soon became warm and comfortable. The eldest grew more ill, and a physician was at last ordered by the officer of the watch. Dr. Sprague attended, and discovered that the child had partaken of a quantity of rum. Emetics were applied, and for an hour the child vomited incessantly, and for a time it was feared that it would not recover. It finally partially recovered, and the whole family were conveyed home. It was supposed that the little girl obtained the rum during the absence of her mother, from a bottle left on the side-board. The girl, as she lay dead drunk, presented a most affecting appearance. She was very handsome, and as she groaned in agony, with eyes fixed in her head, dishevelled ringlets about her face, her countenance pale and cold as death, and the mother who should be watching over her, crazy drunk in a cell in the west room, the scene was most sickening. To see a little child but four years old dead drunk from liquor taken in imitation of its mother, and from the same bottle, was indeed distressing. [Boston Traveller.

A LAWYER IN LIMBO.—Among the letters found in the possession of Clark, arrested at Pond's Eagle Hotel, a short time since, as a counterfeiter, were several signed Robert Harkness, Delhi, Delaware Co. Officer Mack proceeded to Delhi to arrest Harkness, but found he had gone to Unadilla, where he was practicing law. He was found at Unadilla, in his office, in company with a client, and arrested, but immediately hit upon a plan for his benefit, which the shrewdness of the officers frustrated. Stepping aside with his client, he whispered something to him, and then sprang through a back door, leaped over a fence and ran off. The officers, however, not following him, he soon returned. His intention was, no doubt, to lead off the officers, when the clerk could remove his trunk. He was secured and shackled, and on searching his trunk a number of plates for bills of different denominations, counterfeit and altered bank notes, and a preparation for removing ink from paper, were found. He was conveyed to Delhi and committed. He is a lawyer by profession, has been much esteemed in Delaware County, and has been in the County Treasurer's office. He has also been Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. [Albany Atlas.

☞ A Pittsburgh paper says that the name of the man who fell asleep when waiting to warn an approaching train of danger, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and thereby led to the loss of several lives, is Mercer. He has been arrested, and is now in jail at Harrisburgh. From all the information we could glean on the route, we are satisfied the act was more a misfortune than a fault. He went back to warn the approaching train, an having gained a sufficient distance, he stepped into a watch-box to warm himself. He had been overworked, through some disarrangement of his train, and had lost his sleep for two nights. The weather was cold and he sat down beside a hot stove to warm himself, and soon involuntarily lost his consciousness in sleep. The train passed, and the tragedy was enacted. No one grieves over it more than he, and his agony is such as to unsettle his intellect. Before this untoward misfortune he was considered the most careful and safe conductor on the line. Who, in the same circumstances, might not meet with the same misfortune? Let him not be judged harshly.

Post-Office Operations.

The Postmaster-General has established, discontinued, and changed the names of the following Post-Offices during the week ending Saturday, March 5, 1853:

Office.	County.	State.	Postmaster.
Argo	Lucas	Iowa.	Matthew Irvin.
Shiloh	St. Clair	Ill.	Jacob Canman.
Bonny Eagle	York	Me.	Nath H. Lane.
Egremont Plain	Berkshire	Mass.	Abner Brown.
Mount Carmel.	New-Haven	Ct.	Lucius Tras.
West Seneca Center	Erie	N. Y.	Ira Domel.
Ravenswood	Queens	N. Y.	Saml H. Moore
Addison Hill	Steuben	N. Y.	Bligh E. Wood.
Quinzyville	Montgomery	Pa.	Pet. Dougherty.
Bruceville	Preston	Va.	Calvin Holmes.
Sandy Point	Crawford	Geo.	J. Castleberry.
Mountain Hill.	Harris	Geo.	John F. Brown.
Farmersville	Chattooga	Geo.	Wm. A. Mercer.
Clarksville	Clark	Ala.	James J. Cobb.
Red Oak	Prairie	Ark.	John W. Adams.
Three Springs	Hart	Ky.	John B. Wells.
Trenton	Clinton	Ill.	Isaac W. Stiles.
Blands	Saline	Ark.	Sis Chenault.
Zion	Morgan	Ill.	George Wright.
Churchland	Norfolk	Va.	E. G. Williamson.
Newborn	Lucas	Iowa.	Joseph Howard.
South Lancaster	Worcester	Mass.	W. S. Thurston.
Black Rock	Fairfield	Ct.	Alanson Allen.

DISCONTINUED.—Buffalo, Perry Co., Tenn.; Wagoo, Belmont Co., Ohio; Pumpkintown, Randolph Co., Ga.; Slagle's Creek, Polk Co., Mo; Fort Winnebago, Columbia Co., Wisconsin; Lexington, Clatsop Co., Oregon.

NAMES CHANGED.—Amesville, Boone, Illinois, changed to Garden Prairie. Fox, Davis, Iowa, changed to Stringtown. Union Point, Concordia, Louisiana, changed to Black Hawk Point. South Hampden, Penobscot, Maine, changed to Hampden Corner. Long Old Fields, Prince George's, Maryland, changed to Forestville. North American Mines, Houghton, Michigan, changed to Clifton. Church's Store, Wilkes, North Carolina, changed to Reddie's River. Friendship, Sumter, Georgia, changed to Quebeck. Morris Hill, Bath, Virginia, removed into Alleghany Co. Coonville, Mills, Iowa, changed to Glenwood.

CITY ITEMS.

RANGE OF THE THERMOMETER AT *A. J. Delatour's, (formerly Lynch & Clark's,) 254 Wall-st.*

1853.	7 A.M.	Noon.	2 P.M.	5 P.M.
March 17	34	49	44	43

☞ The weather yesterday was half fair and half rainy, but the rain was not plentiful enough to interfere with ordinary out-door enjoyments.

ENTERTAINMENTS.—Prof. BOYNTON will deliver the second of the second course of his instructive Lectures this evening at Metropolitan Hall.

—This is the last night but one of the Opera at Niblo's. Madame Sontag gives us "Lucia," assisted by Badiali, Pozzolini, and others.

—At WALLACK'S, for the benefit of Miss Mulvina, the fine comedy of "The Road to Ruin," and the farce of "The Good For Nothing," Miss M. playing "Nan."

—At the BROADWAY, Mr. Forrest as "Othello," and the petite comedy of "Who Speaks First."

—At BURTON'S, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," with the manager as "Fallstaff." Also the farce of "The Phenomenon."

—At the ST. CHARLES, "Virginius," by J. R. Scott, and "P. P.," or "The Man and the Tiger."

—At the MUSEUM, in the afternoon, "Allow me to Apologise," and "My Friend in the Straps." In the evening, "Blue Beard," and "Your Life's in Danger."

—At the CIRCUS the usual performance of horsemanship, &c., by the French Troupe.

—At WOOD'S MINSTRELS, a new variety of first-class Ethiopian performances, including a new sentimental Song, Delineations, &c.

—At HELLER'S, various illusions of the Black Art, Second Sight &c.

—At RISLEY'S, the fine Panorama of the River Thames, and the remarkable scenes thereon.

—At BANVARD'S the Georama, or Picture of the Holy Land as it is.

—At the ART UNION ROOMS, a rare collection of works of art, paintings, &c.

—At the EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, singular and interesting relics of the Land of Bondage.

☞ Madame Sontag will, it is reported, go to Philadelphia next week, where she will produce a series of Operas in the best possible style.

☞ The California Steam Navigation Company, recently formed, has purchased the steamships United States on this side, and the Cortez and Winfield Scott on the Pacific, for their line. They have also contracted with Mr. Westervelt for three new ships to be finished as soon as possible.

☞ His Excellency Señor de Osma, Peruvian Minister, arrived in town yesterday, and is staying for a time at the Metropolitan Hotel.

RUM STATISTICS.—In the Report of the Chief of Police, sent to the Board of Aldermen last evening, are the following statistics. They show the whole number of places where rum is sold in the several Wards, and the number of places licensed to sell; the number of grog-shops where rum is sold without license, and the number of grog-shops kept open on Sunday. How is it that the Police, while in possession of such information as this, do not arrest the keepers of places unlicensed and selling liquor on Sunday, when they have the necessary power? Who is guilty? Out of 851 selling without license, only 18 have been arrested.

	Licensed.	Not Lic'd.	Open on Sunday.	Whole No.
First Ward	425	28	360	453
Second Ward	189	6	94	195
Third Ward	286	181	44	467
Fourth Ward	459	54	500	513
Fifth Ward	279	15	180	294
Sixth Ward	411	117	400	528
Seventh Ward	252	20	248	272
Eighth Ward	379	38	250	417
Ninth Ward	227	10	195	237
Tenth Ward	229	7	200	236
Eleventh Ward	300	156	456	456
Twelfth Ward	96	7	163	103
Thirteenth Ward	174	10	110	184
Fourteenth Ward	311	64	314	375
Fifteenth Ward	133	8	180	141
Sixteenth Ward	231	69	300	320
Seventeenth Ward	341	76	430	417
Eighteenth Ward	426	57	150	483
Nineteenth Ward	229	102	319	322
Twentieth Ward	335	15	338	350
Total	5,724	851	5,168	6,575

CRIME SINCE 1845.—The following, from the Chief of Police's Report, will show the number of arrests made 1st July, 1845, to Dec. 31, 1852, also for 1852 alone:

	In 1852.	Tot. fm July 1, '45, to Dec. 31, 1852.
Arson	22	122
Assault with intent to Kill	169	988
Assault and Battery	4,984	32,777
Assault and interfering with Policemen	1,218	243
Attempt at Rape	22	160
Attempt to Steal	319	982
Attempt at Burglary	55	343
Aiding and Assisting to Escape	66	351
Abandonment	240	844
Burglary	146	1,097
Bigamy	16	108
Bastardy	215	624
Constructive Larceny	3	86
Disorderly Conduct	4,502	29,756
Deserters	23	360
Driving without License	92	343
Embezzlement	38	150
Escaped Convicts	51	267
Forgery	49	182
Felony	28	222
Fraud	49	185
Fighting in the Street	639	3,224
Gambling	156	940
Grand Larceny	742	3,224
Insanity	480	2,322
Intoxication	8,754	51,037
Intox'n and Disorderly Conduct	5,972	41,010
Indecent Exposure	46	479
Insulting Females	45	219
Keeping Disorderly House	102	471
Miscellaneous Misdemeanors	547	5,863
Murder	30	130
Obtaining Goods under False Pretenses	145	481
Petit Larceny	3,258	21,002
Pickpockets	135	426
Passing Counterfeit Money	147	630
Perjury	16	51
Rape	20	108
Robbery in the First Degree	85	329
Receiving Stolen Goods	69	302
Runaway Apprentices	59	297
Selling Liquor without License	13	141
Threatening Life	38	261
Vagrancy	3,694	17,825
Violation of Corp'tion Ordinances	298	2,257
Total of Arrests from July 1, 1845, to December 31, 1852		216,909

FIRE IN THIRTY-FIFTH-ST.—LOSS OF LIFE.—On Wednesday night about 9 o'clock, a fire was discovered in the dwelling-house No. 146 West Thirty-fifth-st., between Seventh and Eighth ave., occupied by Michael Ryan and family, consisting of his wife, two children and mother. It seems that Mrs. Ryan left the house for the purpose of making a visit, leaving the premises in charge of her mother and children. Upon returning she found the house filled with smoke and her room in flames. She immediately alarmed Officers Cannon and Johnson who entered the room, but unfortunately too late to rescue the poor woman and the children from being burned to death. The old woman, it appears was in the habit of smoking in bed, and it is supposed that the fire dropped from her pipe and thus set fire to the clothing, &c. The police succeeded in subduing the flames before much damage occurred to the building. No alarm was given by the bells. The name of the deceased woman was Sarah Cannaughton. She was 50 years of age and a native of Ireland. One of the children was two-and-a-half years of age and the other only six months old.

Yesterday afternoon Coroner Gamble held an inquest upon the bodies of Mrs. Cannaughton and James and John Ryan, at the Twentieth Ward Station House. From the evidence adduced, it appeared that Mrs. Ryan went out to make a visit, and was absent about four hours. She opened the door to enter, but was compelled to retreat, the smoke rushing into her face. She managed to reach the door, and got hold of the cradle in which she left her youngest child. On taking her son from the cradle he was dead. The Police rushed into the house and found the body of Mrs. Cannaughton, she having been suffocated. Her other son was found lying on the floor near the stove, also dead. The Jury rendered a verdict that Mrs. Cannaughton came to her death by suffocation, and the burns on her body occurred after death. Also, that the children, James and John Ryan, came to their deaths by suffocation.

STATED MEETING OF THE NEW-YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION—*Wednesday, March 16, 1853.*

Present—Erastus C. Benedict, Esq., President, and Commissioners Blackburn, Stuart, Williamson, Savage, Jones, O'Donnell, Meeks, T. E. Smith, Murphy, Fell, Wright, Fraser, Dodge, Tappan, Field, Davis,Ebling, Beadle, De Lamater, Cary, Ransom, Hibbard, Carter, C. H. Smith, Aldis, Waterbury and Monteith.

Absent—Commissioners Nott, Hilton, Vultz, Sweeny, Pinkney, Beekman, Dunning, Scout, Willet and Williams.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The minutes of the Executive Committ