

CELEBRITIES AT HOME.

David D. Porter, Admiral of the Navy.
An Historic Home—The Residence
of Many Distinguished Men.

The Admiral at Work—In the Study—His
Historic Notes—A Library that—How
the Days are spent.

Special Correspondence of the Gazette.

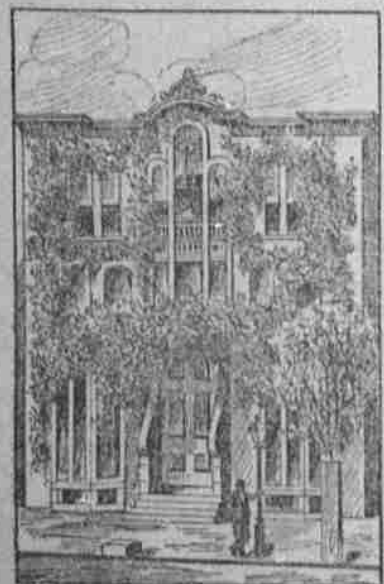
WASHINGTON, Dec. 15.—Perhaps the most historic residence in a city of historic residences, is that in which lives the admiral of the United States Navy. And it is not only historic, but it is one of the most picturesque and striking houses in the capital. Situated on H street, about two squares above the residence of George Bancroft, and only a stone's throw from the old home of Commodore Decatur and a dozen other historic residences, it is almost instinctively singled out by a stranger as a place of more than ordinary interest. The building is of brick, painted brown, and in consequence of many changes and additions, which have been made to it, its appearance is at once picturesque and fantastic. Stained glass windows, with skillfully carved caps and frames, added to the unusual ornamentation, gives the house a decided oriental, and at the same time comfortable look. The main and original building is three stories high, with wings at the back and sides, giving it a frontage of fully 100 feet. The entire front is covered with a seemingly confused labyrinth of bay windows, big and little verandas, and fancifully ornamented cornices, over, around and through which the evergreen ivy and clinging Virginia creeper hang in



ADMIRAL DAVID PORTER.

Luxurious mansions, surrounding and subduing the rough places on every side. From ground to roof the whole building is covered and protected by the dense clustering vines, and in summer the thickest swarms with birds who make love, build their nests and sing songs, all through the long months of sunshine and flowers. It is winter now, however, and the birds have for a time deserted their nests, the winds sigh through the rattling vines and all seems cold and cheerless.

This beautiful house, however, is not only a striking one in appearance, but, as we have said, there is a deal of historical reminiscences connected with it. It is one of the oldest buildings in Washington, having been erected about the year 1826, by Richard Hunt who was then attorney-general, and he owned it until his death. Then it was bought by Joel Poinsett, who was secretary of war in Andrew Jackson's cabinet. While he resided in the house Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren were often his guests, and the chamber in which the latter slept is still in use. The next owner was Commodore Sherbrooke of the navy, who sold it to Capt. Page, and from his hands it passed into those of Hamilton Fish, afterwards senator from New York. He did not live there long, however, but soon rented it to the English government for the use of the legation. While used for this purpose it was occupied by Lord Lyons, the celebrated diplomat, and then by Sir Henry Bulwer, a brother of the famous English novelist. Gen. Phil. Kearney next bought the house and brought his bride to the even then historic mansion. Their married life was not a happy one, however, and a divorce was sued for and procured. Mrs. Kearney retaining possession of the house. She did not keep it in repair and it fell into a ruined state; this gave the ever superstitious negroes of the vicinity an opportunity to declare it haunted, and they talked mysteriously of a white-robed figure flitting from window to window in the midnight hours. The old place again changed hands and next came into the possession of Capt. John Hodge of the navy, from whose heirs Admiral Porter bought it in 1869. During the seventeen years he has lived in the house the admiral has made many improvements, and he says he has now quite a snug berth in which to pass his remaining days. But we are anxious to enter this interesting and historic home, and with mental appetites whetted by what we have heard



THE PORTER RESIDENCE.

about it, we pull the old-fashioned knocker and wait for the door to be opened. We are not kept waiting long. The door is opened, but not by the customary pompous butler, or the trim port housemaid, but by Admiral Porter himself. Here at last is the Republican simplicity. He greets us with a cordiality which puts us at once at our ease.

Those who have seen the admiral on occasions when he was resplendent in gold braid and gilt buttons, would hardly recognize him as he appears at home. He did not have on his military suit and looked no more like the brave old sailor or the admiral of the navy than any business man. And indeed he was not dressed as good as the average business man, for the suit he wore did not cost \$15 in the best days. A thick, double-breasted, close-fitting sack coat, with wide ironers, baggy at the knees and a little frayed at the bottom, a pair of cloth slippers worth perhaps half a dollar, and a black silk skull cap completed his attire. Admiral Porter's personal appearance is not at all imposing. He is about five feet ten inches

in height, weighs perhaps about 170 pounds, with a square well-knit and straight, but with little inclined to stoutness. His long, well-trained whiskers are almost white, and his hair though darker than at thirty, is once was, and there is a vain attempt to hide a little bald spot on the back of his head. He is now nearly seventy-one years old, but he is at least twenty years younger, both in appearance and in his way of thinking. But though our host is not by any means a particularly striking looking man, you will find when you get in conversation with him that he has read, and thinks, and has ideas that he knows how to express and does not hesitate to do so.

Once inside we have time and opportunity to look about the historic mansion. The entrance is from the center of the main building, and for the wide vestibule of the four narrow passages and staircases lead in as many directions. Turning to the right we enter the ballroom, which is in one of the wings, and was built for the British minister. Looking out of the window we see a wall garden, with a fountain and flower beds, thick shade trees and winding walks. A cold and dreary now, but in summer the fountain plays, the trees throw a gracious shade and the garden blooms with a luxuriant flowering of flowers. On the back again we enter the parlors and drawing-room, which are models of refined comfort and elegance. Many other houses are more expensively furnished, but few are more interesting, for no one has a better opportunity to make a collection of rare and beautiful things than the admiral. On the walls of the drawing room hang three pictures of gold brocade and lapis lazuli, very rich and of exquisite workmanship. These vases have quite an interesting history. They were imported by a lady who intended presenting them to Mrs. Lincoln. But when they arrived the lady, by the treacherous fates of war, had fallen into pecuniary embarrassments and had to sell them. They were bought by a gentleman celebrated in the councils of the nation and presented to Admiral Porter.

The office, library, study and workshop of the admiral is on the second floor, and you get to it by a narrow, crooked flight of stairs from the parlors. And a queer place it is, too. You enter through the little glass-enclosed vestibule where the old sailor takes his daily sunbath, in which he has great faith. The place was once a small conservatory, but the admiral says the smell of the flowers made him a little ill, and he had them removed. Three steps up from the little glass box and we are in the office. This is the admiral's quarters; it is from here he commands his household and also his fleet of ships. It is his den, his sanctum sanctorum, and it is from here that he gives his orders. An old stove, a number of more or less worn chairs, a faded carpet, an ancient, comfortable lounge and three or four desks of various sizes are all the furniture the room contains. At how can the remainder of the contents be described? A few books scattered about on the desks, a pile of papers, with the iron and pipe-stems lying harmlessly in the corner; a pile of drawings and photographs, mingled with little brass gun models and a case of stuffed birds in a paper, while all around are scattered papers, documents and models of every conceivable kind. And then there is much on the walls. One of the most interesting of the relics is a letter written by Admiral Nel-



ADMIRAL DAVID PORTER.

son, dated "Off London, July 30, 1803." Near it is also the last note ever penned by Farragut and addressed to Admiral Porter. Then there are photographs and paintings of the most famous generals and naval officers of the war, and drawings of vessels and forts. Another interesting and valuable relic in the room is an immense shield, hung with old and new pistols, daggers, short swords and knives. Every one of them has a bit of history connected with it that is well worth reading. The place is a unique and curious one, and the strangest thing about it is that it never costs the government anything. It is about the only one of which this could be said, but it is true nevertheless, for it was built without aid and furnished by the admiral out of his own means.

In the midst of all the confusion of the host, a cigar in his mouth and generally very busy. He has two secretaries, and from what we saw, he keeps them busy all the time. Still, he has time for literary work, and in the last few years he has given both a novel and a history to the publishers.

"Admiral Porter," I asked, "what are your methods of work?"

"I have none," he answered, "but write when I feel inclined. There are a number of paragraphs in the newspapers stating that I was engaged on my novel 'Allen Dare' and Robert Le Diable' about a dozen years, while the truth of the matter is I finished it in nine months. So you have read it, eh? Well, you make about two thousand who have said the same thing, but yet my publishers claim that they are selling more worth speaking about. Strange people these publishers, don't you think? Ever had any experience with them?"

To his secretary: "Mr. Alden, you can say to Commodore Stockbridge that he had better make preparations to sail about the 22d."

"Yes," (to the writer), "I have written a good deal within the past two years, but I have been unwell of late and I hardly think I will ever write anymore. I made an estimate the other day of how much I had written since I published 'Allen Dare,' and what do you suppose it amounted to? Well, just \$4,000 octavo pages of about 800 words each, and my impression is that I have written to much, and I don't think I'll do any more literary work."

To the butcher's boy who now came in: "No, I thank you, I don't think we'll need any sausage to-day."

And so he went on for an hour or more, giving orders for the movement of vessels to his secretary, attending to the domestic affairs of the household, and talking here and there to the writer, all in the same breath.

About the domestic life of the family, Admiral Porter is almost a man of quiet habits. He is rarely seen on the streets and sticks very close to the house. He seldom goes to the navy department,

and in time of peace has really very little to do with the command of the navy. But his duties are far from ornamental and are very often onerous; giving orders and examining reports constituting the larger part of his work. He arises in the morning about 5 or 6:30 and is busy from that time until noon, when he has lunch, and is then less busy, devoting himself to callers and correspondence. His family go much into society, though the admiral has never shown a marked fondness for it, confining his entertainments to the most part to dinners. He has a good stable and rides occasionally, showing a preference to his daughters' pony phaeton rather than to the dignified family carriage.

GEORGE'S LAND POLICY.

"Earth, Air, Light and Water" as Political Topics.

In his address to the Concord Labor club on Monday Henry George said: "A democracy is a government that recognizes the equal rights of all people to all things created for their use, as the earth, air, light and water, and at the same time protects the life, liberty and property of each individual."

Does this mean that the earth is the equal and free property of all men in the sense that the air and light are, or does he make a distinction between the elements he groups together, together, so that in those of one kind the "equal right" of men is modified by individual ownership such as cannot be predicated of the other? Since the prospects of Mr. George's political party are made to depend altogether upon his land doctrine, it is important that he should clearly define just what that doctrine is intended to effect regarding the rights of property that lie at the basis of our political and social system. Archbishop Corrigan has made his opinion on this point perfectly plain, saying:

"To arrive to base an argument against ownership in land by reasoning on the universal distribution of air and light is to make a mistake of the imagination. Human industry cannot create a cloud from before the face of the sun, nor lift a fog that may be freighted with damaging vapors; we take the air and the light as God gives them, and we owe him thanks for his bounty. It was only the earth which fell under the primeval curse when man sinned, and only the earth, not the air or light, which man's industrious toil can coax back to something like its original fruitfulness. When he has done so his just reward is to enjoy the results without hindrance from others."

Will Mr. George be equally explicit? The issue is not one of a theory or philosophical discussion merely, but of a proposed change in fundamental law and fundamental rights that underlie all law. Will he be so good as, defining his theory, to make clear to the public just how it is to be put into operation upon the ownership and occupation of land? It seems to us that individual ownership could not survive the operation of Mr. George's theories as defined in the resolutions, platforms and addresses of his party. Some of our correspondents think otherwise. The difference is a wide and important one. Mr. George can do more to settle this than any other person. Will he do so? Above all things he owes perfect candor to the warm and generous support of the multitude that follows him. Realizing this, he will, we trust, give a perfectly plain answer, showing just what practical changes he proposes in an American community of today—for instance, this city.

We are aware that some of our contemporaries accept as a clear definition of Mr. George's position the lengthy and clever letter written by him to Archbishop Corrigan, which was printed in full in the *Rockport Transcript*. But in that letter the labor apostle devoted almost all his space to converting the propositions of the archbishop to an affirmative statement of his own. Moreover, the nature of the document he criticised tended to confine the discussion to generalities and prevent plain statement of the local operation of the broad principles under review. The manner of assessing local views, Wall street or market garden at Melrose would scarcely be a proper theme for discussion with the chief of a great ecclesiastical jurisdiction, while it is precisely upon subjects of that character that the Star would like to elicit the views of the late labor candidate for mayor of New York.

REMOVING A TUMOR.

Operation Suspended Because of the Danger of Death to the Patient.

Philadelphia, Nov. 15.—Dr. William H. Pancoast began a most interesting operation at his clinic at the Medical-Chirurgical hospital yesterday afternoon, but after consultation with the surgeons assisting, decided before the operation was concluded, on account of the immediate danger of death to the patient should the operation have been carried out. The patient was a fat, blooded, healthy-looking man, of fine physique, who stood watching a few minor operations performed before his was taken up. He was afflicted with an unusual growth on his right lower jaw, extending down into his neck.

The nature of the growth was suspected, but it was not possible to determine it exactly until it had been exposed. The patient had been warned of the possibility of his death upon the operating table before he could recover from the effects of the anesthetic under which the tumor was to be removed.

Dr. Pancoast's assistants were Dr. E. Soper, chief of the clinic, Doctors McCone, Stubbins, Hitzel and Metter. The operation was begun by making a horizontal incision at the base of the lower jaw, cutting it back and upward toward the ear, dissecting up toward the tumor. This exposed the upper part of the tumor. As the cutting proceeded it was necessary to tie the external jugular vein in order to get at the base of the tumor. The examination thus far developed the fact that the tumor had not its complete removal would have been a complete relief to the danger of immediate death to the patient, as had been suspected. The tumor had sent shoots down into the neck reaching to a level with the trachea, with ramifications around and among the larger vessels and arteries. Dr. McCone's suggestion that the tumor was a malignant growth, its removal could not prevent future development, was adopted, and the consulting surgeons were unanimous that the operation ought not to proceed further than the removal of that part already exposed, and that portion of the growth was cut out from the healthy tissue.

She and he had been listening to the music of the insect world "Arthur," he exclaimed, breaking the noisy silence, "how delightful, and yet how sad, is the monotonous chorus of those cockle-bells!" "To-day's my dear?" replied Arthur: "I think you mean crickets." "Yes, crickets; that's what I mean. I knew it was something to sit on."—(Boston Transcript.)

The fishermen's favorite musical instrument is a cast-net.—(Yonkers Gazette.)

DEEP WATER SCHEMES.

The Plan of Building a Pier from Padre Island Backed by Moneyed Men.

FORT WORTH, TEX., Dec. 15, 1888.

To the Editor of the Gazette.

The Corpus Christi Caller of December 11 contains an article entitled "The Padre Island Scheme." And after saying "we clip the following from a long article published in the Fort Worth Gazette of recent date," gives that part of the article relating to Corpus Christi bay and pass and Aransas Pass, commenting on it as follows: "Deep Water Schemes. A writer in the Fort Worth Gazette goes to great lengths to show what can be done at Corpus Christi and at Padre Island for deep water. His scheme for deepening Corpus Christi pass is practicable, and was one time the pet plan of the people of this city; but getting out aid for two passes so near together, it was finally abandoned for Aransas Pass. What the government may not care to do may be done by private capital, if lines competing with the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railroad should seek this coast for a deep-water terminus. Capital if once interested can build an iron pier and breakwater off Padre Island, and Corpus Christi Pass or build a road down Mustang Island to Aransas Pass. Either is feasible and practicable. That Aransas Pass and Padre Island are the points most feasible for deep water on the Texas coast is without question among those who have made the harbors of Texas a study. Here a few hundred thousand dollars will accomplish for deep water what it is proposed to do at Galveston at a cost of several millions. Such advantages will not remain much longer unimproved. With the movement of railroads toward this section special surveys of these proposed deep water harbors may be expected in the near future."

The "pet plan of the people of this city" is something I am unacquainted with, but have heard it was to dredge a channel (not build an embankment) from Flower Bluff to deep water in the Gulf of Mexico. Of the results of its abandonment I can speak with more certainty. They are a rusty and ruffled dredge-boat laying on the southwest shore of Mustang Island, and sundry acres of land, located by reason of certain "river and harbor improvement" land certificates, granted by the generous government of the state of Texas (when they had a plethora of such riches) to aid internal improvement. The results of "government aid" for Aransas Pass are a toll gate in the shape of a ship's channel, owned by parties who levy a tax on every pound of freight coming in or going out of Corpus Christi, through Aransas Pass, and a depth of water on the bay that is a times barely allows the solitary weekly steamer that visits Corpus to bump its way across at the risk of knocking a hole in her bottom.

Harbor Island is on the inside of Aransas Pass, and was at one time regarded as the proposed gulf coast terminus of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railway. The information regarding it in the following letter is undoubtedly correct:

ABOUT HARBOR ISLAND.

MUSTANG ISLAND, Dec. 1, 1888.

Editors of the Caller:

There was a piece in the *Rockport Transcript* of November 20, signed "Mo-e Anon," which says the foundation of the light-house is upon piling 824 feet. Now, gentlemen, I have lived forty-one years at Aransas Pass; have seen every pile driven. Lieut. Stevens calculated that dredge seventy-five piles, and supposed he could drive them in five days. The first one he attempted to drive took one day to do it, and then three per day were all he could drive, and put fifty-two piles down and fourteen feet was all he could drive them into the ground. The dwelling house has not one pile under it; and has stood since 1855 without settling an inch. A fair piece of ground doesn't exist in Texas than Harbor Island. Of course it is subject to overflow in very high tides.

FACTS.

The fact of Harbor Island being subject to overflow was exemplified twice this year, and if we are to believe the press dispatches, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railway lost heavily each time, in consequence abandoned that scheme and retreated farther inland, on the principle, I suppose, that a railroad company could not afford to renew terminal facilities every "very high tide," no matter how hard the foundation of the island might be, so long as the service was submerged an indefinite number of times yearly.

That the hope, however, of receiving and delivering freight from "ship's tackle" on the Texas coast in safety, and with profit to all concerned is not without promise, may be seen from the following item:

"ALL FOR THE LONE STAR STATE."

"WASHINGTON, Dec. 12.—The following bills of interest to Texas were introduced to-day:

"By Mr. Sayers, a bill to give permission to John Willett, Jot Gunter, James H. Britton, O. Hutchinson, W. H. Westfall, John M. Martin and George W. West to construct, build and maintain for ninety-nine years or more piers on the east shore of Padre Island, extending the piers out to the Gulf of Mexico to a depth of thirty feet, the piers to be constructed of iron or artificial stone; also a wharf, a pier and safe harbor for United States navy and merchant marine. The work is to commence in one year from the passage of the act, and the entire structure is to be completed in ten years."

The fact of the above named gentlemen being connected with the enterprise is sufficient guarantee for its speedy completion, as also their well-known ability would suggest they were possessed of exceptional advantages, among which the extreme narrowness of the bar at the mouth of Corpus Christi bay, its being of less width than at any other point on the Texas coast; the rapidly shelving banks to both sides of the bar that give rise to seven fathoms of water, a short distance from the shore (on the outside), at some eighteen or twenty feet in the channel (on the inside), along which waves and warren-ways of sand and shells drawing too much water to go inside at once, could be lightened of part of their cargo at the pier, and then be towed inside. There is fine anchorage on the outside, and close to shore, where ships can "ride out" in safety, "under the lee" of Mustang or Padre Island, the severe north-west and south-west "blows" that occur on the coast.

And lastly, some thirty-seven miles distant from Corpus Christi Pass there is a strait of natural cement, or conglomerate rock, that is easily quarried and hardens with age. It can be utilized for all building purposes, and can be transported by boat to any point on Corpus Christi bay or pass.

The soil on Padre Island is fertile, and varies from a black to a chocolate loam. There are several "mud" groves of small-growth live oak on the northern end of the island. Good water can be obtained at a depth of from eight to fifteen feet, the quality varying greatly with the location. The lagoons abound in fish and water fowl. The climate is

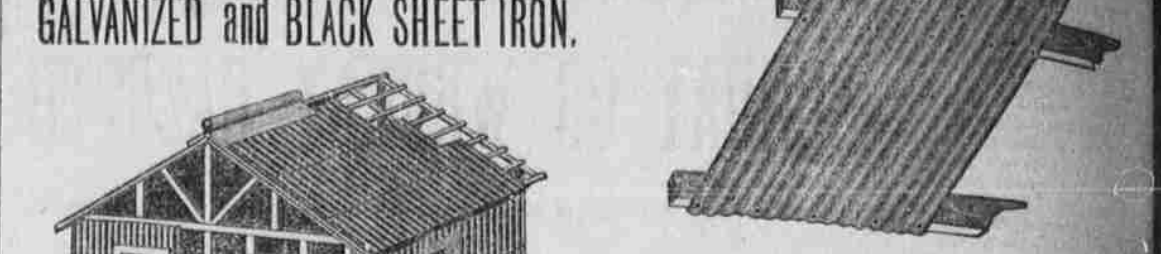
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SHORTEST,
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And BEST
LINE
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St. Louis & New York
—AND THE—
EAST.

By schedule in effect December 1, 1888, trains run east bound as follows:

Fast Line
Leaves St. Louis at 9 a. m. (arriving at Chicago 4 p. m., Cincinnati 11:05 p. m., Columbus 1:20 p. m., Pittsburgh 6:20 a. m. next day, Baltimore 6:50 p. m., Washington 7:45 p. m., Philadelphia 6:00 p. m., New York 9:30 p. m., with through Pullman buffet sleeping cars for New York; parlor cars for Indianapolis and elegant day coaches for Chicago.

Passengers by Fast Line
Can connect at Columbus with the "Limited Express" and arrive at New York at 6:50 p. m. of next day.

Eastern Fast Mail and Indianapolis Express
Leaves St. Louis at 7:20 p. m., arrives Indianapolis 3:45 a. m.

New York Express
Leaves St. Louis 8:00 p. m. (arrives Chicago 7:20 p. m., arrives Columbus 11:10 next morning, Philadelphia 6:00 a. m., Baltimore 6:50 a. m., Washington 7:45 a. m., Philadelphia 6:00 a. m., New York 9:30 a. m., with through Pullman buffet sleeping cars for New York; parlor cars for Indianapolis and elegant day coaches for Chicago.)

Cincinnati Night Express
Leaves St. Louis at 8:00 p. m., and is a solid train, being composed of Pullman buffet sleeping cars, first and second class coaches, and baggage cars. This train arrives in Cincinnati at 1:50 a. m., and leaves for Indianapolis and Southern connections.

In addition to above trains, the Indianapolis Accommodation and Cincinnati Express
Will leave St. Louis at 7:15 a. m., daily, except Sunday, arriving at Indianapolis at 1:20 p. m., and leaving at 7:15 p. m., with parlor cars in Indianapolis and from Indianapolis to Cincinnati.

General Passenger Agent, at St. Louis, or to Thomas H. Thorp, Southwestern Passenger Agent, Dallas, Tex., either of whom is always glad to answer questions and to send maps, etc.

HECK & BAKEL, CONTRACTORS and BUILDERS
Will furnish estimates of cost on all kinds of building, sheding, cooneries, etc.
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