

AMERICAN NEWS.

A Boston lady, Miss Harriet Hosmer, is announced by the *Home Journal* as a first-rate sculptor. She has studied anatomy under Professor McDowell, who declares she did him far greater credit than Powers did. She is said there to be the first female who has hitherto sought distinction in this branch of art; but the Princess Mary of Orleans seems to have been overlooked, if not others as well. Nearly a million dollars' worth of iron and copper, it is said, was yielded last year by the mines about Lake Superior. Nearly 100,000 tons of ice have been cut and stored at Rockland lake by the Knickerbocker Company, who employ 1,000 men, fifty horses, and one or two steam-engines, in quarrying and storing it. One of their ice-houses covers an acre and a quarter of ground. Dr. Channing, it seems, warmly commends the fire-alarm telegraph at Boston, described in our columns a few weeks since. We are pleased, by the way, to see that an idea which we may say we were the first to come out with in regard to the electric telegraph, is entertained by Dr. Channing. As he truly observes it is destined evidently to constitute the nervous system of living communities. It is proposed to swing people from wharf to wharf over the East River, says a Boston paper, in cars suspended from a locomotive to be run on timber tramways laid on piers so high as not to impede the navigation. The number of steamboats belonging to the United States—ocean, river, lake, and ferry—is 1,370, employing 29,000 men, and conveying annually forty millions of passengers. The inland steam tonnage of the States, says the *Tribune*, exceeds that of Great Britain and her dependencies by 62,533 tons. An advertisement as to "blower stands" reminds us of an old and useful invention, which, we think, is not used so frequently in this country as in America. This is the "hot blower"—a sheet of iron, tin, or other suitable material, made to fit and close up the openings of fire-places, leaving only a small opening for the air which enters and blows up a low fire with far greater speed than bellows. A site has been secured for the World's Fair on Reservoir-square, New York, and many of the principal prize articles of the Fair at London have also, it is said, been secured. Prince Albert and a great many other distinguished persons, according to the *New York Mirror*, have declared their intention to become exhibitors. In order that the affair shall not be an exclusive, private speculation, a committee of trustees has been selected, who have issued a call, or rather thrown the enterprise open to general subscriptions, in all to the amount of 200,000 dollars, which is the estimated cost of the building. Two classes of subscribers are provided for—one, those who subscribe solely with a view to promote the enterprise, seeking no other profit: these are to have their money refunded from the first receipts of the Exhibition. The other class are subscribers for personal profit, being entitled, in proportion to their subscriptions, to one-half the profits of the Exhibition. The subscriptions are to be called in by instalments, the first half in one, two, three, and four months; and the second half in eight months. A Boston periodical called *To-day* proposes a new scheme for an electro-telegraphic circuit round the earth. In place of a submarine one crossing the Atlantic, it proposes one to run from the telegraph station at Quebec northwards, and, crossing Bhering's Strait, to traverse Siberia and Russia in Europe, to all the chief European cities, and, amongst others, to Paris, and by Dover to London. All the chief cities and towns in the New World would thus at once be connected with most of those of the Old, without more than fifty miles of submarine telegraph. But what of the icebergs which occasionally choke up the Strait of Bhering, ploughing up and harrowing the ground even at immense depths, like nature's agricultural implements or her rock-grinding and soil-preparing machinery for future lands? We fear that a girdle must first be put upon these—a hindering influence of eternal frost, or a dissolving influence of perpetual sunshine—

ers Ariel can safely go to work with his earth-girdle, by way of this tempting strait. Many of the American newspapers are now printed by a press invented by Mr. Hoe, of New York. His eight-cylinder-power press is 33 feet long, 14 feet 8 inches high, and 6 feet wide. It has one large central cylinder on which the type is secured, and eight smaller cylinders arranged around it, at convenient distances. Eight persons supply the eight small cylinders with the sheets, and at each revolution of the large cylinder eight impressions are given off, the sheets being delivered in order by the machine itself. The limit to the speed is in the ability of the eight persons to supply the sheets. At the rate of 2,500 sheets to each, the press would give off 20,000 printed impressions per hour.

VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

DR. REID'S REPLY.

MY attention has been called to three recent and successive numbers of *THE BUILDER*, in which my name is introduced in connection with estimates and transactions at the Houses of Parliament, that must, as I am prepared to prove, necessarily mislead your readers as to the facts of the case. The course pursued by the architect, Sir Charles Barry, in respect to the documents he has used, his estimates, and proceedings on the works, has been such, that I have preferred specific charges against him, which have been submitted to her Majesty's Government. By these charges I am prepared to stand or fall whenever they shall be investigated before any proper tribunal; and therefore I have to request you to do me the justice of inserting this letter in *THE BUILDER*, that I may caution your readers against the reception of any statement emanating from Sir Charles in reference to my plans, and also as to others that have appeared in your columns on the same subject.

In page 97, No. 471 (14th Feb.), referring to the New House of Commons, you state, "We are informed, on good authority, that every requisition he made, with the exception of the removal of the paint on the floor, which the Commissioners of Works would not sanction, was attended to; and that the drains complained of by him were put in by his own men from his own drawings."

This is not the case. Whoever the nameless authority may be to which you allude, I give it the most explicit contradiction, and am prepared to show requisition upon requisition still unsatisfied, and the injurious result of alterations made in opposition to my views.

As to the drainage, whatever may be said to you on the subject, I have only to state that when Lord Seymour, on the day following my statement at the Bar of the House of Commons, saw the state of the architectural works of which I had complained, his Lordship at once accorded me the authority desired, and the principal vaults objected to are accordingly shut up till they shall be rendered as unobjectionable as others which the architect has completed for the House of Peers in a very different manner. Neither were the drains alluded to put in by my men, nor were they executed from my drawings.

As to the attempt made by a gentleman in the employment of Sir Charles Barry at the Houses of Parliament to impugn the facts stated by me at the Bar of the House of Commons, in the presence of the members, who, on every side, had been witnesses of the truth and fairness of my statements, it appears to me to be so gross as to require no comment. The proceedings of the House of Commons on the subsequent Wednesday is the best answer that can be given to his allegations. Nevertheless I may add the following facts, by way of illustrating what has been said by me in Sir Charles's employment:—The gas lamps in the division corridors were not ventilated on any one of the nights on which Mr. Jeakes, the gentleman referred to above, leads your readers to believe they were ventilated. The works required for this purpose were neither completed nor in satisfactory operation, and Mr. Faraday did not undertake till a future period

to have them satisfactorily ventilated. Again, this gentleman leads your readers to understand that the ventilation of the House was not in proper operation in consequence of the removal of an engine that had been the subject of complaint. The statement is utterly incorrect. Under the authority of Lord Seymour, arrangements were made for working the instrument which was to have been driven by the engine, and further it was used on every occasion when it was required.

Mr. Jeakes states that in addition to a staff which he refers to, I demanded and obtained the addition of three engineers. This statement is utterly untrue. The engineer in my service having entered into a partnership in a firm where he was too much occupied to give me the time he had formerly given, I obtained from Lord Seymour authority to expend that portion of the salary he had not drawn during the last year, in consequence of his absence, in replacing the services thus lost.

As to the oil paint question, I repeat that thousands of superficial feet of the ventilating chambers were rendered offensive by this paint to those whose nostrils have not lost their sensibility to its influence, and that the painting was continued in opposition to every remonstrance, when there could have been no possible objection to the substitution of a proper material.

As to the chimneys, I repeat that on every day referred to during which the House sat, smoke from corridors and districts not under my control was blown at different periods by strong external currents into the House; and also that, in addition to these, smoke leaked palpably from fire-flues in the walls of the House, manifesting itself on one occasion at least in the form of a dense cloud on the members' gallery on the east side.

In respect to the expenditure, either of time, money, space, or materials on any plans of mine in which Sir Charles Barry has taken a part, I have to state that his estimates afford no criterion whatever of the expenses justly due to my plans, but merely of the amount which it was possible for him to expend by alterations upon alterations in respect to which my opinion was not adopted, and under a system that has prevented me from acting for six successive years at the Houses of Parliament except under protest; while, during this period, Sir Charles has never once been confronted with me face to face as to the proceedings to which, as a public duty, I objected. The total sum spent under my immediate direction is under 6,000*l*. As to anything beyond this, your readers will recognise the justice of my demanding a sight of the accounts hitherto withheld from me, before adopting any estimates as yet brought forward on this subject.

D. B. REID.

"INDISPUTABILITY DISPUTED."

A PAMPHLET under the above head, written by a Templar, or professing so to be, treats in a scholastic manner the now all-important subject of Life and Fire Insurances. It is not beyond the memory of living man that Insurance was the exception, and not, as now, the rule of life. Compare the number of insurance offices fifty years back and now. About the beginning of this century the profits of such incorporations were enormous; and even now, the older companies of half that duration count their capital at millions, and their income at hundreds of thousands, and were it not for the increase of companies within twenty years, those established before that period should each of them maintain establishments equal in extent to the Bank of England, to embrace the whole of the business transacted at the present day in fire and life policies. Every householder who has property now insures his dwelling and place of business; and most men have occasion to effect either periodical or permanent insurances on their lives. In leasars of houses, landlords either oblige the tenant to insure the premises let out, or pay themselves out of the rack rent the annual premium; and to this circumstance is due the celerity with which