

NOTES ON THE PROVINCES.

Southampton.—The new Corn Exchange and Chamber of Commerce, are to be erected on the site of the old Custom-house, on the Town Quay, and facing the harbour. The lower part of the front is to be stuccoed with Portland cement, and rusticated; the upper part faced with white bricks. The cornices and dressing, balustrade, &c. to be also executed in Portland cement. The whole of the area on ground-floor is to be appropriated to the Corn Exchange, having a staircase provided, leading to the Chamber of Commerce above. Additional light will be obtained by means of a large lantern, to be provided in the centre of the building. The floor is to be paved with Staffordshire blue and red paving tiles, laid on concrete. The cost of the building will be between a thousand and eleven hundred pounds, in addition to the materials of the old building. Messrs. Hives and Bedborough are the architects, and Mr. Ball the contractor.

Birmingham.—From a report by Mr. J. P. Smith, the borough surveyor, in relation to the works performed, commenced, and in progress, since 1st January, it appears that there have been used of rag stone since that period, 5,364 tons; pebble stone, 3,729 tons; gravel, 6,197 tons; and of water for the roads, 19,642 loads, or 6,540,786 gallons. The number of new buildings registered under the Improvement Act was 160, and 646 houses, a small portion only of what had really been erected, and it was deemed necessary to enforce the penalties incurred by this neglect of the provisions of the Act before complete registration was effected. Many requests by builders, &c. had been made to be allowed to construct streets narrower than the 14 yards required in the Improvement Act, but it was determined to insist on the full width. Some improvements are about to be made at Steelhouse-lane, by the removal of several houses; and stations and stabling, sheds for watering-machines, &c. in the various districts into which the town is divided under the Sanitary Act, are about to be erected, and the surveyor's offices enlarged, &c.—From a report to the council on baths and wash-houses, it appears that new baths will probably be opened in the present month; the charges to be—swimming bath, each person, 6d.; private plunging bath, 1s.; private warm bath, 6d. From accounts appended, showing receipts and expenditure from the opening of the baths on 12th May, 1851, to 31st March last, it appeared that the receipts for bathing had been 1,108l. 0s. 9d.; for washing, 64l. 9s. 2d.; for soap, 18l. 13s. 5d.; and that there had been a balance in favour of the establishment of 282l. 11s. 9d. The total number of bathers had been 97,213; the total number of washers, 2,447.

Newcastle.—According to the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, the new baths and wash-houses here are to be opened on the 17th instant. The terms fixed are said to be so moderate that all classes may enjoy them.

Bath.—It is proposed to found a Proprietary College in this city, similar to those of Cheltenham and Brighton; the proprietary arrangement to be in 250 shares, of 35l. each, payable in four years. Each share, also, to give to the holder the advantage of a first-rate education to one child for a very small sum. The estimated cost of the building is 6,000l. A committee, to take the necessary preliminary steps, has been appointed.

Holyhead.—The following is from the miscellaneous estimates for the current year:—"Required to be voted on account of the works at the new Packet Harbour and Harbour of Refuge at Holyhead, and to defray the expense of the present harbour establishment at Holyhead, &c., to 31st March, 1853, 89,396l. The whole expense of the new Packet and Refuge Harbour is estimated at 628,063l., on account of which there have been already voted—in 1845, 30,000l.; 1846, 66,000l.; 1849, 34,500l.; 1850, 89,371l.; 1851, 59,129l.; total, 279,000l. The sum that will be required for the service of the year ending 31st March, 1853, is 75,000l.; add sum required to make good advances, during past year, beyond the

sums already voted by Parliament, 12,000l.; total, 87,000l. Expense on account of present harbour, &c., 2,396l. Grand total, 89,396l."

Birkenhead.—According to one of the local commissioners, the Gas and Water Company had made a show of liberality by reducing the price of gas 10d. per 1,000 cubic feet; but, to the great mortification of the ratepayers, it was found that a larger sum than the amount of the reduction in gas was charged by an increase in the price of water.

Liverpool.—Considerable sensation has been created in Liverpool by the publication of a letter from Mr. Samuel Holm, a member of the town council, at present travelling on the Continent, detailing the particulars of the catastrophe at Turin, in the explosion of the powder magazine of the Place Palloze, by the side of the Dora, and showing that the greatest danger will always exist in Liverpool of a similar catastrophe, not only at the present magazines, but when the 800 tons of gunpowder shall be removed to floating magazines on the Mersey, within a mile of some portion of the town, and within three miles of a population of half a million of inhabitants.

Hastings.—The new Town-hall was opened on Monday, in last week. The general arrangements and dimensions of the building are—Entrance-hall, with two side offices and orchestra over them, county court, sessions room, &c., 60 ft. by 36 ft., and 22 ft. 6 in. high, lighted from the roof by three large circular windows, 10 ft. diameter; board of guardians' room, &c., 36 ft. by 19 ft.; magistrates' room, 23 ft. 6 in. by 14 ft. 6 in.; county court office, 24 ft. 4 in. by 19 ft.; ditto, private office, 19 ft. by 12 ft. 3 in.; witnesses waiting-room, 18 ft. by 15 ft. The building is warmed by means of a hot-air apparatus, which is erected in the yard at the back of the Town-hall. The walls are wholly built of stone, with projecting ornamental dressings at the corner, entrance-hall, cornices, &c. It is expected to cost about 1,500l. The contractors are Messrs. John Tomlinson and Brothers, for the masonry; Thomas Tattersail, joiner and builder; John Cronkshaw, slater; Henry Maxwell, plumber and glazier; Jenkinson, plasterers; Mr. T. Maxwell, clerk of works.

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA.

NUMEROUS as are the travellers who visit that country, and the information occasionally given in *THE BUILDER*, it still remains nearly *terra incognita* to us, as far as architecture is concerned.

In an article in the *American Review*, it is stated, "that in many structures, reared at a great cost, and which might have been rendered noble monuments of art, are committed egregious errors and solecisms, and now remain as records of the lack of artistic talent and feeling;" which remark would apply to many in this country.

The Americans seem to be affected with an absolute mania for Greek temples, or what will look like such at the first glance, or seen from the distance. Public and private buildings are all dressed up and disguised in that uniform, and the greater part in a bungling manner. As far as villas and other compounds of the ordinary dwelling-house and temple are concerned, the mischief is not so very great, simply on account of their being comparatively a short-lived generation; but it is sad to find that edifices of monumental constitution, piles constructed of granite or marble, are in the same false taste, and stand as proofs of the misapplication and unartist-like treatment of a style which, however beautiful in itself, is by far too unvaried in expression, and too limited in compass, to answer the demands of the more complex system of architecture of the present time.

The Gothic style is altogether an exotic in America, where, so far from bearing any historic associations and sentiment, it is quite an alien: not revived at the present day as among ourselves, but a new and stranger one, it may indeed be said that its beauties are quite sufficient to recommend it under any circum-

stances; and were it adapted for the sake of its intrinsic excellence, there would be a reasonable plea for its being done; but, unfortunately, it seems to have been taken into favour by the Americans more for the sake of its name, since, so far from being appreciated, the style itself is scarcely understood by them, or if understood, it can be only by a few professional or other students. There being no examples of it in former buildings, no wonder, therefore, that anything can be palmed upon the American public as Gothic, or that the most mongrel and hideous style should have been imported into the country under that specious denomination, truly admirable in itself. The genuine pointed style is nevertheless one that does not accommodate itself spontaneously to the actual wants; on the contrary, it is difficult to maintain the appearance of consistency,—a point which the Americans have scarcely yet reached, and in most instances fallen far short of it. As regards Grecian, it has not fared much better; for so preposterously has that style been taken up, without any regard to principle or character, as to be rendered anything but classical,—one in which columns alone give the architectural expression; and when applied to buildings of the most homely and unfinished character, adds to their inherent meanness, and only renders this the more conspicuous.

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ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.

THERE seems to be a prospect of extensive advancement in electro-telegraphic communication. Steamers are capable of plying between Newfoundland and Galway in five days, and in connection with this possibility, New York and London are to be brought within five days' time distance, by means of about 48 miles only, of submarine telegraph across the St. Lawrence, &c. on the one hand, and on the other, by the Irish telegraph from Galway and across the Irish channel, which it is said will be laid down and completed, in the current year. A submarine Irish, indeed, it is said, will be laid down during the present month, between Donaghadee and Port Patrick, a route 44½ miles shorter than between Kingstown and Holyhead. Two distinct lines of four wires are to be thrown across the channel, and Downing Street and Dublin Castle, are to be united in instantaneous communication. The laying down, too, of the Belgian telegraph from our eastern shore, is to be gone into without delay as the wire is ready. The line is to run from Dover to Nieuport.

The advantages offered by the Submarine Telegraph, in fact, are about to be greatly extended, both on the continent of Europe and in this country, by the establishment of two companies under very influential direction, whose object will be the placing of London, Liverpool, and Manchester in direct and instantaneous communication with all the capitals and important commercial towns of France, Belgium, Holland, Prussia and other parts of Germany. To effect this, besides the Belgian a second cable will be laid down between France and England. Arrangements have also been made independent of the Newfoundland scheme for the collection in Boston and New York of telegraphic messages from all parts of the United States, from whence they can be brought to Liverpool by the mail packets, and thence transmitted through these lines to all parts of Europe. But even this is not all: a well-known American telegraphist is now earnestly engaged in promoting the project of extending the telegraph westward to the Pacific, and is sanguine of being able to have it in operation to San Francisco within eighteen months, provided Congress shall make a favourable response to his memorial asking for right of way through the wilderness, and protection to his wires. He seeks no pecuniary aid, but simply proposes to supersede the present system of *fortes*, at long distances, with large garrisons, by establishing stockades twenty miles apart, each of twenty dragoons. He proposes that two or three soldiers shall ride daily each way from each stockade, so as to transport a daily express