



Vol. III.]

TORONTO, ONT., FEBRUARY, 1888.

[No. 2.

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It appears, after an experiment of several months, the ferry boats plying between San Francisco and Oakland, which had been fitting up for burning petroleum, have now gone back to coal. The economy, as we understand, so far as the consumption of fuel is concerned, is said to be decidedly in favor of petroleum; but the trouble in its use came from the intense heat produced, by which, or by the peculiar nature of the combustion, the iron of both the furnaces and boilers began to indicate rapid deterioration - hence the return to coal.

Puck believes that if George Westinghouse would invent an air brake that would stop a grocer's bill in half its own length, he would earn the gratitude of thousands of estimable people. Our lively contemporary forgets that the feats of the automatic were accomplished only after shutting off steam. This necessary preliminary cannot be accomplished in an ordinary household if a buxom cook is pulling hard to keep that bill running and the grocer has two clerks pushing behind to keep the bill rolling up - *Railroad Gazette*.

THE United States is interested in the construction of an Alaskan railroad, which, if built all, must extend across the British possessions. The project is looked upon with favor by some of our most thoughtful and

practical citizens, and it seems likely that the present generation will not pass before a remarkable change will be wrought in the British north west, giving it an importance at present imagined by but few. - *Railway Register*.

It is well known that more people are killed and injured in the United States by being struck with trains while walking on the track than in any other way. The danger of track-walking is not, however, confined to American railroads. A Glasgow paper lately gave an account of two railroad men who went out in a fog laying detonating signals upon the rails, and both got killed by a train. A trackman who discovered the mutilated remains of the men went and reported the occurrence at the nearest station, and while he was returning to the scene of the accident he, also, was run over by a train and instantly killed.

THE four popular steamships of the Cunard Line, the *Etruria*, *Umbria*, *Anania* and *Servia*, which perform the fast passenger express service between New York and Liverpool, have recently been docked (alternately) for the purpose of having their bottoms scraped and being generally overhauled for the coming season's business. The wonderful trips of these greyhounds have frequently been noted in our columns, but the regularity with which the service has been performed during this winter is of considerable interest. Of the sixteen recent passages eastward the reported arrivals on the other side were as follows: On Friday twice, on Saturday ten times, on Sunday four times, the fastest trip being 6 days and 7 hours, and the slowest 8 days and 2 hours. It is expected from the overhauling these steamers have received this winter that then time will be shorter than ever.

MR. PETER GRANT, a well-known engineer, now engaged on the Cape Breton Railway, in a pleasant letter gives the following information respecting that important work: Messrs. Reid and Isbester are the contractors from Port Hawkesbury to Grand Narrows. From Grand Narrows to Sydney was taken by

Messrs. Slater and Sims, of Ottawa, whose sureties are now pushing on the work. For mid winter Messrs. Reid and Isbester have a fine force, something like 500 men and 150 horses. They are both heavy contracts in the neighborhood of \$900,000 each. From point to point of the Grand Narrows the distance is about 1,650 feet, with cages on each side for a steam ferry to carry over the train as it stands, locomotive and all. The line is to all intents and purposes an extension of the Intercolonial to Sydney Harbor, although frozen over for a few months in winter. But then, if they push on 18 or 20 miles further they come to Louisbourg, a commodious horse shoe harbor, which does not freeze in winter, and the most easterly point of the Dominion to boot. Mr. Grant promises an account in the spring of the proposed summer's operations.

The English *Railway News* states that "it is reported that when Mr. Vanderbilt reached Constantinople in his yacht, the Sultan made him a proposition to build a system of Asiatic railways. Mr. Vanderbilt said his visit was one of pleasure, not business, that he knew nothing of the country, and was not prepared to deal with so large a question. The Sultan gathered information, and sent the papers to Egypt after Mr. Vanderbilt, and suggested that Mr. Gould might not be disinclined to consider the project. These proposals from the old East to the new West show the march of the times." It is to be hoped that Mr. Gould will take up the project and enlarge his experience, as he has hitherto done all his business with people who had money and exchanged them for Gould bonds. The Turks have lots of bonds, Asia Minor and otherwise, in lots to suit customers, but want to exchange them for Gould's gold. This will be a novel experience for Mr. Gould, and as the Sultan has a liking for steam yachts, and a wizard-like capacity for making gold disappear, leaving only worthless bonds behind, he and Mr. Gould are evidently kindred souls. Kismet! Bismillah!! Backseesh!!