

## Glennings.

### "WHERE DOES THE DAY BEGIN?"

"Where does the day begin?" is a question which has attracted a good deal of attention from the readers of this journal, and its discussion, together with that of the gain or loss of a day in going round the world, has occupied a considerable space in its columns. Nevertheless it has occurred to me, that the story of how we, who were passengers on the Pacific Mail Steamship "City of Tokio" during her eleventh voyage across the Pacific Ocean, had Thursday, the 12th of September, 1878, dropped out of our lives, might not be devoid of interest.

The omission of the day, although generally a topic of conversation among those on board of a vessel crossing the Pacific—often creating a ripple of thought of quite an unusual character among many travellers—is accompanied by no demonstration which would of itself attract attention, and might take place entirely without the knowledge of the passenger, who would only discover that he was one day behind time upon arriving at the Asiatic port.

The way in which we learned of the loss may be briefly stated.

We left San Francisco—latitude  $37^{\circ} 48' N.$ , longitude  $122^{\circ} 21' W.$ , at 12 M. on Saturday, August 31, 1878. The route selected by Commodore Maury, who was in command, was the longest of the three upon which the vessels belonging to this company sail—being almost parallel to the equator, the latitude of Yokohama being between  $35^{\circ} N.$  and  $36^{\circ} N.$  Each day at noon the position of the ship was determined and the record posted as a bulletin in the smoking room. The ship's clocks were also corrected according to the distance passed over during the previous 24 hours.

At noon on Wednesday, the 11th day of September, we found ourselves in longitude  $175^{\circ} 14' W.$ , so that with favorable weather we hoped to pass the 180th meridian a little before noon the next day. The rule which our commander followed was that if this line be passed between midnight and noon of any day that day should be dropped; if between noon and midnight the succeeding day should suffer the consequences. This made it uncertain whether we should lose Thursday or Friday, as the time of passage of the meridian must be very nearly noon. In fact, bad weather having been in our way during the night, we did not expect on Thursday morning that we should be able to make the passage before noon, and had resigned ourselves to the quiet enjoyment of Thursday, content that Friday, which was an unlucky day at best, should be taken from our supply of days for that week. But we were doomed to be tossed from one day into another in the twinkling of an eye.

Our last bulletin had read:

Wednesday, September 11, Latitude  $34^{\circ} 40' N.$ , Longitude  $175^{\circ} 14' W.$ , and upon hunting up our new one we found it as follows:

Friday, September 13, Latitude  $34^{\circ} 33' N.$ , Longitude  $179^{\circ} 49' E.$

Thus, although technically Thursday had been dropped—practically we had made two bites of the cherry, calling one half Thursday and the other Friday. Just before this change our time was about six and one-half hours slower than "Columbus time" at home. It suddenly becomes about seventeen and one-half hours faster.

During the morning I had been musing over what was taking place at home. It was the day for the opening of the Collegiate year at the State University, and I had been picturing to myself the gathering of professors and students—armed with renewed health and vigor for the "Fall campaign," and thinking—I will confess it—with a tinge of sadness of my own work there; of the implements of warfare no longer my own. Now my reverie is disturbed by the thought that all this took place yesterday instead of to-day; or why may I not console myself with the reflection that it never took place at all?—for Thursday, September 12, is a day which has no recognized existence.

Many things of curious interest occur to which the passengers call attention.

Several persons discover that they have slept on deck from Thursday morning until Friday afternoon. It was discovered about 1 P.M. on Friday that we had been served with nothing to eat since Thursday morning, and immediately everybody was furiously hungry.

A poor fellow making the trip previous to this one suffered the loss of his birthday. By going back the same way, however, he may be able to have a pair of them.

It is generally so managed that Sunday is neither dropped nor doubled. Of one commander it is said that he doubles Sunday whenever it is possible, and has service in the cabin on both days.

Our commodore—who never told a lie—says that he twice passed the meridian at 12 M. precisely, so that it was one day at one end of the boat and another at the other end. The "City of Tokio" is 424 feet long, and therefore able to reach into two days. Our commodore—whose veracity has never been questioned—goes on to say that in this way it has occurred that there was card playing in the smoking room—which is forbidden on Sunday—and divine services in the Social Hall—which are not held the rest of the week—at one and the same time, the first being "fore" and the other "aft."—*Ohio Educational Monthly.*

## HISTORY IN OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.

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It is told of Beecher that he once gave this recipe for making good coffee: "Find out how they make it at the restaurant, and don't do it that way." So perhaps one may give the rule for teaching history by saying, "Find out how they teach it in the common schools, and do not teach it that way." There are, doubtless, restaurants which make good coffee, and common schools which teach history efficiently; but the rule, it is to be feared, is poor coffee and bad teaching.

The importance of the study of history is admitted. It has the two characteristics of a useful study: it affords good mental exercise, and it gives useful knowledge. Properly taught, it brings into play not only the memory, but also the judgment of the connection of events; the causes of human successes and failures, and the moral qualities of the actions of men and of nations. The knowledge it gives vividly impressed, is thought-inspiring, and useful in our daily estimates of men and events. In the hands of a skillful teacher, few studies can be made so useful or interesting; but, as commonly pursued, none are so tiresome or useless. In place of the vivid picture of great peoples and great men, struggling, suffering and triumphing by turns; building cities, settling states, forming governments, conquering enemies, developing industries, extending commerce, and growing great or sinking into weakness through the presence or lack of heroism, wisdom and justice, there is too often the dull memorizing, or attempts to memorize, some poor, dry abridgment—a meaningless and lifeless string of dates and events half told.

*First Mistake.*—The first mistake made by most teachers in teaching history, comes from not discriminating the differences between history and the other common studies, such as arithmetic and grammar. In these latter branches, the facts and principles to be studied lie in the text books themselves. The real numbers and operations are in the arithmetic which the pupil holds in his hand; the real words and sentences to be analyzed are in his grammar. The problems to be thought out, the demands upon the judgment and the reasoning faculty, are there in the book, and can not be evaded. The exercise of the memory cannot be substituted for that of the judgment. Thought is imperative. But history is the description of scenes and events not present, and which demand at the outset an exercise of the imagination to bring them before the mind. They involve relations of time and place which can only be learned by a careful study of their chronology and geography. They require often an explanation of old customs and usages, and a study of contemporary events and people. To be valuable, history must be vivid. The reader or student must, as much as possible, live over the events, and be, as it were, an eye-witness of the scenes. Especially must he comprehend the motives and feelings of the real actors, and make his own judgment of their wisdom and justice. Nothing of all this is accomplished, or even attempted, by the ordinary text-books of teachers. A lesson of so many pages, in some mere "outline" as it is called, is assigned the class, and nothing is demanded except the rehearsal of the lesson—often only selected parts of it, giving some leading events and dates—a sort of abridgment of an abridgment. The pupil is invited, if not compelled, to substitute an act of memory for an exercise of thought and reason. No problem demands solution. No thinking is required beyond the simple understanding of the words. Occasional questions are perhaps asked on the geography and chronology in-