

TERMS

COMMERCIAL COURIER.

Published weekly every Saturday morning at \$3 per annum if paid in advance, or \$4 if not paid until the expiration of the year.

Persons subscribing out of the State, are required to pay in advance.

No subscription received for a less term than one year.

ADVERTISEMENTS will be inserted at ONE DOLLAR per square for the first insertion, and FIFTY CENTS for every continuance. Those Advertisements that do not have the number of insertions marked on the margin will be published until forbid, and charged accordingly.

All Letters addressed to this Office, must be post paid.

INDIAN SUMMER—AMERICAN FORESTS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT LAKES ON OUR AUTUMN SUNSETS.

The beauty, blandness and mingled glories of a Western Indian Summer belongs alike to earth and sky. In the valley of the great Lakes they are blest with a mellow richness and loveliness unknown in other climes. The spirits of beauty can worship in no temple more resplendent than the "arched heavens" lit up by an Autumn sunset, and furnished with flashes and crimson colorings, deepened by the many tinted foliage of the primeval woods, mirrored and reflected from waters broad and bright as the Mediterranean of the old world. The forest—pen and pencil can do justice to the spectacle it presents, when the frosts of a night has changed the lingering green of a summer. "It is as if a myriad of rainbows were laced through the tree-tops—as if the sunsets of a summer—gold, purple and crimson—had been fused in the alembic of the west, and poured back in a new deluge of light and color over the wilderness. It is as if every leaf in those countless trees had been planted to out-flush the tulip—as if, by some electric miracle, the dyes of the earth's heat had struck upward, and her crystals and ores her sapphires, hyacinths and rubies, had led forth their imprisoned colors, to mount through the roots of the forest, and like the angels that in olden time, entered the bodies of the dying, reanimate the perishing leaves, and revel an hour in their bravery."

A writer in a late number of the Oasis advances the plausible theory that the chain of lakes lying in a great circle from south of west to north, add much to the splendor of our Autumn sunsets. Rays of light falling on a reflecting surface, slide off, so to speak, in a corresponding angle of elevation or depression, whatever it may be. The writer considers the great American lakes as vast mirrors spread horizontally upon the earth, reflecting the rays of the sun that fall upon them according to the optical laws that govern this phenomenon. The higher the sun is above the horizon, the less distance the reflecting rays would have to pass through the atmosphere, and of course, the less would be the effect produced; while at or near the time of setting, the direct rays striking horizontally upon the waters, the direction of the reflecting rays must be so also, and therefore pass over or through the greatest possible amount of atmosphere previous to their final dispersion. Objects on the earth's surface, if near the reflecting body, require but little elevation to impress their irregularities on the reflected light. Any considerable eminences on the eastern shores of the great lakes would produce the effect of lessening or totally intercepting these rays at the moment the sun was in a position nearly or quite horizontal. The reflective power of a surface of water is much greater than that of earth, which accounts for the admitted superior beauty and brilliancy of autumnal sunsets in the northern, over the most gorgeous in the southern states.

The views of this writer may be novel, yet his hints are worthy the attention of the curious. The succession of most resplendent sunsets for the past several weeks, when not destroyed by atmospheric derangement attending storms—the fulgurance which continues to curtain the chambers of the day-king—with the frequent auroral ministers that attend his exit, in this latitude, leads us to marvel, and reverence and worship the Power that spreads and gilds the banner tent—displaying a handiwork man can only admire and enjoy, not imitate.

The theory as this writer accounts for the successive flushes of golden and scarlet light so often observed to rise and blend and deepen in the west as the sun approaches the horizon, and sinks below it, by the supposition that each lake, one after the other, lends its reflecting light to the visible portion of the atmosphere, and thus as one fades, another flings its mass of radiance across the heavens, and acting on a medium prepared for its reception, prolongs the splendid phenomena. He says,

"We have for years noticed these appearances, and marked the fact, that in the early part of September, the sunsets

are of unusual brilliancy, and more prolonged, than at other times. They are at this season, immediately after the sun goes down, accompanied by pencils or streamers of the richest light, which, diverging from the position of the sun, appear above the horizon, and are sometimes so well defined that they can be distinctly traced to the zenith. At other seasons of the year, clouds just below the horizon at sunset produce a somewhat similar result in the formation of brushes of light; and elevated ranges of mountains by intercepting and dividing the rays, whether direct or reflected, effect the same appearances; but in this case there are no elevated mountains, and on the finest of these evenings the sky is perfectly cloudless. The uniformity of these pencils at the same season for a great number of years, prove the permanency of their cause, and let us trace their origin to the peculiar configuration of the country bordering on the great lakes:

"At the time of the year these streamers are the most distinct, a line drawn from this point (Oswego) to the sun would pass over a small part of the west end of Lake Ontario, the greatest diameter of Lake Huron, and across a considerable portion of Lake Superior. From considerations connected with the figure of the earth, and the relative position of the sun and the lakes, with the hills that border Lake Huron on the east, it appears clear to us that the broken line of these hills act the part of clouds or mountains in other circumstances in intercepting and dividing into pencils the broad mass of light reflected from the Huron and thus creating those splendid streamers, by which, as it were, the commencement of autumn is marked. As the sun still advances to the south, the pencils formed by the highlands are lost to us, but in their place come two broad ones, caused by the feeble reflective powers of the isthmuses that separate St. Clair from the Huron, and the former from Lake Erie. This occurs not far from the middle of September, when the sun sets a few degrees north of west, and can be observed nearly a month. These interruptions of the brilliancy of the west are not, however, of the duration of those effected by the hills, as the sun has scarcely time to leave the surface of the Huron before these pencils and breaks are all abruptly melted into the rich dark crimson that floats up from the Michigan or the mighty Superior."

"After the southern declination of the sun has become such that the Huron range of hills is to the northward of the range of light reflected to us, these pencils disappear from the heavens, apparently, and do not return until, with another season, and a renewed atmosphere, the sun is found in the same position.—The reason of this is, the whole of the Michigan peninsula is so level that it does not break the reflected light from that lake; and the broader ones made by breaks in the chain of lakes from Erie to Huron, are not of a nature to be distinctly marked as those produced by the interception of rays by hills or clouds.

"We have thrown out these hints—for we consider them nothing more—in the hope of directing the notice of other and more competent observers to the facts stated, and if possible, thereby gaining a satisfactory explanation of the splendid phenomena connected with our autumnal sunsets, should the above not be considered as such."

The favorable location of our city, overlooking as it does a broad expanse of waters on the north and west, often gives it the famed rose-colored skies of imprisoned Italy. At such an hour the divinity is stirred within us, and few can go out under the pavilion nature has spread over our forest, city and Erie, without feeling that 'God alone is to be seen in heaven.' The breathings of the sweetest of American bards then come unbidden from the fount of memory:

"Oh! what a glory doth this world put on,
For him that with a fervent heart goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed and days well spent!
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting place without a tear."

From the letters of "A Rambler in the West,"
A SNOW-STORM ON THE PRAIRIE.

"Now sharp Boreas blows abroad, and brings
The dreary winter on his frozen wings;
Beneath the low-hung clouds, the sheets of snow
Descend, and whiten all the fields below."

Such was the burden of my song when I awoke from a most refreshing slumber, and saw large white flakes descending, and the whole country covered with the snowy garb of winter. It is oft-times a very pleasant employment to watch the progress of a snow-storm, but then you must be sheltered from its violence, for I assure you, you cannot at all sentimentalize when you are breasting its fury, and have a long and dreary journey before you. However, this morning I was in a peculiarly good humor, and disregarding the solicitations of my friends, who beg-

ged me to remain until the storm had abated, I determined to resume my journey. Soon the merry jingle of the sleigh-bell announced to me that my vehicle was at the door of my friend's hospitable mansion—into it I sprang with joyous glee, and away we flew over the broad and boundless prairie. My noble steed seemed to feel a new excitement as he inhaled the fresh morning breeze, which lent life and vigor to every nerve.

A prairie is most beautiful in the 'spring time of year,' for then it is a garden formed and cultivated by nature's hand, where spring the clustering flowers which bloom in rich luxuriance, and "shed their fragrance on the desert air." But when stern winter casts her mantle over the earth, and binds the streams in icy fetters, then a prairie is a spectacle, grand and sublime, and will well repay for the hardships and privations of Western travelling. I was compelled, however, to ride against the wind, which whistled around and blew directly in my face. So violent was the storm that I was almost blinded by the thick flakes that were dashed directly in my eyes. Had I acted with prudence, I should have discontinued my journey, and made myself comfortable for the remainder of the day at the log hut where I dined—but I determined, in spite of wind and weather, to reach Peoria by night.—Whilst progressing quietly on my way, gray twilight extended her evening shades on earth. Still I drove on, anxious to reach my point of destination. Not a single star peeped out from the heavens to shed its light on a benighted traveller.—The storm increased in violence, and the cold winds whistled a wintry tune. I now found I had strayed from the road, and here was I on a broad prairie, without mark or mound, and had lost the trace, which was ere now covered by the falling snow.

Unfortunately I had left my compass behind, and now I was on a broad sea without a chart or compass, and without one stray light in the heavens whereby to direct my course. The mariner, when tossed upon the billows of the stormy ocean, has at least the satisfaction of knowing where he is, for the needle will always point to the pole, and his chart will tell him of the dangers in his path—but the weary traveller, who has lost his way on a prairie, is on a boundless sea, where he cannot even tell the direction he is pursuing, for oft-times he will travel hour after hour, and still remain at nearly the same point from which he started. Had even one accommodating star beamed in the heavens, I should not have been the least disconcerted, for then I could have some object whereby to guide my steps. But all the elements combined against me, and I assure you, my feelings were by no means comfortable. Memory ran over the sad history of the numerous travellers, who had been overtaken by night, and been buried in the falling snow; many who had started in the morning full of gay hopes and buoyant anticipations, who, ere another sun had risen, had found a cold and solitary grave—arrested in their course by the chill and icy hand of death! Alas, thought I, how true it is,

"For then no more the blazing hearth shall burn—
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return—
Or climb his knee, the envied kiss to share."

Insensibly I felt a strong inclination to sleep—I had always heard that this was a dangerous symptom, and if I yielded to its influence, my life would certainly be lost. I endeavored to shake off the drowsy feeling. Never before have I experienced such a strong inclination to sleep. Never before did I exert myself more to keep awake. I hallowed—I shouted—I beat my breast to preserve animation, and tried every method to prevent my yielding to the drowsy influence. My noble horse was almost exhausted, and I myself began to despair of reaching a place of shelter—when suddenly a ray of light beamed upon the snow, and shed a shadow around me. Encouraged by this favorable token, I urged on. My jaded steed also seemed to know that he was approaching a place of shelter, for he quickened his pace, and shortly afterwards I discovered at a distance, a small log-hut, from whose window beamed a broad blaze of light. Soon was I at the door, and warmly welcomed by the kind owner, who shook the snow from my garments, and gave me a seat before a blazing fire.

Oh, how delightful was the sense of security as I sat sheltered from the wintry blast, and listened to the tales of the inmates, many of whom had, like me, been overtaken by the storm, and now were relating the events of their journey. I have passed many delightful evenings in the course of a short but eventful life—I have been at the festive board, where the wine-cup was pushed merrily around, and song, and laughter, and merriment abounded—I have mingled in the society of the gay—I have been

"Where youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet."
But never have I passed a more happy evening than in the small and narrow cabin of that Illinois farmer.

From 'Incidents of Travels' by an American.

The Ruins of Ancient Samaria.

Leaving the valley, we turned up to the right, and, crossing among the mountains, in two hours came in sight of the ruins of Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, standing upon a singularly bold and insulated mountain, crowned with ruins. The capital of the ten tribes of Israel, where Ahab built his palace of ivory; where, in the days of Jeroboam, her citizens sat in the lap of luxury, saying to their masters, "come and let us drink," destroyed by the Assyrians, but rebuilt and restored to more than its original splendor by Herod, now lies in the state foretold by the prophet Amos, "her inhabitants and their prosperity are taken away." The ancient Samaritans are all gone, and around the ruins of their palaces and temples are gathered the miserable huts of the Arab Fellahs. Climbing up the precipitous ascent of the hill, we came to the ruins of a church, or tower, or something else, built by our old friend the Lady Helena, and seen to great advantage from the valley below. The Lady Helena, however, did not put together all this stone and mortar for the picturesque alone; it was erected over, and in honor of, the prison where John the Baptist was beheaded, and his grave. I know that this spot was guarded with jealous care, by the Arabs, and that none but Mussulmans were permitted to see it; but this did not prevent my asking admission, and, when the Jame sheik said that none could enter without a special order from the pasha, Paul rated him soundly for thinking we would be such fools as to come without one; and, handing him our travelling firman, the sheik kissed the seal, and, utterly unable to determine for himself whether the order was to furnish me with horses or admit me to mosques, said he knew he was bound to obey that seal, and do whatever the bearer told him, and hobbled off to get the key.

Leaving our shoes at the door, in one corner of the enclosure, we entered a small mosque with white washed walls, hung with ostrich eggs, clean mats for the praying Mussulmans, a sort of pulpit, and the usual recess for the Kebla. In the centre of the stone floor, was a hole opening to the prison below, and, going outside and descending a flight of steps, we came to the prison chamber, about eight paces square; the door, now broken and leaning against the wall, like the doors of the sepulchres of the kings at Jerusalem, was a slab cut from the solid stone, and turning on a pivot. On the opposite side were three small holes, opening to another chamber, which was the tomb of the Baptists. I looked in, but all was dark; the Mussulman told me that the body only was there; that the prophet was beheaded at the request of the wife of a king, and I forgot where said the head was. This may be the prison where the great forerunner of the Lord was beheaded; at least no man can say that it was not; and leaving it with the best disposition to believe, I ascended to the ruined palace of Herod, his persecutor and murderer. Thirty or forty columns were still standing, the monuments of the departed greatness of its former tenants. On one side, towards the northeast, where are the ruins of a gate, there is a double range of Ionic columns. I counted more than sixty, and, from the fragments I was constantly meeting, it would seem as if a double colonnade had extended all around.

The palace of Herod stands on a table of land on the very summit of the hill, overlooking every part of the surrounding country; and such was the exceeding softness and beauty of the scene, even under the wildness and waste of Arab cultivation, that the city seemed smiling in the midst of her desolation. All around was a beautiful valley, watered by running streams, and covered by a rich carpet of grass, sprinkled with wild flowers of every hue, and beyond, stretched like an open book before me, a boundary of fruitful mountains, the vine and the olive rising in terraces to their very summits; there, day after day, the haughty Herod had sat in his royal palace; and looking out upon all these beauties, his heart had become hardened with prosperity; here, among these still towering columns, the proud monarch had made a supper, "to his lords and high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;" here the daughter of Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, "danced before him, and the proud king promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask, even to the half of his kingdom." And while the feast and dance went on, the "head of John the Baptist was brought in a charger and given to the damsel." And Herod has gone, and Herodias Herod's brother's wife, has gone and "the lords and high captains, and the chief estates of Galilee" are gone; but the ruins of the palace in which they feasted are still here; the mountains and valleys which behold their revels are here; end oh, what a comment upon the vanity of worldly greatness! a fellah was turning his plough around one of the columns. I was sitting on a broken capital under a fig-tree by its side, and I asked him what

were the ruins we saw; and while his oxen were quietly cropping the grass that grew among the fragments of the marble floor, he told me they were the ruins of the palace of a king—he believed of the Christians; and while pilgrims from every quarter of the world turn aside from their path to do homage in the prison of his beheaded victim, the Arab who was driving his plough among the columns of his palace knew not the name of the haughty Herod. Even at this distance of time I look back with a feeling of uncommon interest upon my ramble among those ruins, talking with the Arab ploughman of the king who built it, leaning against a column that perhaps had often supported the haughty Herod, and looking out from this scene of desolation and ruin upon the most beautiful country in the Holy Land.

WINDS OF THE DESERT.

Mr. Buckingham, in one of his late lectures, gave some interesting particulars respecting the wind of Egypt, which are two in number. The Eastern wind, known by various names, but most commonly as the wind of the North, blows steadily for ten months during the year, adding greatly to the freshness and purity of the atmosphere. Apertures in the roofs opening to the North allow the current of air to ventilate the buildings; and around these wind-catchers the inmates group, as in other countries, by the fire-side. Another benefit conferred by the wind on their navigation, seems almost providential: vessels glide rapidly down the Nile, borne onward by the force of the current, unaided by sail or oar, but to ascend the river is more difficult. With tall masts raised, however, and wide arms extended, and broad canvass spread, they are wafted by this useful breeze in the face of the tide, from North to South.—During the remaining two months of the year, navigation is impeded. The hot and sultry khamseen breathes its encraving influence from the Nile even to Sicily; and has become proverbial in the land of song as an excuse for failure in any enterprise.

So when a luckless author is reproached for want of spirit in a work, or a lover with absence of tenderness in a ditty, or a musician with a piece possessing little harmony, the answer may probably be—"It was done in the time of Sirocco; what would you have?"

From the great insecurity of person and property, there is little travelling except in caravans. These frequently comprise 40,000 camels, attended by 30 or 40,000 persons. Flying horsemen scouring at full speed, the surrounding country, secure them from sudden attack; but the chief danger they have to fear is the hot blast of the desert. Its approach is tokened by a lurid streak in the heavens, such as may sometimes be seen in American sunsets. It is a sign well understood by the natives, and they prepare for it immediately. It comes like the heated air from a fire furnace suddenly opened, producing faintness and lassitude; and soon, increasing in violence, it raises the soft sand in clouds, penetrating the eyes, nose and mouth, and insinuating itself beneath the garments. The camels are halted by the sound of a bugle, the note of a flute, or some other well known signal, and arranged in lines of a hundred or thousand or a thousand each, with their backs turned to the quarter whence the Simoon is expected; and beneath the shelter thus afforded, the men prostrate themselves upon the ground. The drifting sand, opposed in its course, rises in a little while to the camels' backs, and begins to pour down on the other side.—Now must they again bestir themselves, if they would not be buried where they lie. Although the atmosphere is thick with yellow sand, producing darkness so total, that one cannot see an extended hand—and darkness too that can be felt—a new position is to be taken, a new line of camels formed, and the same operation gone through with. This is often necessary to be done many times, until reduced to perfect helplessness by exhaustion, they sink and die, and are buried beneath the sand. The groans of women and children, and blendid cries of men and beasts, help to make the scene awful beyond description. One of these simoons to which Mr. Buckingham was exposed, lasted eighteen hours; and out of a caravan of 20,000 persons returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, to the shrine of Mahomet; which was overtaken near Damascus by this destroying blast, only 15 escaped alive to tell the tale.—New York American.

THE AMERICAN UNION.—There are those who affected to doubt the permanency of our institutions, who fear that the spirit which created, may fail to sustain them. Such doubt is treason!—and the wretch who breathes it, should be branded as a traitor! The shrug, the sigh and the repret, the "speechless obliquity" of hypocritical friendship, are more vitally injurious than the worst malice of Enmity. The corruption that begins its mint within the life springs of the system, is almost hopelessly incurable. There is no cause for doubt. We have but recently