

embankment. The old saying, "misfortunes seldom come alone" has been oft times verified, and it would seem that there is a certain period when accidents, like other ills, become epidemic.

THE Albion with the Suez mail arrived on Wednesday morning her letters were delivered in Dunedin seven days in advance of contract time, or on the day on which she was due in Melbourne. By it there is English news to the 13th instant, and for the first time we have European events eight days after their occurrence. On the arrival of the *Albion* at Melbourne, Mr Vogel, the Post-master General being still in Victoria, promptly made arrangements with Messrs McMeekan and Co., to have the New Zealand mails forwarded by both the *Albion* and *Tararua*, the former carrying those for Otago and Canterbury; the latter starting three hours afterwards with the mail for Westland, Nelson, and Northern ports. Mr Vogel also applied to Messrs Bright Brothers, who courteously agreed to detain the *Hero* at Sydney, to allow time for the Wentworth to carry the Auckland mails. The *Hero* will probably leave Sydney with those mails late on Saturday evening, the 17th inst. Although Mr Russell has come to an understanding with the New South Wales Government as to the Californian mail service, it has not yet been reduced to writing. Mr Russell returns to New Zealand by the *Hero*. The Macgregor has been chartered for Californian service, and is to call at Auckland for mails.

THE following incident may appear amusing to those who read it, but it contains a moral for all unfortunates placed at the mercy of rapacious landlords. Some few months since a well-known resident of the town, the possessor of some land in the vicinity of Kensington, determined to take advantage of the high rentals ruling, and erect dwellings thereon. Scarcely had the timber been on the ground when one of the houses in prospective was taken at the respectable figure of 14s. per week, the knowing owner clapping on twenty-five per cent. to allow for contingencies. When the building was finished, the tenant had scarcely taken possession of the premises when he was favored with weather which quickly improvised an artificial lake, and effectually barred egress and ingress without calling into requisition the service of sea-boats. Availing himself of the first opportunity of getting ashore, he hastened to acquaint the landlord with the unenviable state of affairs. He had, however, to return satisfied with an expression of sympathy and regret from that individual. In the course of time the weather abated, and the sufferer discovered, *through the splits in the floor*, that the flood had gone down, and that the grass was visible in its place. Again he repaired to town, and on informing the proprietor of the double fact, a smile illumined his countenance as he observed: "Oh, then in that case the rent in future will be sixteen shillings!" Anxious to know whether he had been indebted to the dispersion of the waters, or the increased facility afforded for admiring the landscape for the enhanced value of the tenement, he wished for some further information. This he was afforded with more promptitude than satisfaction, as he was informed that the rent would be not sixteen but eighteen shillings. The unfortunate querist hastily beat a retreat, depriving himself of the pleasure of wishing the speaker "good evening," fearful lest that courtesy should cost him another two shillings. The worst of it is that although he could leave the landlord, he cannot the house, but since then he forwards the eighteen shillings, and keeps clear of that man.

THE news brought by the *Albion* is of an unusually tame character, no incident of note having occurred, the intelligence of which has not been anticipated by the *Mikado*. For once the telegraphic columns are, happily, conspicuous for the absence of those calamities and catastrophes which generally form the principal and most numerous items. We learn that the present occupant of the White House does not intend to seek re-election for the Presidential Chair, but feel rather doubtful of the veracity of the report. President Grant, although he has ruled the United States for a double term of office, is none the less popular at the present day than he was eight years since, even when he appeared before the people, as the victorious commander, his laurels still green and his achievements fresh in the minds of the people. The report may be true, but we question if any opponent would have a better chance in a contest, and it is unlikely that a man of General Grant's energy and activity, would, while yet in the prime of life, voluntarily resign the position to which his abilities have raised him, and which he has hitherto maintained with such credit.

THE following telegram, dated Brisbane, 29th ult., which appears in the Sydney 'Freeman's Journal,' of the 16th inst., should be read with interest and profit by intending visitors to the Palmer rush:—"News has been received from Palmersville of the holding of a large public meeting, at Stoney Creek, of the representatives of the various camps. Bishop Quinn presided. The following resolution was passed without dissent:—That, in consideration of the present condition of the gold fields, of the arrival of a large number of men from the south, and of the inevitable danger of a famine during the rainy season, which is fast approaching, this meeting deems it its duty to ensure publicity for the following facts: that there is no alluvial mining at present, except what has been already worked; that a majority of the diggers are not earning wages; that many are not making rations, a considerable number are in a worse position; that the quartz reefs cannot, as worked, afford lucrative employment until machinery is on the ground; that the present rate of charges for provisions is exorbitant, seeing that they cannot be procured for less than an ounce of gold per man per week; that the present prices for rations at the principal camps are—flour, 3s per lb; sugar, 3s 6d per lb; tea, 7s per lb; salt, 2s 6d per lb; jam, 3s 6d per lb; potatoes, 4s per lb; rice, 3s 6d per lb; blucher boots, which can be bought for 5s in Brisbane or Sydney, 30s to 35s per pair; that supplies being forwarded from Cooktown and Townsville are unequal to the present wants of the population on the gold fields; and that large numbers of miners are leaving the diggings for fear of a famine during the rainy season."

Krupp, the celebrated gun maker, pays £10,000 taxes on an income of £336,000.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

It is asserted that but for the Government expenditure in the Bengal famine, 2,500,000 persons must have died of starvation.

By means of the postal service it is calculated that 3,300,000,000 of letters are circulated annually over the globe, or about nine and a quarter millions a day, or 100 a second.

After London, Dublin takes the largest quantity of coastways borne coal, the requirements of the Irish metropolis during 1873 being 805,095 tons, while Belfast absorbed 780,940. Next in order came Plymouth, with 355,508 tons; Bristol, with 342,265 tons; and Bridgewater, with 306,355 tons.

At a recent sale of the late Mr Sumner's property at Boston, ninety-five dollars were paid for an old Roman lamp, bearing the inscription "The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the Sheep," to which the departed statesman had added—"of all colors."

The Chinese have completely domesticated the otter. In that country every fisherman has his otters and cormorants. The otters are trained to hunt in company, to attack, pursue, and seize the fish. Travellers who have fished in China, state that they have seen good well-trained otters currently sold for £80.

It appears from statistics just published that in England and Wales at the end of last year there were 11,369 miles of railway lines open; that the total capital paid up, including shares, loans, &c., was upwards of £490,000,000; and that the total number of passengers conveyed, including season ticket-holders, stood at upwards of 400,000,000. The total traffic receipts of the year amounted to 27,000,000, the working expenses were nearly £26,000,000, and the net traffic receipts £23,000,000.

On condition that Glasgow and the neighboring towns which drain into it defray the expenses, government has consented to appoint there scientific men to inquire into the means by which the River Clyde may be purified.

A laborer named Nolan has been rescued from drowning at Bray, Ireland. He had tied his clothes round his neck with a loaf of bread wrapped up in them, and intended, he said, to swim over to England. He was given into custody as a lunatic.

A Russian prince named William Radzinel has become a Catholic. In Russia all converts to Catholicism forfeit their property, and lose all prospects of favors from the government.

It is rumoured that Mr J. Martin, the senior member for Meath, will resign his seat in order that Mr John Mitchell may obtain a seat in Parliament.

It has been decided by the authorities at the Horse Guards that when the hunting spurs provided for issue to the mounted services for use with the knee boots have been used up, no further supplies of that description of spur will be made, but that all subsequent issues of spurs will be of the swan-neck pattern, which can be fastened to the heel of the boot.

An Indian, named Justiniano Roxas, aged 122 years, is enjoying the hospitality of the Sisters' Hospital, in Santa Cruz.

A novel watch is said to have been invented by a Swiss watch-maker. The motive power is compressed air.

The population of Jerusalem is estimated of 19,000, of whom about 5000 are Mahometans, from 8000 to 9000 Jews, and the rest Christians of various denominations.

One of the severest penalties to which criminals in Scotland were in ancient days condemned was to be deprived of the use of salt.

Polo, which has been supposed to be quite a modern game, is asserted to be almost identical with one that flourished in the twelfth century amongst the Byzantine aristocracy.

It is a popular belief in Spain that a stork's egg is a certain cure for habitual intemperance.

Western Australia has a species of eucalyptus, called raspberry-jam wood, which derives its name from the similarity of the scent to that preserve. It is a handsome wood, well fitted for cabinet purposes.

There is a tradition in the East that when Satan stepped out of the Garden of Eden, after the fall of man, onions sprung from the spot where he placed his right foot, and garlic from that one which his left one touched.

An exhibition of the city of Pompeii, as it was 1800 years ago, is now to be seen in Paris, winding up with an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is said to be splendid.

An American sheriff was lately arrested for stealing a set of harness, which was found in his possession.

The police, searching in the slums of Paris, have seized a paste, sold in tin boxes, which, by contact with water, takes fire and burns with great intensity.

Every day a student is detailed to watch by the side of the tomb of General Lee, at the Washington Lee University.

William B. Astor, the American millionaire, is now over eighty years of age. He is possessed of property worth 70,000,000 dollars, or £14,000,000.

Mr Seebolms, one of the chief photographers of the Transit of Venus Expedition on board the United States steamer, which arrived at the Bluff on Friday, was compelled to remain at Bahia, Brazil, being unable to continue the voyage on account of protracted sea-sickness.

The word "Whig" is said to have originated in England in the sixteenth century, when a party arose who favored a republican form of government. They adopted as their motto the words "We hope in God," the initials of which form the word "Whig." The word thus means opposition to kings and monarchies.

Baron Rothschild, just dead at Vienna, has left the greater part of his fortune as fixed capital in the bank in which Nathaniel, Ferdinand, and Albert are partners.

It is a singular fact, though not generally noticed, that the back of one's head in health is warmer to the touch than the forehead. In sickness, *vice versa*.

Forty-seven thousand Germans have gone back to Paris to live.