LIFE AT 'FRISCO.

Bright Sketch of Summer Days on the Coast.

Oakland and Alameda, With the Famous Baths.

The Mechanics' Fair and Its Throng of Sight-Seers.

Pleasures in the Grotto, Where "Th' Glist'ning Waters Fall."

San Francisco Correspondence of the St. Louis Republican.

SAN FRANCISCO, August 20.—Oakland, just across the bay, is a charming city and considered by some much preferably to San Francisco as a place of residence. It is much warmer and not subject to such high winds. It contains some lovely residences and many fine buildings, among the latter hotels, banks, colleges and seminaries.

Across the bay is Alameda, famous for its baths. Here great crowds of people flock on Saturday afternoons and Sundays to witness the sea bathing. I say Sundays advisedly, because the morals of this coast do not prevent them from making a holiday out of this day of rest and stretching its capacity to the utmost. Everybody goes somewhere on Sunday; they even go to church—a fact that might make pious Chicago shudder The boats are crowded from morning till night, and it seems like a great universal picnic.

The baths are quite popular and much sport is indulged in by the bathers, for the benefit of the spectators as well as their own. These inclosures are known under the high-sounding appellations of Long Branch, Terrace and Newport, the first being the largest and the latter the most patronized.

Ample accommodations are made for visitors, who are duly surprised and shocked at the amazing novelties in bathing suits. Some of them are shockingly æsthetic, but they are all warranted to stand exposure to the water; in this respect being unlike those popular ones of the east, which are not intended to get wet under any circumstances, and which are worn only for the sake of displaying the wearer's form and attitudinizing to better advantage. I imagine Mrs. Grundy must be well satisfied with these latest freaks of fashion, since they are so inexpressibly comforting to her delicate sense of modesty, and as long as the bathers enjoy their poses upon the sand equally as well as their plunges into the sea, I suppose the rest of the world should be satisfied.

Of course the bathing at Alameda is not near so delightful as surf-bathing, but withal much less dangerous, and it affords a pleasant, safe recreation for timid ladies and venturesome children with nervous mammas.

The beach at the Cliff house would be a much finer place for bathing, but the water is a great deal too cold for even the most intrepid of bathers to venture in.

The Chinese are much employed as domestics in families in this city, and in this capacity some of them are really invaluable. They are quick, neat and very rarely need second orders. In intelligence they far surpass the average hired "help," and have none of their impertinent airiness. They make excellent cooks, and, contrary to expectation, have neither ways that are dark or tricks that are vain in this delicate matter of catering. Most of them eat with knives and forks and not with the traditionary chop-sticks.

It seems odd at first to strangers to have one of these long-queued Celestials standing behind one's chair, grinning and blinking those three-cornered eyes of his in the most heathenish fashion. But the dexterity with which he handles the dishes and changes the courses soon makes one forgive his supreme ugliness and that bright smile which is child-like and bland.

One can scarcely turn a corner in San Francisco without running across half a dozen of these saffron-tinted Orientals, and they all wear the same idiotic stolidity—the universal squint that makes them kindred.

They are most bitterly hated by the Irish and by most of the Americans, who look upon them as the curse of this beautiful land, and those who are here to judge for themselves can scarcely blame them. People living in the east can never realize how entirely the Chinese have overrun this Pacific coast, and how completely they have monopolized every form of labor.

The gardens, of which there are quite a number, are much patronized, though there is less beer and more play than in St. Louis. They do not sit in the open air, as we St. Louisans do, but enjoy their garden pleasures in a more civilized manner. In fact, I fear the consequences were they to attempt any such exploits as sitting in the open night air. It is as impracticable in summer as in winter. Foolish lovers cannot sit on the front door steps and study astronomy as they sometimes do at home; neither can irate papas blame the moon for the damage inflicted on their front gates.

I actually believe one can ride more for five cents and see more for twenty-five in this city than any place I ever was in. And I almost fancy that dear old sleepy St. Louis is behind the times when I see the giddy enterprise that makes this city one of the fastest in the union; not that I would copy San Francisco ways in all particulars; but, dear me, St. Louis is so slow, so "goody goody," as the school boys say, and so long to catch the new ideas. But after all, God bless her; she has the warmest hearts in the land—the kindest hospitality, the most generous impulses and the most loyal souls. She has a great heart that throbs and beats for her children, and they would be base indeed who could turn traitors. Slow and sure is her watchword, and when she has won her great place in the nation we will be glad that she has not been so reckless as her less careful sisters. Long may she prosper is echoed in the hearts of those that love her, though they be far away.

The annual mechanics' fair has just opened and is well attended both night and day. It is held in the pavilion and is really quite a fine affair. Though not so comprehensive as our own, it bears favorable comparison with many parts of it. The fruit display is not quite so fine as it will be later, and the art exhibition is not above par, yet with these exceptions the fair is all that might be expected.

Considering the fact that the exhibition continues for six weeks the attendance is somewhat extraordinary. Saturday night is the great gala night, and sometimes there is scarcely standing room. It is a pretty sight on one of these evenings to stand in the gallery and look down upon the brilliantly illuminated hall with its vast throng of restless, surging humanity

It is like a beautiful panorama changing every moment. The flying colors, the bright dresses, the gay music and the animated faces—all form a pleasing picture of brightness and beauty.

Not far away is the grotto, with its glistening rocks, its gleaming cascades, its sparkling fountains and its many colored lights Through the dim recesses of the shrubbery the electric light casts a pale radiance like that of moonlight, and its effect is very pretty. Wandering through this sylvan retreat one catches the scent of the flowers like the woods in June, and the faint perfume of the tuberoses brings memories of other moments as happy as this. The hum of human voices sounds far away like the distant roar of the ocean, and the faint strains of the music sound weird and strange between the fast-spoken words of the eager sight-seers. It is a pleasant spot in which to linger for a little while and watch the heedless crowd that comes and goes.

Here are seen all representatives of humanity. The fashionable young lady who is au fait in all she does, who wears white bonnets and light kids and looks most languidly æsthetic. The young man who accompanies her, with broadcloth suit, a la mode, button-hole bouquet, and who looks as unutterably utter as his fair companion. Then there is the girl of the period who racquets at every step, flirts with all the eligible young men within the range, and snaps her fingers in Mrs. Grundy's face. She is delighted at the sensation she creates, scorns chaperons and shocks the nerves of more refined people with delightful sangfroid. She revels in the fact of her oddity and considers herself, as The Detroit Free Press says, "quite too tooey." With her is the young man who sports a light cane, a pair of light kids, a lavendar tie, and who wears the air of an ethereal being who is peculiarly adapted to the Newport and the Saratoga.

After them comes the man with the alkali flat on the top of his head, the old lady who inwardly says prunes and prisms whenever the girl of the period flashes across her pathway like a comet, the dutiful sleepy papas and the æsthetic mammas who trail about with subdued children. Then there is the irrepressible small boy, and wide awake people, and goodness knows how many more. Can't we all know them—we see them everywhere that such a crowd as this is gathered together, and it would take volumes to describe them all.

There is one picture among the collection in the art gallery which is always surrounded by a crowd of enthusiastic admirers. It is a life sketch by J. C. Brown, and is called the Dress Parade. Newsboys, bootblacks and street Arabs are gathered together under the leadership of a captain who has aspired to the dignity of a cap and a pair of boots. The headgear of the company is in various stages of dissolution—some have hats minus rims, some hats minus crowns. Brooms, brushes, sticks and canes form the deadly weapons of defence, and the uniforms of the company are magnificient in patches and grease-spots. It is life-like to the last degree, even the little red-headed hoodlum with pug nose and freckles, and the boy with his injured toe done up in a rag. Each little dirty face is a study within itself, with its expression of beatific happiness and its assumption of military dignity. It is a thing that might be seen in the street any day, and yet, from its very fidelity to nature, the admirers of art turn away from the wonders of Yosemite and the marvels of California scenery to this realistic sketch with its homely bit of street life. Truly "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Speaking of pictures reminds me of a very pleasant visit I made the other day to the studio of Mr. M. Straus, formerly well known in the east and now one of the most noted artists in California. This genial getnleman met us at the door of his atelier looking quite artist-like in his velvet coat and Oriental cap, with brushes and palette in hand. On a large easel stood an unfinished painting, and he was busily engaged in transfering to the canvas the beautiful falls of Minnehaha from a color-sketch. But on our arrival he kindly laid aside his brushes and paints to show us some of his *chef d' oeueres*. Mr. Straus has made California scenery a specialty and in this direction his works deserve especial attention.

Among the more notable of his paintings are "Founding the Mission," a scene at Cypress Grove, near Monterey, Cal. This is an historical painting representing Father Junipera Serra passing through the grove with an escort of Spanish troops to found the mission San Carlos, 1770. He was among the first to found missions on the coast. This is among the strongest of Mr. Straus' paintings in drawing, perspective, sunlight and atmospheric effect, and texture of tree trunks, etc.—a painting that could not fail to attract the attention of connoisseurs.

Then we have "Devil's Canyon," a painting, the same sized canvas, but totally different in character and general handling. In the former we have a perspective in an interior forest; in this we have the grandeur of the California mountains. The spectator is supposed to stand upon the mountain-top looking down from range to range until in the far distance the eye catches a glimpse of the broad Pacific with the ships glinting in the starlight on its bosom. The former painting is a glorious sunset; in this we have the early morning fog clouds dispersing and turning their rosy faces toward the sun, the grey veil-like mist lingering in the canyons, while in the foreground there is a beautiful variety of tint and texture of chemizello, chapparell, rocks and tall red woods, and a little silvery cascade tumbling over rock, making music as it goes.

Mount Ranier, another gorgeous sunset in Washington territory, is fully equal to the other two in artistic merit. This mountain is nearly 15,000 feet high, and on its snowy breast are reflected all the red and gold splendor of the setting sun. Far away the distant horizon is veiled in a purple mantle, while in the fore-ground meanders a tiny brooklet in which the mountain beautifully reflects its lofty crown. It is one of the artist's finest works, but it a scene so grand, so magnificent that one must see it in nature itself to appreciate its wonderful beauty on canvas.

Space forbids mentioning other canvasses on which I would like to linger, but I cannot forbear mentioning some smaller ones of still-life painting—among them one called "A Flutter." It is a beautiful little painting of bright-hued humming-birds and butterflies, and is a marvel of rich colored and feathery texture. Another of California fruit—a basket of peaches and mushmelons—is so deliciously real that it fairly makes one's mouth water, and several panels of fish and game would delight the epicure. It was a rare treat to visit this charming little studio, and we are indebted to Mr. Straus for much pleasure.

Though there is great wealth in California and magnificent scenery for artists to revel in, still there seems to be little demand for pictures—that is painting of real sterling merit. Even in the most refined, beautiful homes one sees paintings that were evidently bought by the yard and cheap chromos. Probably the Californians are so engrossed in money-getting and pleasure-going that they have little time for cultivation of the finer arts. Be that as it may, it seems to me that there is lack of interest in this direction.

Monterey and Vera Cruz, about fifty miles from San Francisco, are the most noted watering-places on the coast. They have fine hotels, beaches, bathing, music, dancing and the necessary adjuncts that make a fashionable watering-place. During the months of June and July they are much frequented by the leaders of society, who consider it au fait to be out of the city at that time.

One would suppose that people living in such a delightfully cool place as San Francisco would be contented to remain in it during the time that less favored mortals are sighing for cool breezes; but the fact is that they are not. It is quite the fashion to go into the country; in fact, they do it to get thawed out. Imagine the absurdity of the thing—leaving a comfortable city home with every comfort and and pleasure, and an atmosphere of delightful coolness, to roast one's self in the country. It is enough to make a St. Louisan melt in his boots, and in fact I am afraid that some such calamity will befall the St. Louisans pretty soon, if the thermometer does not condescend to come down from its astonishing altitudes.

Oh! how I do wish that I might waft one little sea-breeze to the Future Great from this cool coast where they have more than they desire. F. I. S.

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Talk With the President's Pastor.

Washington Special Cincinnati Commercial.

Rev. George Power, of the Vermont Avenue Christian church, which was attended by President Garfield and family, says the attempted assassination has stimulated the movement to build a new church edifice for his congregation. A large amount has been contributed and other large gifts have been made conditionally.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Power to a correspondent yesterday, "that we shall have to make it a memorial. We had expected to begin on the 1st of October, and possibly before that. Of course the excitement and anxiety since the assassination has occupied our minds to an exclusion of other business, and we can not now begin so soon. We have money enough to justify beginning on the plans we had proposed as the best."

"The president has always been an active and prominent member of your church, I believe?"

"Yes," said the pastor, "for many years. He is, of course, well known throughout the country to our people, and is loved as well as admired, especially in those communities in which he has been chiefly brought into personal contact. The members of our church fellowship have, of course, followed his prosperous career with great interest, because he has always identified himself with us. In the early, feeble days of the church in this district he was a very active member. They used to meet in a room in the City Hall, before they had the means to get a separate building of their own, and in those days the President took an active part in the services, leading the meeting. About ten years ago the congregation felt able to call a pastor, and since that time General Garfield has been one of the congregation, and always a prominent and zealous member. His wife and mother are members of our denomination, and the children went to our Sunday school until the family broke up house keeping here last fall."

"The absent members of the family are not coming on to Washington, I believe?"

"No: the president's mother is rather too feeble to undertake the journey, and the children are too small to appreciate their loss. Mrs. Garfield prefers that they should recollect the White House as a happy home. I recollect that the president's mother said at the time of the inauguration, when I was congratulating her on the great honors which had come to her son, "Yes, it is too good; I am afraid something will happen." I have often recalled that remark, as trouble after trouble came upon the family. First, the president's mother herself, you will remember, fell sick. Then came Mrs. Garfield's sickness, and now, last of all, this violent and terrible injury of the president himself.

"My, congregation," Mr. Power continued, "have naturally taken the deepest interest in the family. I read them the bulletins every Sunday and explain them as well as I can, because they expect that I can, perhaps, tell them something comforting every week. Latterly we have had special prayer meetings, and at such times I read them the evening bulletins, but it has been hard work lately to find any comfort in them."

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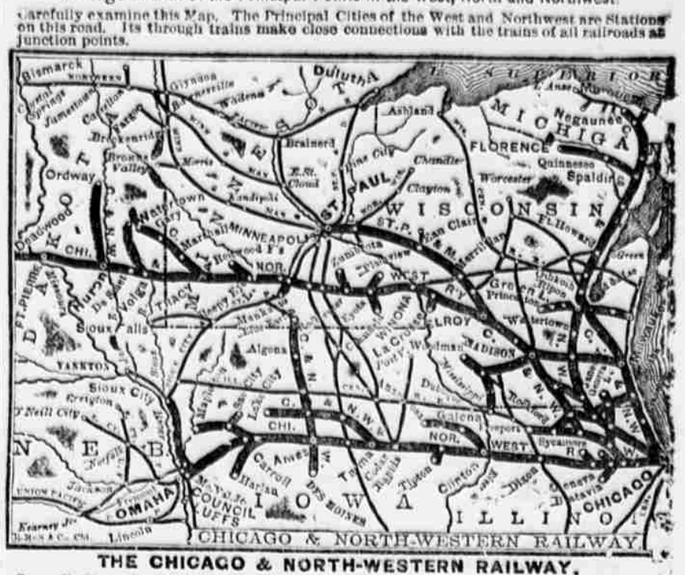

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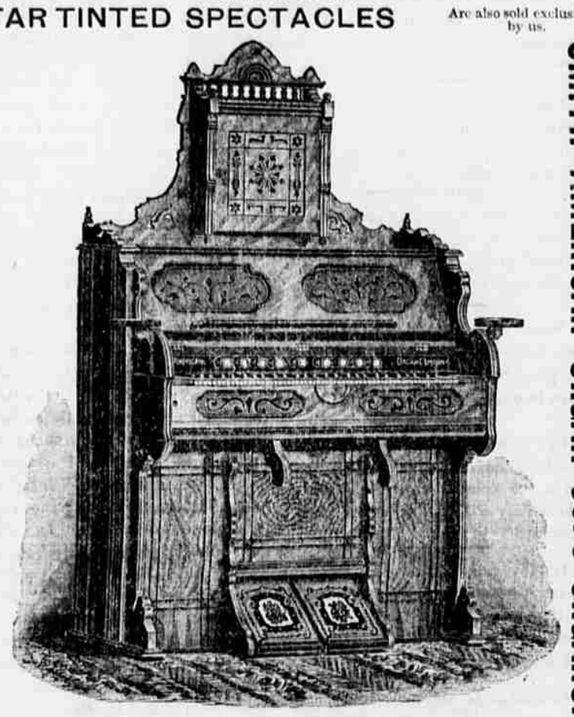

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