

Steamship Lines.

Six regularly established lines of ocean-going steamships now radiate from this port, north, south, and west. As the most important among these stands that company whose name and fame are second only to that of the State, with whose history it became so early connected, and in whose general and especially whose commercial interests it has ever since maintained so important a part:

THE PACIFIC MAIL STEAMSHIP Co.—With a single exception—the Cunard—this is the oldest steam navigation company in existence. It is the largest company ever organized as distinctively American, and sailing under the stars and stripes. The wrecking, burning, and disabling of some of its largest ships; the stock-jobbing in Wall Street; the opposition of rival lines upon the ocean and the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad; the disclosure of the disbursement, by its agents, of three quarters of a million of dollars in the effort to obtain from Congress an additional half million of annual subsidy; and, finally, the refusal of the Post-office Department to pay the subsidy previously received, on account of the company's failure to come to time in the fulfillment of its contract in regard to the time of completing and placing in service some of its latest, largest, and finest ships; all these have combined to create in the public mind throughout the country an unusual combination of distrust and disgust, most damaging to the company. A change of management, and a change of base by removing its headquarters from New York to this city, thus locating in the midst of the merchants from whom its chief support has come, and, *must come in the future*, in a constantly-increasing degree, would prove among the most certain and powerful means of restoring public confidence, and retrieving at once its reputation and its fortunes. A fleet of thirty first-class steamships of wood and iron, with an aggregate carrying capacity of nearly one hundred thousand tons, and constantly traversing regular routes whose total length nearly equals the circumference of the globe, present an array of naval statistics of which several highly respectable second-class nations might well be proud. Among the latest additions to its fleet of iron steamships, the City of Peking and the City of Tokio, in size, model, strength, and speed, surpass anything yet known in the merchant marine service of the world. Iron propellers, four hundred and twenty-three feet long, forty-eight feet wide, having a registered tonnage of five thousand five hundred; passenger accommodations for one hundred and fifty in the cabin and one thousand five hundred in the steerage, are particulars which convey to any mind familiar with nautical matters some partial idea of the positive grandeur of these monarchs of the seas. In perfectness of proportion, beauty of model, and strength of construction, the shipbuilder's art has never surpassed, probably never equaled, these ocean leviathans, while in the indispensable point of speed they easily rival that of the earlier railway trains. In fact, the terms of the contract require, and the builders—John Roach & Sons—bind themselves under a heavy forfeit, that the ships shall make fifteen miles an hour at sea. This would give them a daily speed of three hundred and sixty miles. At this rate the seven thousand-mile voyage from San Francisco to Hongkong will occupy less than twenty days. Besides these ocean monarchs, the company have contracted with the same builders for three more first-class, iron-screw ships for the great China Line, each of which is to be three hundred and sixty-two feet long, with a carrying capacity of eight hundred steerage passengers and three thousand tons of freight. The builders contract that these ships shall be the fastest in the world, having an average speed of sixteen knots an hour. Two others, of a different class, are also to be added to the line. The five ships will cost over \$4,000,000. The company runs four different lines. The oldest and best known is the New York and San Francisco Line, commonly called the Isthmus Route. Four side-wheel and five iron-screw boats, of over three thousand tons each, constitute this line; a ship leaves New York every other Saturday and San Francisco alternate Wednesdays, at noon. The only way port at which these ships regularly touch, is the Mexican port of Acapulco. Its Central American and Mexican Line comprises four iron screws, of two thousand tons each, and three side-wheelers. This line makes regular fortnightly trips between San Francisco and Panama, calling at some twenty Mexican and Central American way ports; a ship leaves San Francisco at noon every other Thursday. The great Japan and China Line, which might properly be called the Americo-Asiatic, or great Central Trans-Pacific Line, embracing a larger arc of the earth's circumference than any regularly established route has ever before attempted, is that upon which this great company seems now concentrating its chief attention, and stocking with the largest and finest ships ever known to the naval or merchant marine service of the world. It has four immense iron screws, some of them of over five thousand tons each, and four wooden side-wheelers of nearly equal size, and five iron screws of four thousand tons each now in process of construction. From this fleet of thirteen magnificent steamships, with an aggregate carrying capacity of seventy-five thousand tons, the company dispatches a ship from San Francisco at noon of every other Saturday, and one from Hongkong upon alternate Wednesdays. The company's fourth and last line is the Shanghai Branch immediately connecting with the preceding. It comprises four wooden side-wheelers of two thousand five hundred tons each, one of which leaves Yokohama for Shanghai, by the way of the inland sea of Japan, and calling at Hiogo and Nagasaki, four times a month. The company's connection with other lines than its own branches, are as follows: At Hongkong with English and French steamers for the upper ports of India, and, by the way of the Suez Canal, with the Mediterranean and Atlantic ports of