Alaska, which at that time held the title of "Greyhound of the Ocean," the Oregon being in process of construction. This latter vessel was being built for the Guion Company by the same builders who had turned out the Arizona and Alaska, each of which in their day held the record for the fastest passage, and, being provided with engines of enormous power, was expected to lower considerably the time of passage between New York and Queenstown. The facts did not belie the expectations.

Last summer — her first season — she repeatedly beat the record, and reduced it to 6 days, 10 hours, 30 minutes, then to 6 days, 9 hours, 25 minutes, and finally, in December, to 6 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes. Whether these times will be beaten or not remains yet to be seen.

The new steamer America, of the National Line, is the chief, if not the only, rival of the Oregon. Her maiden voyage was also made last summer, and on that occasion she achieved the honor of having made the fastest first passage, 6 days, 15 hours, 41 minutes. As the engines are new, and not always in good working order, the first voyage of a steamer is apt to be comparatively slow. Later on in the season the America reduced her time to 6 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes, which was then only about four hours behind the Oregon's. Many were the exciting races between these vessels, both being driven to the utmost. As the America is laid up this winter, and is doubtless having improvements made upon her engines, more races may be expected next summer.

It is a question as to whether the speed of ocean steamships can be further increased. The present high rate is attained by driving the ships by engines of enormous power, and to gain a small increase in speed an enormous increase in the amount of fuel consumed is required, so that the stowage room for the coal becomes a most serious difficulty.

And, withal, everything depends upon the weather. The fact of the Oregon having made her fastest passage in the usually stormy month of December is owing to her having had favorable winds and no unusually rough seas.

The following figures in regard to a few steamships may be interesting. The Alaska is of 6,932 tons' gross tonnage; the indicated horse-power of her engines is 11,000; she consumes 253 tons of coal per day, or 1,756 between New York and Queenstown, in making her fastest passage of 6 days, 18 hours, 30 minutes. The Oregon measures 7,375 tons, 11,500 horse-power, and consumes 337 tons of coal per day, or 2,155 between New York and Queenstown, to make a passage of 6 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes. The America is of 5,528 tons, 7,500 horse-power, and burns 182 tons of coal per day, or 1,199 between New York and Queenstown.

The largest steamship afloat, exclusive of the Great Eastern, is the City of Rome, which was built for the Inman Line, but now sails under the Anchor Line flag. She is 560 feet long, 52.3 feet wide, and 37 feet deep, measuring 8,144 tons.

What a comparison between these enormous vessels and the little Savannah, a vessel of three hundred tons, which steamed from Savannah to Liverpool, in 1819, in twenty-two days!

A. R.

Theses.

In case some of '85 have not yet decided upon a subject for their final school composition, the following subjects are offered as likely to open interesting lines of investigation:

1. Design for two Passenger Elevators for the Buildings of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.


3. "The Infinitesimal in Contradistinction to the Limited; or, a Study of the Attributes of Time and Space considered as a priori Self-existent Entities."

4. A dissertation on the permanent set of water under tension, compression and torsion.