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[WHOLE NO. 304.]

ENGLISH LETTER.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

[NOTE.—Our special English correspondent left England last month on a journey through the United States and the Dominion. We hope to hear frequently from him; at all events for some weeks to come we are confident of deriving an advantage from his graphic pen. At the outset he carries our readers back to a description of the materials and the manner in which a ship is constructed; then to the completion, furnishing, and subsequently to a trip across the Ocean.]

THE NEW IRON STEAMER, CITY OF BERLIN.

When passing along the coast of England in an iron steamer, but few persons would think that but a short time ago the hull they were floating on was a mass of hard stone that composed a part of the land they were looking at. Perhaps six months ago, men were quarrying it out of the side of a hill—from there dragged higher up and put in a blast furnace, or white hot fire where they are made to burst into pieces, making reports like hundreds of guns, and as they do so, they sink lower and lower into the furnace until they get quite to the bottom of it where they come out into daylight again, and before they are cold they are put into an iron barrow, hoisted up, and when at the top, are once more turned into another flaming furnace mixed up with other stuff; when it gradually sinks, becomes hotter and hotter until it is as white as snow; then it melts, runs into a vessel at the bottom—and there it is kept in that state until there is enough of it collected—then the molten iron is allowed to run out on to a sandy ground, where gutters have been made for it. It passes along them until it arrives to where a number of holes have been made for it—it fills them all, stops running, gets cold and is then pig iron.

When these pigs of iron are required they are taken away to another furnace, and are thrown into it, and this time they are made white hot, so that a number of the pigs of iron get into one mass, and white as snow.

In that state it is pulled out of the furnace, and placed on a large shovel, the part of which is on wheels; the mass is then wheeled to an enormous steam lift-hammer, and is placed under it. With a terrific smash it falls on to the white lump, sending the sparks flying far and wide, as if it were going to blind everybody, and set everything on fire around it; then the steam hammer is lifted again, and when high enough, is allowed to fall down again with another tremendous crushing blow, which sends the still white mass into a flat oval, rough edged piece of solid iron.

At this stage it is again put on the shovel with wheels, and is put under another steam hammer, and there it is hammered edgewise, and hammered until it becomes a square lump, and flattened. This being done, it is then taken to a weighing machine, and its weight being determined, the square lump of still white hot iron is taken to where there are placed two enormous iron rollers. One side of the square piece is then placed against these two rollers, which are revolving quickly around. When the upper roller takes a grip of the edge of the iron above, the lower roller takes hold of the lower edge, and with their united grips they force the heavy lump between them, and between them the iron must go, and as it passes through, it flattens considerably the first time. Then it is picked up on the other side and passes through back again; and again and again it has to go through until it is thin enough to be a sheet of iron to form a piece of a ship, and now you see it lying on the floor of the rolling shed, a large oval-shaped sheet of iron of the thickness required for the ship; of course, it has rough edges.

At this stage a wooden mould is brought and is laid down on the sheet of iron, then a clean chalk mark is made all round the frame. This being done, the sheet is lifted by several men by means of long handled nippers. It is then placed under a pair of shears or scissors, and the edges are all cut by the chalk mark, and it is then a sheet of iron, clean, and a piece of a ship.

Just in the same manner the keel of the ship is rolled out length after length, the exact breadth and thickness required, until there are sufficient lengths to make up the whole length of the keel, which would be for this large vessel the enormous length of 488 feet.

(To be continued.)

THE PORT CHAPLAIN AND HIS WORK AT THE PORT OF QUEBEC.

CASES OF DROWNING AND SUDDEN DEATH.

A SAILOR'S CHEST.

INTERESTING DETAILS.

What a religious boon is the office of Port Chaplain, both to our seamen and their friends at home. The clergyman filling it should not only be recognized as a necessary and important officer, but should (in part at least) be paid by the Government.

Look at the nature and character of his work. During the shipping season in each year, he is in constant communication with the Shipping Office, the Water Police, the various Consuls, and the Coroner. Yes! the Coroner!

The year 1874 is to be much remembered for the number of sad cases of drowning, both among our citizens and our seamen. Also, for the number of sudden deaths to which attention will be called presently.

The following is from my Register: James Lydimore, aged twenty-three years, seaman, of the ship "Ocean Bride," country, England, was accidentally drowned at Indian Cove, Port of Quebec, on the third, and was buried on the sixth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, under authority of the Coroner's warrant.

By me, JAMES S. SYKES, Port Chaplain.

Henry Codling, seaman of the ship "Ernestino," was accidentally drowned at Sillery Cove, July 20th, and was buried July the 8th, 1874.

Julius J. D. Dobson, of the ship "Do Salaberry," was accidentally drowned on the 31st, and was buried on the 10th July, 1874.

Then appeared the following in the "Morning Chronicle":

INQUEST.—Another of what have become of late almost daily occurrences took place yesterday, on the body of a man whose body was found in the water opposite the Champlain Market. It is thought that it is that of the carpenter of the "Lady Seymour," who fell into the river while attempting to board the ferry boat about three weeks since. A verdict of "found drowned" was returned. As the identification was not complete, the following is the description:—Age 35 to 40; hair, moustache and beard, black. Had on black cloth trousers and waistcoat, long boots, hooped, blue cotton shirt, and a woollen cravat. On the body a carpenter's rule and two keys were found.

In September we hear of the melancholy drowning of Mr. Choquet, a student at the Marine Hospital, by the overturning of a boat in the River St. Charles. And in October, just four weeks after the above sad case, Reginald Jamieson, of the Bank of British North America, was lost overboard from the yacht "Wasp," at the east end of the Island of Orleans close to Capé Tourmente.

Several others might be mentioned, but the above will suffice.

In this chapter of accidents I am forcibly reminded of another warning voice, to us thoughtless mortals, which we pay very little attention to. It is the number of sudden deaths. Out of the many which happened during the shipping season of 1874, five were seamen, and were buried by me under the authority of the Coroner's warrant.

A few remarks on these may not be uninteresting, and will serve to show the importance and usefulness of the office of a Port Chaplain.

There is a simplicity and honesty in the general character and life of a true sailor, which is rarely found in men ashore.

Listen, here is a letter from a sailor to his wife.

"New York, 27th May, 1874.

"DEAR WIFE,—I write you these few lines to inform you that I arrived here in good health, thank God. I have been to the General Post Office several times, but could get no letter. I suppose it has miscarried some way, for I think you would write. I would have sent some money to you only I was afraid it would not go right, as not knowing how you are getting on I was afraid to send to Charles street, and did not know if Mrs. Jeffery is still in the same place. I cannot get an English ship here for the Clyde, so I will pay my passage to Quebec, and the extra wages I will get will pay the expenses. We are going to get paid to-morrow, and I will start by train the same night (tonight), so I expect to be home in about five or six weeks from the date of this letter, and

as I can get a vessel for the Clyde, it will be the cheapest way for me.

I hope you have been keeping your health and spirits, and don't be down-hearted, as things are not so bad as you may think. Give my kind love to Robert, and I hope he is a comfort to you; also my best respects to Mrs. and Mr. Jeffery, and J. McLean, if at home, also Mrs. McLean and daughter, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and all enquiring friends. I need write no more, as I hope to see you soon, when you will hear all you want to know from me, and hope you will manage along as well as you can till then.

So I remain, Dear wife,
Yours truly,
JAMES MCKINLAY.

N.B.—I will write from Quebec and let you know the vessel I am coming home in.—J. McK.

I address this letter to Mrs. Jeffery's old address, hoping it will find you. I hope you got the other letters all right.

With a joyous heart he posted the letter, took his seat in the cars, and was soon on his way to Quebec.

It is no stretch of fancy to imagine the happy thoughts playing in the mind of this sailor, while the train rushes on to its destination.

The good ship he is going to join, Homeward bound once more with a little store of gold, to which he will add the pay of his voyage home; this will gladden the heart of his loving wife. What a happy meeting it will be—Six weeks from the date of that letter and the good ship will be in the Clyde, and these fond hopes will be realized.

Old Quebec is in sight, and soon the train is at the station; the G. T. ferry boat has landed our sailor friend on the Quebec side of the St. Lawrence. He will leave his luggage at the station for the present; he has the checks all right, and will go to O'Connell's, his old boarding-house, till he can get a ship bound for the Clyde. He is a little fatigued with the journey, but a night's rest will set him all right. It is Saturday, and on Monday he will get for his luggage. Thus he planned for the future and retired for the night.

"Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that chequers life."

It is Trinity Sunday, and the last day of the merry month of May. The church bells rang out their musical invitation to God's Holy Temple, and thousands of voices were sending up their prayers to heaven, in which "all that travel by land or by water," have a share in the blessings flowing from the Throne of Grace. Is our sailor among the worshippers? No; he has been suddenly called aloft; the heart so full of love, hope and home has ceased to beat; the hand that wrote the loving letter to his wife is cold in death.

While seated at the table in his room, with a book before him, a brother sailor, who was with him at the time, saw a sudden change coming over him and went to his assistance, and in a few minutes Dr. Abern, who happened to be coming that way, was in attendance, but the spirit had taken its happy flight.

An inventory was taken at once of all his effects, etc. After the inquest, came the Coroner's Warrant to bury James McKinlay, Seaman of the ship "Limerick Lass," who died suddenly, of heart disease.

The burial of a sailor is always a touching scene, whether it be in the presence of a whole ship's company, where many hearts leave with love to the shipmate who sleeps beneath the Union Jack that covers the coffin, borne by friendly hands to his last resting place; or a funeral without a mourner save the Port Chaplain, who, in such a case, becomes a connecting link between the departed and the friends at home.

Having no knowledge at the time of the proper person to whom to communicate the particulars of the above case, I had to wait. At last two letters were handed to me from the Superior Court—one from England and the other from Scotland. I have since received a third from Ireland. All three, addressed to the British Consul, Quebec. Surely the people in the Old Country take us to be foreigners; but we will pardon their ignorance, and will show that we are British without the Consul. These letters were handed to me, not that the office of Port Chaplain is on a par with, or is any way similar to that of a consul, but because they contained matters of great importance to friends of sailors at home.

The following letter is from Scotland, and is connected with the above case:—

GREENOCK, 22nd July, 1874; 120 Bristland Street.

Hon. B. Majesty's Consul, Quebec.

Dear Sir,—It has been reported here,

that a seaman—John McGroday or McKinlay—died in Murphy's or McConnel's lodging-house in June last, some said suddenly and others suspect foul means. Would you make, or cause some enquiries to be made, and report to me, as several families here claim kindred or relationship to him. One says he is her son, and had just come down from the Lakes, and having some money; another says he is her husband, and came from New York to get a run home, and that his first name is James. Any information you can give will be thankfully received by,

Honoured Sir,
Yours respectfully,
DONALD BROTHUR,
Seaman's Chaplain,
Greenock, Scotland.

The above letter opened up a correspondence between the Seaman's Chaplain at Greenock and the Port Chaplain, Quebec, in behalf of the widow of a seaman.

The next letter came addressed, Rev. J. S. Sykes, Port Chaplain, Quebec. The following is an extract:—

GREENOCK, SCOTLAND,
12th Oct., 1864.

Dear Sir,—I beg leave to hand you the papers of Mrs. James McKinlay, whose husband died in Quebec, on the 31st May last.

There is no doubt but that she is the real widow of the late James McKinlay. I enclose a certificate from our Magistrate, D. Campbell, Esq., and a certificate from the Minister of the Parish of Greenock. Also the last letter James McKinlay sent to his wife from New York, which will be very satisfactory. We feel much obliged to you for your attention to this matter. You will be doing good service to the widow if you will kindly send her the things and money, etc. You may send her letter to my care as every body here knows me, and there will be no danger of her money going astray.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours most respectfully,
DONALD BROTHUR,
Seaman's Chaplain,
Greenock.

Now, there is a right and a wrong way of doing everything, and the business to be transacted in behalf of this poor widow must be by legal instruments.

The papers I received were simply an identification of the proper person to whom the effects of the late James McKinlay belonged, but did not give me power to act in the case. I had, therefore, to write for the power of attorney, hence another delay.

The Coroner having all the effects in his possession, an instrument was necessary to authorize him to give them up, and me to receive them and send them home.

The balance sheet, the watch and chain, and the money, were sent home by the first mail for England in March, 1875. The chest and bag will be forwarded by one of the Greenock ships in the spring.

One of the many pleasures in the life of a sailor is that of overhauling his chest; and on long voyages this is done over and over again; and there is a charm about it that none but sailors understand.

I could spin such a yarn about this operation that would bring you down upon your knees beside a shipmate and make you thrust your head with his, where everything you see has a tongue that tells of home and all the loved ones, as he turns up one thing after another—from a photograph of his mother, sister, sweetheart or wife, the love letter, &c., to the Book of books—the Bible. But this is not my task just now. I would wait to give you a scene from real life where the sailor's chest is ready for sea. A loving heart moves the hand to write in a copy of the New Testament the following name and date:—James McKinlay, March 8th, 1864. This precious book is carefully and prayerfully put into the chest by an unknown hand. Two days later, and the chest with its owner, is on board the ship. The book is discovered, and the following entry made under his name:—

"Found this book in my chest on the 10th day of March, when overhauling my chest. I expect it was put in by my mother or sister."

The above was copied by me, March 10th, 1875. Eleven years James McKinlay kept this treasure through storm and calm.

A VICTIM OF STRONG DRINK.

John Hodgson, aged fifty-six years, mate of the ship "Henry Palmer," country England, died during the night of the twenty-third, found dead the

next morning, and was buried on the twenty-fourth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, under the authority of the Coroner's warrant, by me,

JAMES S. SYKES,
Port Chaplain.

"Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
While wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveller."

(To be continued.)

Current Events.

A GREAT fire has taken place at Peshawar, in the Punjab, and half the city has been destroyed.

JOSEPH, son of Mr. Joseph Rowntree, was drowned a few days ago in the mill pool at the St. Andrew's Mills, Ont.

THE Roman Catholic church at Springfield, Massachusetts, was burned on the 27th ult., and sixty-five lives were lost.

ANOTHER fire in St. John's, N.B., on the 30th ult., destroyed 8 houses. Loss estimated at \$75,000.

PORTLAND has again been in flames. Over 70 houses destroyed; 200 families rendered homeless; the loss fully \$200,000.

THE people of New Bedford, Mass., are fitting out a large whaling expedition, numbering 111 vessels, for a regular old-fashioned whaling cruise.

MELBOURNE, Australia, June 7.—Reports have been received here from the Fiji Islands, that 50,000 natives have died of an epidemic.

WYOMOUTH, June 2.—A lad named Ralph Butler, aged about 11 years, son of Mr. N. E. Butler of Wyomouth, was drowned about 7 o'clock last evening.

THE brig Florence, from St. John, N.B., for West Indies, struck against the ice off Cape Race, and had to put back into Aquaforte, with 5 feet of water in her hold.

A Montreal special says steamer "William" was burned there, and while burning was cut adrift with some 30 people on board, but a tug fortunately rescued them. Loss, \$10,000.

THE King of Burma announces that he is about to start a newspaper, and will engineer the editorials in person. Those of his subjects who do not subscribe are to be executed.

OTTAWA.—The corner stone of the new City Hall will be laid on Dominion Day. A stone suitable for the purpose, taken all the way from Nicolet, in the Province of Quebec, is being prepared for the forthcoming interesting ceremony.

SEABOARD, June 4.—The steamer saw mill, belonging to Jas. Graylock, situated about six miles north of this place, was totally destroyed by fire this morning, together with about \$50,000 worth of saw lumber. It is understood there was some insurance on the mill.

St. MARK'S, June 4.—A very disastrous fire occurred in this town last night, by which the extensive agricultural works of Mr. Jas. R. Moore, together with the flouring mill of W. Patterson, adjoining, were totally destroyed. The loss is estimated at \$80,000.

FORTS fires are still raging in various sections of the country. There was fire west of Halifax within four miles of the city. No buildings were burned, owing to the exertions of the people. The fire in the woods, near West Ferry, Lunenburg, was so severe on Friday that several families, fearing the destruction of their houses, moved their furniture into the open fields, and stood guard over them.

THE NEW PRISMATIC URICA, June 7.—A second observation has enabled Dr. Peters, of Switzerland Observatory, to determine that both the planets discovered by him on the morning of the 4th inst. were hitherto unknown. Dr. Peters, in a letter to the "Herald," says that in honor of the reception given him in Ottawa on Thursday last he styles them the "jubilant planets," and names them respectively Villia and Adonia.

St. LOUIS, May 21.—A special dispatch to the "Republican," from Kansas City, says:—800 farmers, of Jackson county, met at Independence, to-day, to devise means of relief to the destitute and suffering. Reports from all parts of the country were that grasshoppers are destroying all the crops and fruits. The meeting resolved to issue an address calling on the people of that country to assist helpless farmers who are cutting down trees for their stock to eat their leaves, straw, being fed to the cattle. One farmer said that half the farmers would be objects of charity within three months.