

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY.

VOL. XVIII. No. 26.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 1, 1898.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

The Rule of the Road.

The Naval Board of Inquiry of the United States has approved of the claim of \$218,889 presented by the owners of the British seamer "Foscolia," which was sunk in collision with the United States cruiser "Columbia," off Fire Island, New York harbour, on the night of May 28, and referred to recently in these columns. The board is satisfied that the owners of the steamer have a reasonable ground for claim inasmuch as the "Columbia" for "public reasons" on the night in question exhibited no lights and gave no fog signals, thus disregarding the rules of the road at sea in the public interest. The amount approved by the board will not be paid until a decision is reached in the case by the United States Court for the Southern District of New York.

A Very Curious Case.

A case somewhat novel in the annals of English police courts has been tried before the borough magistrates of Leicester. A commercial traveller was arraigned by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, charged with "inflicting mental suffering" upon his family of four children. The specific acts complained of were those of intoxication prolonged for three months, and of repeatedly threatening them with violence when in that condition. There was no evidence of actual assault. The magistrate treated the prisoner to a free lecture upon his unmanly conduct, and then sentenced him to hard labour for three months!

It has been maintained by those who ought to know that mental suffering of this kind is the refinement of cruelty, that the moral injury so sustained is farther reaching than any physical injury could be, and that such misconduct demands exceptional punishment. If the punishment can in all cases be made to fit the crime, it will be interesting to note its effects in a year or two from now.

Acetylene Gas.

As one result of a recent exhibition of acetylene gas apparatus, at the Imperial Institute, London, which comprised the lamps, generators and burners of a score or more of manufacturers, it is claimed that all objection to the

general adoption of the gas as a luminant has been removed. For many months, acetylene gas has been the subject of discussion in insurance and other papers. It is said to be more brilliant than any other artificial light; more powerful than coal gas; and that it dispenses with the cumbersome paraphernalia of the present gas plant. It is now claimed that all suspicions as to its safety have been swept away, and the inventive genius of the United States is duly credited by the British papers with having solved the mechanical difficulties that hitherto prevented the utilization of the gas for all forms of lighting. The *Insurance Post* says: "It is from our kin-across-the-sea we have so far received the most practical and best approved appliances for generating and consuming this combination of water and calcium carbide." Of certain lamps shown at the South Kensington Exhibition, a Professor Thompson, who is referred to as an eminent authority, reports:—

"In these lamps, the use of acetylene gas is rendered safe and practical by simple means. As the gas is generated in the lamp only as and when required, and is burned as soon as generated, all the risks attendant on storage and manipulation are obviated. The method of regulating the supply of gas by regulating the number of drops into the reservoir is exceedingly ingenious and simple; while the use of a water seal makes it impossible for the internal pressure to rise beyond the limit required for the flame. I have tried in various ways to make the lamp burn wrongly. I found that it was quite safe even when purposely tilted or overturned. The cycle lamp may even be tossed about through the air without extinction or risk. It does not blow out in the wind, even when the cover-glass is removed. The manipulation of the lamps is exceedingly simple, requiring merely the insertion of a dry cartridge containing a charge of carbide of calcium (resembling lime in physical qualities) and the filling of a small reservoir with water. The lamp burns with a soft, bright and unfllickering flame. On turning the regulator to increase or diminish the supply of gas generated, the flame does not jump, the change in brightness occurring quite slowly. The lamp requires no attention while burning, beyond the admission, by the regulator, of more water after an hour or two; and it