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**The Sargeson Bridge Disaster.** It will be remembered that a few weeks ago a very serious accident occurred on the Central

Railway of New Brunswick, resulting in the death of John A. Duncan and the more or less serious injury of several other persons. An investigation by a coroner's jury into the circumstances connected with the death of Mr. Duncan has just been concluded, and the finding of the jury indicates pretty definitely their opinion as to the causes of the accident and the points at which the blame for it is to be located. They find that the collapse of the Sargeson trestle bridge, through which the disaster occurred, was due to the trestle being allowed to pass into a state of decay, thereby rendering it of insufficient strength for the purposes for which it was used. And that the trestle was further weakened previous to the accident, owing to the manner in which certain repairs were being made. It is further declared that the men who were repairing the trestle at the time of the accident were guilty of negligence in not sufficiently securing the new timbers as they placed them on the trestle. And that the employees of the Central railroad who had charge of the section of railway over said trestle are also guilty of negligence in not reporting the manner in which the repairs were being made at the time of the accident to the proper authorities; and further, that the Central Railway Company was guilty of gross negligence in allowing the trestle to pass into such a state of decay and also in respect to the manner in which the repairs were carried on. It is well that there should be thorough investigation of this matter, for there are a number of roads in much the same circumstances as the Central. The facilities they afford for traffic and travel are of very considerable importance to the sections of country through which they pass, but on account of the very limited amount of business available, their earnings are not sufficient to keep them in good condition and afford any returns to stockholders. The difficulty of operating a railroad satisfactorily under such conditions is obvious. At the same time the interests of the public clearly demand that some guarantee should be given that the condition of a railway is one of reasonable safety, and that when repairs are made it should be under such direction as to ensure against danger during reconstruction. The Sargeson bridge disaster appears from the evidence adduced to have resulted from the lack of competent supervision while the repairs to the bridge were in progress.

**The Galveston Horror.** The disaster which on the night of the eighth of September overtook the city of Galveston is shown by the fuller accounts which have been received during the week to have been of a really appalling character. The hurricane and the accompanying tidal wave sweeping over the island left behind a scene of desolation and death such as probably had never been witnessed in an American city. Elsewhere, along the Texas shore of the Gulf, there was great destruction of property and much loss of life, but the most terrible effects of the storm were experienced at Galveston. Estimates as to the loss of life vary from 1,000 to 10,000. The exact number will never be known, and it will be some time before an estimate is given which can be accepted as even approximately correct. Three days after the disaster occurred the Mayor of Galveston placed the number of dead at 5,000. Possibly half the number would be near the truth. It soon became evident that the presence of so many corpses in the city was the supreme horror of the awful calamity. The safety of the living demanded prompt sepulture for the dead. Some of the bodies were cremated in the debris in which they were imprisoned, many were buried in common trenches and many others were taken out in vessels and consigned to the sea. To add to the horrors of the situation, fiends in human shape have flocked to Galveston for the purpose of looting the wrecked houses and robbing the bodies of the dead. Many mutilations of the dead for the purpose of securing articles of jewelry and the shooting down by the score of negroes found engaged in this ghoully work are features which add a darker shade of horror to the terrible picture. Relief has been sent to the survivors, many of whom were more or less injured and a great number in need of food and other necessities. Much suffering is reported, however, as occurring before the arrival of supplies and the organization of an effective relief work.

**Wireless Telephony.** If wireless telephony has not as yet realized the expectations of

its enthusiastic promoters, the experiments made with it seem to indicate that the discovery is likely to be turned to much practical account under certain conditions, and that it will be especially useful as a means of communication between vessels at sea, as well as between vessels and the shore. It is interesting also to learn from a trustworthy source that wireless telephony is also among the inventions of the age from which practical results of more or less importance are to be expected. At the recent annual meeting in London of the Association for the Advancement of Science, Sir William Henry Preece made the statement that, as a result of his experiments with wireless telegraphy, he had found it quite possible to convey audible speech six to eight miles across the sea without wires, and added that it was a practical commercial system capable of being applied to communication between ships and between ships and the shore. Sir William Henry Preece is consulting engineer to the British Post Office and the colonies. He is the author of several works on telegraphy and telephony, and in view of his theoretical and practical knowledge of these subjects his opinions in this connection will be received with respect.

**China.** Affairs in China appear to be in as great a muddle as ever. So far as appears, no settled line of policy has been adopted by the Powers interested, nor has any basis of negotiations between them and China been yet arranged. Russia is said to be still in favor of withdrawal from Peking, but is reported to have modified her original proposition on that point. The Peking correspondent of the London Times states that Russia has decided to withdraw her legation from the Capital, leaving a purely military command there, and it is thought that the other powers will pursue a similar course. A despatch from Shanghai, which may or may not be worthy of any credence, states that the Russian Government has addressed an ultimatum to Li Hung Chang declaring that the Emperor must resume the government, guarantee the apprehension and punishment of Prince Tuan and other leaders of the Boxers, and exclude the dowager-Empress from all influence in the government. The despatch adds that Li Hung Chang has declared that these propositions, with the exception of that regarding the Emperor's resumption of control, are unacceptable and has abandoned his journey to the north. Dr. Morrison, the Peking correspondent of the London Times says in a despatch to that paper that in the best-informed quarters the opinion is expressed that Russia and Germany are acting in accord, Russia seeking the definite alienation of all territory north of the great wall, and Germany the annexation of Shantung, Kiangsu and the Yangtse Provinces. Russia seeks to restore the power of the Empress-dowager and the Emperor in order to be enabled to wield her influence through them over the remaining provinces. The dismemberment of China seems almost inevitable. The Empress-dowager has retained Prince Ching's son as a hostage for his father. The Boxers are reported to be active again in the country south-east of Peking. Sir Robert Hart in Peking predicts more trouble with them in November. Additional British troops are reported to be landing at Hong Kong, and the British Government is said to be considering the transfer of troops from South Africa to India in order to make it practicable to send more troops to China. It is also said that Russia and Germany will each maintain a force of 15,000 troops in China during the winter, and that Japan will keep 22,000 there.

**President McKinley's Letter.** President McKinley's letter, accepting the nomination of the Republican party for the presidency, is of course a document of some interest. The president shrewdly selects the Bryan doctrine on the currency question as the first object of attack, since it constitutes the least popular plank in the Democratic platform, and takes pains to show that that party, if successful in the coming election, would be bound by Mr. Bryan's promises to the overthrow of the gold standard and the free coinage of silver. Mr. McKinley's reference to trusts embodies language more strongly condemnatory, it is probable, than an influential section of his party would wish to endorse, and indicates the recognition of a popular sentiment on this subject to which it is necessary to make concessions. In this connection Mr. McKinley says: "Combinations of capital which control the market in commodities necessary to the general use of the people, by suppressing natural and ordinary competition, thus enhancing prices to the general consumer, are obnoxious to the common law

and public welfare. They are dangerous conspiracies against the public good, and should be made the subject of prohibitory or penal legislation. Publicity will be a helpful influence to check this evil. Uniformity of legislation in the several States should be secured. Discrimination between what is injurious and what is useful and necessary in business operations is essential to the wise and effective treatment of this subject. Honest co-operation of capital is necessary to meet new business conditions and extend our rapidly increasing foreign trade, but conspiracies and combinations intended to restrict business, create monopolies and control prices should be effectively restrained." The President deals at considerable length with the nation's concern in Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines. In opposition to the policy of the Democrats in respect to the Philippines, he intimates that what they propose would involve that the United States should yield its sovereignty to a single tribe, a small fraction of the people of the islands, which wantonly attacked the American troops in Manila, and protect this minority in the government of the islands against the majority of the people as well as against external powers. "This," Mr. McKinley says, "would require an army and navy far larger than is now maintained in the Philippines, and still more in excess of what will be necessary with the full recognition of our sovereignty. A military support of authority not our own, as thus proposed, is the very essence of militarism, which our opponents in their platform oppose, but which by their policy would of necessity be established in its most offensive form." Allusion is made of course to China and the present situation there, but there is nothing of special interest in that allusion. As a tub to the anti-British whale of the United States electorate, Mr. McKinley thinks it necessary to call attention to the fact that, though the Government preserved neutrality in the South African war, "it did not hesitate, however, when requested by the Governments of the South African republics, to exercise its good offices for a cessation of hostilities. It is to be observed that while the South African republics made like request to other powers, the United States is the only one which complied."

**The Bitter End.** Fighting still goes on in South Africa and probably will continue in the way of guerilla warfare for some time to come, but it must now be evident even to the most sanguine or infatuated of the Boers that the cause for which they have fought is a lost cause, and many of them doubtless have bitterly reached the conclusion that the men who befooled them into believing that they could successfully resist the power of Great Britain have deserved their execration rather than their confidence. Paul Kruger has left the Transvaal for Portuguese territory. He is at Lourenço Marquez preparatory, as is believed, to sailing for Europe. A large part of his personal fortune is probably safe, but thousands who followed his leadership have been brought to ruin. General Louis Botha, chief in command of the Boer forces, has been obliged on account of ill health, it is said, to give over the leadership to General Villjoen. The following from a proclamation lately published by Lord Roberts indicates pretty well the present situation in the Transvaal and the Orange River colony:

"The late President Kruger, with Reitz and the archives of the South African republic, has crossed the Portuguese frontier and arrived at Lourenço Marquez with the view of sailing for Europe at an early date. Kruger has formally resigned the position which he held as president of the South African republic, thus severing his official connection with the Transvaal. Kruger's action shows how hopeless in his opinion is the war which has now been carried on for nearly a year, and his desertion of the Boer cause makes clear to his fellow burghers that it is useless to continue the struggle any longer. It is probably unknown to the inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony that nearly fifteen thousand of their fellow subjects are now prisoners of war, not one of whom will be released until those now under arms against us surrender unconditionally. The burghers must be cognizant of the fact that no intervention in their behalf can come from any of the great powers, and further, that the British empire is determined to complete the work which has already cost so many lives, and carry to a conclusion the war declared against her by the late government of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, a war to which there can only be one ending." Lord Roberts then proceeds to point out that with the exception of the small area which General Botha is defending, the war has degenerated into irregular operations, which must be brought to a near end, and concludes: "The means I am compelled to adopt are those which the customs of war prescribe as applicable to such cases. They are ruinous to the country, entail endless suffering to the burghers and their families, and the longer this guerilla warfare continues the more vigorously must they be enforced."