

this is also *ultra vires* of the Legislature; it is certainly unjust to compel a company to elevate the track which it laid under legal sanction and then to pay any consequent damages.

The new charter not only proposes to give the Council the right to regulate and prohibit the erection of telegraph poles and wires, which is reasonable enough, but also to require the removal of poles and wires already existing, and also "to regulate and control in a manner not contrary to any specific provisions on the subject contained in this charter the exercise by any person or corporation of any public franchise or privilege in any of the streets or public places in the City, whether such franchise has been granted by said City or by or under the Legislature of the Province."

A SORRY STORY OF THE SEA.

Methought what pain it was to drown.—Shakespeare.

The man who affects to regard death without fear must not expect to be believed. He may not look forward to it with horror; he may be perfectly resigned when he sees its approaching shadow; but still he dreads. Sometimes when he fears death, sudden unexpected death, he has the cowardly animal instinct to preserve his life at all hazards. It is in moments of shipwreck and sudden death that the greatest instances of heroism and self-sacrifice have occurred; but occasionally cruel, unreasoning panic, the thought of "what pain it was to drown," has made a terrible story of the sea, more sad to think upon. Better, far better it would have been, if the fog which enveloped the steamship, "La Bourgogne," had shut out the sorrowful, pitiful exhibition of that spirit of self-preservation, which is said to be the first law of nature. The bulletin boards told the story of the most recent ocean horror just as completely as the full and revolting narratives of the survivors. *Five hundred and fifty lives lost. Only one woman saved. Every child on board lost.*

It will not bear thinking about. But as one turns from perusal of the particulars of what took place, when the French steamship "La Bourgogne" foundered off that fog-bound graveyard of the Atlantic, Sable Island, it is good to recall Dickens' beautiful story illustrating the better and the brighter side of man when shown in his protection and sacred guardianship of children. Let us quote from the writer of some of the sweetest stories in the English language:

"There is a solitary child among the passengers—a little boy of seven years old who has no relation there; and when the first party is moving away he cries after some member of it who has been kind to him. The crying of a child might be supposed to be a little thing to men in such great extremity; but it touches them, and he is immediately taken care of. "From which time forth, this child is sublimely made a sacred charge. He is pushed, as a little raft, across broad rivers by the swimming sailors; they

carry him by turns through deep sand and long grass (he patiently walking at all other times); they share with him such putrid fish as they find to eat; they lie down and wait for him when the rough carpenter, who becomes his especial friend, lags behind. Beset by lions and tigers, by savages, by thirst, by hunger, by death in a crowd of ghastly shapes, they never—O Father of all mankind, thy name be blessed for it!—forget this child. The captain stops exhausted, and his faithful coxswain goes back and is seen to sit down by his side, and neither of the two shall be any more beheld until the great last day; but as the rest go on for their lives, they take the child with them. The carpenter dies of poisonous berries eaten in starvation; and the steward, succeeding to the command of the party, succeeds to the sacred guardianship of the child. God knows all he does for the poor baby; how he cheerfully carries him in his arms when he is himself gripped with want; how he folds his ragged jacket round him, lays his little worn face with a woman's tenderness upon his sunburnt breast, soothes him in his sufferings, sings to him as he limps along, unmindful of his own parched and bleeding feet. Divided for a few days from the rest, they dig a grave in the sand and bury their good friend the cooper—these two companions alone in the wilderness—and then the time comes when they both are ill, and beg their wretched partners in despair, reduced and few in number now, to wait by them one day.

"They wait by them one day, they wait by them two days. On the morning of the third, they move very softly about, in making their preparations for the resumption of their journey; for the child is sleeping by the fire, and it is agreed with one consent that he shall not be disturbed until the last moment. The moment comes, the fire is dying, and the child is dead. His faithful friend, the steward, lingers but a little while behind him. His grief is great, he staggers on for a few days, lies down in the desert, and dies. But he shall be re-united in his immortal spirit—who can doubt it!—with the child, where he and the poor carpenter shall be raised up with the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

It takes such a narrative as the above to efface the knowledge thrust upon us by the loss of all the women and children on board this French liner. It is saddening to know that men sometimes yield to the fear of death and become miserable cowards; but we must take some comfort from the heroism of a few Roman Catholic priests who, making no effort to save themselves, remained on board giving absolution to those who desired same, and find consolation in the courage of the captain and his officers. These men are the only features of "La Bourgogne's" ghastly story the general public want to remember. To the sorrowing relatives of the drowned, these tales of survivors must only be an added anguish and pain. Silence would be kindness, and we hope to hear no more about what occurred when the steamship "La Bourgogne" foundered.

The receiver of the Massachusetts Benefit Life has given out the cheering news that it will shortly be his pleasure to declare a dividend of forty cents on the dollar to those claimants who deserve such a dispensation.