

WHAT IS "LLOYD'S"?

Of all the queer ways by which men have immortalized their names, there are not many queerer than that by which a certain Mr. Lloyd appears to have done it, and to have done it most effectually.

Little or nothing is known of this worthy, except that some time during the last century he kept a coffee-house in or near Abchurch Lane, London; and as he had the good fortune to be largely patronized by ship-owners and captains, "Lloyd's Coffee-house," or the abbreviated "Lloyd's," came in course of time to be the recognized rendezvous for all who were in any way interested in shipping matters. Mr. Lloyd died, nobody knows when, and his coffee-house has long since disappeared; but his name still shines out in letters of brass at the eastern end of the Royal Exchange, and is familiarly known in the uttermost ends of the earth. The association which originated beneath his roof has developed into an organization having its agents and representatives in every seaport of any pretension throughout the world, and has acquired such importance that the advantages to be derived from an official connection with it are found to be a sufficient inducement to undertake its agency, without any other remuneration whatever. So curiously has the name of the lucky coffee-house keeper come to be identified with shipping interests, that it has in many instances been adopted by various continental associations; while it is said that there are still people who believe that he is the great potentate in shipping matters, and who occasionally write to "M. Lloyd, Londres."

There are at the present time two distinct associations known as Lloyd's, both of them having their head quarters in London, and within a few yards of each other. The one with which the general public are, perhaps, most familiar, is that to which reference is made when a vessel is said to be A 1 at Lloyd's. This association, named Lloyd's Register of Shipping, and the offices of which are in White Lion Court, Cornhill, was founded in 1834, simply and solely "for the purpose of obtaining a faithful and accurate classification of the mercantile shipping of the United Kingdom, and the foreign vessels trading thereto." The original constitution of it has remained without material alteration till the present time. There is a committee for the general management of affairs; there is a sub-committee, appointed by them, for the actual work of classifying ships; and there is a large staff of surveyors, whose duty it is to inspect vessels, to furnish the committee with such reports as enable them to assign each a character. The details of this classification would probably have but little interest for the general reader. It will be sufficient to state that the letters A, B, etc., which are appended to the names of ships, indicate the soundness and sea worthiness of the ships themselves, while the figure which follow the letters indicate the completeness and sufficiency of their equipment—their rigging, boats, anchors, etc. Thus, a vessel which is classed A 1 on Lloyd's Register is not only a good, sound craft, but is thoroughly well equipped. She stands in this class for a term of years depending on the materials of which she is built and the quality of workmanship bestowed on her; and from it she falls, in the usual course of things, into class "A red," for a period of half or two-thirds of the time she stood in the highest rank. From this she goes into B, thence into C, and finally into Class I. When she

is too old and cranky to be retained in this grade, Lloyd's will have nothing further to do with her.

Some idea of the magnitude of the business accomplished by the association may be gained from the fact that in 1872 they had upon the books upwards of ten thousand vessels. The fee for a survey originally was ten guineas, but this was reduced to five guineas. Subsequently, rates were still further modified. The other "Lloyd's" may be found on the first floor of the Royal Exchange. Going in by the eastern entrance of this building, the visitor will at once see the illustrious name shining down upon him over a doorway on the right. The most conspicuous object, however, is a very imposing looking individual in a gorgeous scarlet robe, who guards the entrance, and with the lungs of a S. M. or shouts out, above the din and confusion within, the name of any one of the throng who may happen to be wanted. Only the initiated may pass this barrier; but one may stand without, and see pretty nearly all that is to be seen of this, the oldest of the two institutions known the wide world over as "Lloyd's."

Standing without the barrier, one may see into a handsome saloon, with a richly decorated ceiling, supported on a double row of pillars, and with walls adorned by the arms of the association—a golden anchor on a blue ground. The room contains two enormous ledgers, a self-registering barometer, and an anemometer, which marks with a pencil, upon a sheet of paper, the force and direction of the wind at all hours of the day and night. There are still unmistakable traces of the coffee house period in the history of this institution. The floor, for instance, is occupied by four rows of tables, shut in from each other by little mahogany partitions, in the usual coffee-house fashion; while, until a few years ago, the attendants in the room still answered to the name of "waiter." It is a scene of great bustle and confusion, the room being usually filled with a throng of people who buzz about apparently with the smallest possible reference to anything like business.

The insurance of a ship, unlike that of a house or a life, is usually undertaken by a considerable number of men of firms individually. There are companies engaged in this line of business, but by far the greater part of it is effected with individual insurers, or "underwriters," as they are termed. There appears to be no reason for this beyond the force of custom, which originated at a time when companies for this purpose were by law limited to two, the Royal Assurance and the London Assurance. The monopoly was abolished in 1824, but the practice which had sprung up in consequence of it survived; and at the present time, the greater part of marine insurances in London are effected with the men who are to be found seated at the tables in this large room at Lloyd's.

A transaction in shipping assurance is usually carried on through a broker, by whom the premium to be offered is arranged with the owner or freighter of the vessel. This being determined on, he sets forth on a slip of paper the particulars of the risk—the name, class and tonnage of the ship; the port she sails from, and that to which she is going; the probable length of the voyage, the sum to be assured, the premium offered, etc. The slip is then sent into this large room at Lloyd's, and submitted to various "underwriters." Probably no one of them will assume the whole risk. To do so with any approach to safety, it would be neces-

sary to engage in business on a most gigantic scale. It is sometimes done. Usually the responsibility of every ship insured is divided among a considerable number of men. If the premium the broker offers is considered sufficient, one will append his initials to the sum of £100, on his slip of paper, another £50, and another perhaps £500, and so on, until the sum required is made up. The broker now draws up a formal policy of insurance, under which those who have engaged to do so writes their names. Hence the insurers are called "underwriters." The second great ledger in the room records the safe arrival of ships; and the contents of the two, together with all other intelligence respecting shipping matters, are published daily in a little sheet entitled Lloyd's List.

Taking the two societies, "Lloyd's and Lloyd's Register," as they are popularly supposed to be, as one great concern interested in all that pertains to maritime affairs, they constitute an agency such as the world has never before seen, and without which British commerce never could have attained its present proportions. At home there is no vessel of importance that escapes their vigilance, and abroad there is no spot to which the telegraph extends with which they are not in frequent communication. There is no port which ships are accustomed to visit where they have not a pair of experienced eyes on the watch, and a representative ready to transmit intelligence, and to act on their instructions.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

Our late Chinese and Japanese mails indicate that the trouble between China and Japan grow out of the invasion of the Island of Formosa by the Japanese is in no way settled, nor the prospect of a war between the two nations in any way diminished. The *Ugogo News* hears that war has been actually decided upon by the Japanese, and says that if it has not been decided upon for some time past, "the repeated passages of the *Delta* and *Madras* between Nagasaki and Formosa, with troops and munitions of war, are altogether inexplicable." The *Nagasaki Express* says that Japan is recruiting her army from all the large cities of the Empire. Warlike preparations are making in Yeddo, Yokohama, and many large towns along the inland sea. The Government has purchased several new ships for use as transports in case of need. The *Express* thinks that a war would be popular with the people who believe that the celestials would be easily whipped. The *China Mail* says:—"The Japanese are said to have demanded the payment of \$2,500,000 from the Chinese Government for the expenses of the expedition, which will be most likely paid. The Chinese are not in a position to cope with the Japanese, and will not be for some years unless they alter their tactics. If they enter into a war now they will most certainly get a tremendous thrashing, and in all probability lose the island. The Chinese troops are only Chinese drill, a mere rabble, and have been receiving from Fort Law and the north a lot of guns of different kinds, some of them useless. Some Krupp guns were landed the other day, but they were in a dreadful state from rust and dirt. The Chinese do not appear to be doing anything. Three thousand five hundred foreign-drilled troops are expected from the north very shortly."

The general opinion of the Chinese and Japanese papers seems to be that China is quite unprepared for war, its army being