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JAS. S. CARNEGIE,
AGENT, St. Andrews.

Miscellany.

Cutting both Ways.

Vexation is beginning to be felt in the United States on the discovery that the imposition on England of the "three fifths" in the Washington Treaty may in the end tell as much against the Americans themselves, in the case of the British Counter Claims before the Joint Commission, as against England at Geneva. These claims will exceed 470 in number. Their aggregate amount is large, but of course the final awards will not be in proportion. Many of them may be ruled out altogether, and others will be reduced in amount. A great many it is said must be paid in full. The heaviest of these claims are for the illegal seizure of property, as in the case of blockade runners, &c. In all these cases there seems to be perfect and incontrovertible evidence of the value of the seizures. The 316th case on the docket of the Mixed Claims Commission is that of the steamer Springbok. This vessel was taken on her voyage from London to New York in 1862, and taken into the latter port, and both vessel and cargo were condemned. The decision was appealed against and the decree reversed by the Supreme Court, so far as the vessel was concerned, but was affirmed with respect to the cargo. The owners, not satisfied with this, have taken the case before the Mixed Commission for justice and restitution. In their plea they show conclusively that the only ground for condemnation was that "part of the cargo comprised arms and munitions of war," and that these arms and munitions consisted only of 12 accords, 12 bayonets, and 50 military buttons. It is argued that it was something new under the sun to condemn the whole cargo of a vessel because it contained only these few articles contraband of war.

Mr. Vernon Harcourt is the counsel of the owners of the Springbok. The appraised value of the vessel's cargo is set down at £56,378 11s 11d, to which must be added expenses of claimant £2000, and interest from February 10, 1863, making the whole claim amount to over 500,000 dollars. The case of the Peterhoff, respecting which so much was said in 1863 and after, is revived before the Commission. The cargo of the vessel was sold for 273,628 dollars. 99 cents. The Peterhoff claimed to be making a legitimate voyage to Matamoros, and was condemned because her cargo contained a few cases of artillery harness and regulation grey blankets. Another vessel, the Pearl, and her cargo were condemned at Key West in 1863. She was captured when on her voyage from Cork to Nassau, was appraised with her cargo at 30,000 dollars, and was ordered to be restored to her owners. The case was taken by appeal to the Supreme Court, and, pending a decision, the steamer and cargo being value every day, were sold for account of whom it may concern. The debt and credit of the sale of vessel and cargo were as follows:—Vessel sold for 1032 dollars 48 cents, cargo 1267 dollars 88 cents.—2320 dollars 36 cents; per contra—various fees, 4222 dollars 99 cents. This leaves no residue for distribution. As the owners of the Pearl can prove that she was making a legitimate voyage when captured, she will have to be paid for at her appraised value of 39,000 dollars. A great many of the claims partake of the character of the above. The average amount claimed in each case is 250,000 dollars, which for the 470 cases would aggregate 117,500,000 dollars. This would more than counterbalance any nice little bill which the Americans may carry away from Geneva, and it is more than probable, were a balance struck, that both sides would be about equal—that is, allowing that we are molested in a few hundred thousand at Geneva. The only difference will be that, if England has to pay, the money goes into the American Treasury; but if the latter pays, private individuals will pocket the compensation.

LOSS OF THE AMERICA. Thrilling Account of the Fire.

The America reached the harbor of Yokohama safely and in good trim, at 7 o'clock a. m., Saturday, August 24, 1872, within an hour of the time she was due. Soon after she was fastened to the buoy I went ashore for a day or two, until the branch steamer for Shanghai should sail. The same evening I went aboard the America for a few minutes, and while there learned that during the day the Yokohama and Shanghai freights, the mail, and all of the treasure, excepting \$400,000, had been transferred, and that she would depart from Hong Kong on the Monday following. Everything was quiet and orderly as usual. All the officers, with one exception were on board; a few of the passengers and a goodly number of visitors were there also. I left my trunk containing everything I had with me, excepting the linen clothes I wore, locked up in the stateroom which I had occupied, little dreaming of the fearful calamity which so soon followed.

Shortly before midnight I was aroused by an alarm of fire. I rose hastily, and without stopping to dress, looked out upon the harbor. The night was calm as death. The bay of Yokohama lay before me, still and tranquil; a dense cloud of smoke, rising above the harbor like a mountain specter, lowering and darkening the face and light of a full moon, and the naked masts of different ships lying at anchor, deeply tinged with a lurid flame just bursting through the cabin of the America, constituted the main outlines of the scene disclosed by the conflagration as I first beheld it.

Nearly all the officers and employees of the ship were there, manfully disputing the progress of the flames. For some among them was Capt. Duane, who, all honor to him, staid by his ship in her downfall, till every man had forsaken her, and every passenger was gone or dead. Then, and not till then, he threw himself over the ship's bows into the bay, to share the fortune and chances of the poorest cooie.

The America, at the time of the fire, lay at her buoy, about half a mile from the harbor (wharf). As soon as the alarm was given all the sampan (native boats) left the harbor, where they were anchored for the night, and flocked around the burning ship. Every sampan was gone when I reached the harbor, and it was impossible for me to get nearer the ship. I was sufficiently close, however, to mark very distinctly, by the light of the fire, everything that passed on the America's upper deck. The Chinese passengers were thoroughly aroused by this time, and, Chinese men like, each one had his box or bundle of effects on his back or in his arms, determined to save that or die in the attempt. Many of them, I am sorry to say, lost their lives, beyond doubt, in this foolish attempt to save a trifling bundle of old clothes.

Seeing that no hope now remained of saving the ship, an attempt was made to let the Chinese down to the boats below by a gangway on the port side. The terror-stricken Chinese rushed pell mell upon the gangway, each with his package of worldly goods, until the ladder, overburdened with the great weight, fell with a heavy crash, precipitating over 60 Chinamen into the water. Many of these were rescued, and quite a number were drowned. The passage to the gangway on the other side of the ship by this time was entirely cut off by the flames; nothing remained, therefore, for those remaining on board (over 150 in number) but to jump overboard from the forward deck into the water, a distance of fully twenty-five feet, or to remain and be consumed by fire.

The scene on the forward deck of the burning ship at this moment beggars description. The Americans, few in number compared with the whole, were woking with all the energy of desperation to lower the life boats; but before they could be swung on the davits all hands were driven forward by the flames. The poor Chinese were now rushing hither and thither across the hurricane deck, screaming and throwing their arms in the air most frantically. Now picking up their bundles, now dropping them again, and seizing them once more and throwing themselves headlong overboard, box in arms. By this time all the upper deck over the dining saloon was fairly consumed, and the fire had climbed the mainmast to the yards.

The smoke stack, thirty-two feet in circumference, and forty feet above the deck, was red hot to its uppermost extreme, and shooting from it was a bright red tongue of fire, hissing and snapping and fairly leaping to the sky. The heat by this time had become unbearable anywhere except on the extreme forward deck. Very few persons were there now. All the Chinese had gone overboard and were struggling in the water below. A round the buoy the drowning wretches were so thick that there was nowhere close room for another head. The struggling of those poor creatures around the buoy was touching. The stronger men held their place, the weaker were overborne and drowned. The fear of an explosion or the falling of the ship's giant masts had now driven every boat from near the wreck.

Those who had jumped into the water, and the few who had still to jump, must therefore now swim through the death circle, within the boundary of which no boat could venture. It was at this fearful crisis that Capt. Duane, having flooded the magazines, and finding that every one else had fled, plunged over the ship's bows, and fell paralyzed into the water. Brave man, overcome with almost superhuman efforts to save his ship, his proud spirit cowed and broken at the loss of the very apple of his eye! Unable to use his legs, he sank and rose, and sank again! Oh, there is no hand to reach out and save our gallant commander? Yes, thank God! Just as he was sinking for the last time, the friendly hand of Captain Williams seized him by the collar and rescued him from the watery grave.

About this time a very painful thing occurred, which I deem worthy of note. There were a few beef cattle on board, and quite a number of pigs, sheep, turkeys, and chickens. The cries of distress from these unfortunate animals, which were distinctly heard on shore, above the roar of the conflagration, were painfully touching. Poor things, they had thus far escaped the butcher's knife only to meet death with a thousand fold more terrors.

The personal adventures of those who escaped would make a volume of thrilling interest. One of the cabin boys had \$2000 in silver, which he of course tried to save. It is needless to say what a wretched fate befell him. Another Chinaman actually jumped overboard with his box of clothes, and clung to it until picked up. A European gentleman told me that up on some one's congratulating this man, he coolly remarked he was 'sorry he was not able to save his wife, too.' It is a most remarkable characteristic of this mysterious people—'The Chinese'—that, in the presence of danger, they never so far lose their presence of mind as to forget their bundle of rags.

The humanity of which Christianized people show, or ought to show, in rescuing women and children and infirm persons in time of peril, never troubles a Chinaman. Their actions under circumstances of this character are to me as mysterious as the Sphinx itself. Out of the thirty Chinese women and children aboard, the most of whom had husbands and fathers with them, I venture to say that not five are saved. And as for the poor children, I am credibly informed that at least a part of them perished in the flames. Of the 177 Chinese passengers, I am also informed that fully one third of the number were lost.

Mr. Sheppard, American Consul at Tien Tsin, China, who was on his way to take charge of his Consulate, lost everything he had, including his instructions from the government, his passport, and all his private papers.

The origin of the fire will probably remain forever in doubt. It is generally believed to have been caused by one of the Japanese coolies dropping his pipe of lighted tobacco in the ship's hold while the freight was being taken out, and that smouldered there for many hours, and finally burst forth into a conflagration. Another supposition is that it was caused by spontaneous combustion of the coal.

By Sunday morning the whole of the upper decks, the masts, and all the wooden structure of the water's edge (her great smoke stack, barred and blackened, the iron paddle wheels, and the ponderous walking beam, were still erect. During the afternoon all that was left of the largest American steamship on record was towed up to the head of the bay, close to Kanasama, and late that Sunday evening, while the little bay was lashed with the fury of a hurricane, just as darkness and night and storm closed over the scene, the America, dismantled, humbled and destroyed, quietly sank to the bottom of the ocean, as if to hide her great misfortune from the gaze of her less favored but no longer envious sisters.

THE PARSON'S HORSE.—The day was warm, and the church windows were open. In the midst of his sermon the preacher was disturbed by the sudden exit of three men sitting near the door. Glancing out of the window, he saw his old horse 'Charley,' who had been indulging in too much fresh-cut grass, lying down in the harness. The kind friends who went to his relief soon restored him to his upright position, and the congregation generally was none the wiser for the work going on outside. Returning home, the parson called his man Patrick to account, and asked him with what he had been feeding 'Charley.' 'An' sure, why do you ask me the question?' 'Reason enough. He fell down in the harness when tied to the post by the side of the church.' 'An' was you preaching, sir?' 'Yes.' 'Och, an' sure, thin, I expect he thought he might as well just take nap wid the rest of em.'

ALL-JAW.—'Talk about the jaws of death,' exclaimed a man who was living with his third scolding wife; 'I tell you they're no touch to the jaws of life.'

The Potatoe Disease and its Cause.

The potatoe disease has appeared to an alarm extent in the Vale of Severn, and to a greater or less extent in most other parts of the country. Year after year, during the last quarter of a century, we hear of the ravages of this disease, yet no effectual means have been proposed by which to check its progress or its annual visitations to our shores. Cholera, in former years, was a scourge which carried off numbers of people; but in modern times, thanks to the progress of the age and the attention which has been given to sanitary and dietary matters, its deadly effects have been greatly modified. A few years ago the silkworm was threatened with extinction from Europe by a disease which at first baffled the skill of sericulturists. But by the aid of science, this disease has been mitigated, and promises to be totally got rid of under judicious treatment. As with animal diseases, of which numerous other instances could be given, so with vegetable. Proper treatment, if it does not eradicate the disease, may at least reduce its destructive nature within the smallest compass.

During the years when the potatoe disease became first known, various suggestions were put forth in order to the protection of the potatoes; but some of them were absurd, and others, when acted upon, were attended with no effect. Before we can properly deal with the potatoe disease, several things have to be taken into account, such as variety of potatoes, aspect of fields in which they are planted, soil, drainage, and the time of sowing the seed. On farms in which these things are neglected, and on which the crop is left to chance, the disease has been found to make its appearance in its severest form.

Before we allude to these matters in detail, it is essential that we should inquire into the nature of this disease, and by doing so, arrive at the origin of it.

The potatoe disease is always reported to have made its appearance in the vicinity of the sea coast, in fields with a southern or south-western aspect, or in fields consisting of rich loamy soils and sheltered on the north and east by woods or clumps of trees. It smites the haulms of potatoes (and simultaneously with them the tubers) of varieties with rough, large, and pointed leaves, before it becomes perceptible on the haulms, of varieties having smooth, small, and somewhat rounded leaves. Potatoes grown on a sandy soil, in an open situation, and in fields not inclining to the south or west, frequently escape the disease, provided they are of the variety of the latter kind which we have here instanced, and sown early in the spring time. The foregoing, we believe, is a correct summary of the places, &c., in which the disease first makes its appearance, so far as soil aspect, and variety of tubers are concerned.

The first evidence of the malady is in small burnt-like spots on the leaves, but on close inspection, it will be found that a portion of the haulm, from the point at which the footstalk of the leaf which presents these spots join downwards, is more or less damaged, while from the point at which the footstalk of the leaf join the haulm upwards is uninjured. By lifting the tubers out of the soil, it will be at once observed that the lower or further portion of it from the root is destroyed, while the more mature part of the tuber is scarcely affected. These features of the disease are well known to every agriculturist who grows potatoes, and are within the province of science to admit of explanation. To electricity, and to nothing else, we owe the potatoe disease. At this statement, some persons will exclaim "Nonsense!" "Rubbish!" "The man who says so must be dreaming!" However, expressions of this kind cannot withstand truth and facts—facts which on demonstration, are simple, and because simple, are not, therefore, less true.

After a thunderstorm, the disease may make its appearance, but the electricity or lightning from the storm clouds do not cause it, but electricity produced from the formation of watery particles, in the shape of dew drops. The atmosphere abounds in electricity, but with the production of lightning in storms we do not propose to deal, but to confine our observations to the minute electric fluids (if electricity can be indeed termed a fluid, but for the purpose of our remarks we will call it such), produced by the vapours which are condensed into dew drops. From experiments made by M. Le Monnier, at St. Germain en Laye, and communicated to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, the amount of electricity in the atmosphere was estimated. Le Monnier caused a pole to be fixed vertically into the ground, which, at the height of 32 French feet, bore an insulated tin point, from which the metallic wire conveyed the electricity to an electroscope, or any other convenient apparatus for its examination. The result was that some electricity might always be detected in the atmosphere; that in dry weather it was scarcely perceptible at sunrise, but increased gradually until three or four in the afternoon; it then diminished till the evening fall of dew, at which time it increased; and by a subsequent diminution it became almost insensible at midnight. The electrical state of the atmosphere has been practically investigated by others with equal or similar results.

From the foregoing it appears that the change of the moisture of the earth, by the heat of the sun during the day, into vapour, produces electricity, and that also the change from vapour, into dew causes also an increase of electricity. This change of vapour into visible watery particles in dew-drops is more perceptible on vegetation than, for instance on gravel walks, &c. This is because vegetation, such as grass, &c., being pointed, offers greater facilities for the radiation of the sun's heat, and thereby offers a cool surface to the atmosphere before rounded and smooth objects do, and consequently retain on them a greater amount of watery particles; and also a greater quantity of electricity is present. Electricity seeks the earth, and the sap of plants frequently forms for it a conductor. The rough, large and pointed leaves of potatoe plants are such as to present to the atmosphere a cool surface much sooner than other objects, and consequently they receive a larger quantity of dew. As a sequent in the formation of this dew, especially in hot weather after very much rain, in a moist soil proportionately, a larger quantity of electricity is formed in close proximity to the leaves on which the dew is deposited, which seeks the best conductor for it into the earth. The sap of the soft haulms of the plants afford this, and the electricity is conducted to the tubers. For the same reason, the part of the tubers which contain the most succulent matter and are lowermost in the soil, receive the strength of the current and are destroyed.

In localities with a southern aspect, especially after rain in summer, owing to a higher temperature in comparison with open districts and with northern or eastern aspects, there is a greater amount of vapour, and also a heavier deposit of dew, so that in such localities the potatoe disease is known to make its first appearance; in the vicinity of the sea coast, because of saline properties, there is always more moisture to be evaporated, which adds to the formation of a copious deposit of dew. Small, smooth, and round-shaped leaves, and potatoe plants which do not spread luxuriantly on the surface of the ground so as to prevent a free circulation of air, are less susceptible to disease than those varieties which, so to speak, grow apiece with large and rich foliage. The disease makes its appearance when the greatest amount of moisture is on the ground, and at a time when the foliage is so thick as to prevent a current of air from passing underneath them and dispersing the vapours produced by the sun's rays in the hottest part of a summer's day. These vapours, by being concentrated in the evening time, add to the increase of the dew deposit—increasing the production of electricity, and thereby the disease sooner generates the destructive malady.—[English paper.]

ST. PATRICK'S AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY held its annual Cattle Show and Fair at the farm of Mr. Hugh Monahan, Digdegash, on Tuesday, 8th inst. All departments were well represented considering the very unfavorable weather. There is a very marked improvement in the Stock these few years past. A very fine Jersey Bull was exhibited by Mr. Joseph Linton, and also a thorough bred Devon by Mr. John Burns.

The roots were good in general; Potatoes not nearly so large as last year, but Mangolds, Beets, Parsnips, Carrots, Turnips and other roots were exceedingly good. Grain in considerable samples was exhibited. Wheat as fine as can be raised, in the Province, weighing from sixty-six to sixty-eight pounds to the bushel; Oats 46, Barley 38, Buckwheat 56lbs. Fruit in very fine samples was exhibited—Apples for size and flavour which cannot be beaten this side of Nova Scotia.

The Fancy department and Domestic manufactures were also well represented, which reflects much credit on the women for their skill and industry. There seems to be a lively competition between the members of the Society in exhibiting the produce of their farms and domestic manufactured articles, some members showing as high as thirty articles, and receiving a large amount of prize money, which is a great encouragement for them to produce superior articles from their farms. The Society appears to be strong and in good working order; good efficient officers and a hard working committee who take a lively interest in the encouragement of Agriculture and other branches of industry.

Our accommodating Secretary, Mr. Hugh Monahan, treated every one present to a very fine dinner, and all seemed to enjoy his hospitality to their evident satisfaction. Yours, &c., Mc.

Bocabee, Oct. 15, 1872.

Lieut. Crosby, U. S. Infantry was killed by the Indians on the 5th inst.