

the table, facing the fire, and with his back to the window. On the right sits the Foreign Secretary, and opposite to him the Lord Chancellor. As no one else, under any pretence, is allowed to enter the room, the junior members of the Cabinet are seated nearest the door, so that they may themselves bring in any despatch-boxes which may arrive.

In a corner stands a table bearing a few captain's biscuits and some plain water—the only refreshment allowed to be taken in or ever introduced into the room. There is no oratory; the opinions of the Ministers are expressed briefly and plainly, and each man is expected to say what he really thinks, without ambiguity and concealment, for he is taken at his word by his colleagues.

DR. CULLIMORE, of the Northwest London Hospital, writes what the English journals call a very sensible letter on the evils attending children's parties in winter. The subject is one which may well receive the thoughtful attention of parents and all who are solicitous for the welfare of the young. Dr. Cullimore's principal objections, which are based on physical grounds chiefly, are urged for the benefit of children under seven years of age. It is impossible not to recognize that the so-called "pleasure" of a children's party involves a very large measure of excitement both before and after the event; so that, apart from the exposure to the chances of "chill" and improper food and drink on the occasion, there is an amount of wear and tear and waste attending these parties which ought to be estimated, and the estimate can scarcely be a low one. It may seem ungracious to strive to put a limit on the pleasures of the young; but it must not be forgotten that early youth is the period of growth and development, and that anything and everything that causes special waste of organized material without a compensatory stimulus to nutrition ought to be avoided. The amusements of young children ought to be simple, unexciting, and as free as possible from the characteristics of the "pleasures" of later years. As a matter of fact, "children's parties" are in no way necessary to the happiness of child-life.

It is suggested that if the search in the Gulf of Salamis for relics of the Greek and Persian galleys sunk there 2364 years ago is successful, the Archæological Society might institute a careful search after Pharaoh's chariots lying in the neck of the Gulf of Akabah. Or could not the "Anglo-Israelites," who believe the English people to be Jews, use their spare cash—they have plenty, for they are most of them Anglo-Indians—in that exploration? They might find something that would support their theory, a prophetic tablet, for instance, written by Aaron and bearing testimony to Lord Beaconsfield, or a square stone with inscriptions showing that Moses established representative government, joint-stock banks, and trial by jury, and must therefore have been the first Englishman. That would not be a whit more wonderful than some of their discoveries, and the chariot-wheels would be irresistible evidence.

ENGLAND'S OLDEST COLONY.—IV.

DESPATCHES.

THAT light which brightens and dwindles every half minute, a curious spectacle from 'board ship, what is it? The revolving white light of Cape Race. Near to and in connection with it is worked a telegraphic station whence to St. John's, it may be over the continent, day by day, is flashed word of such casualties as happen, state of the atmosphere thermometric and barometric, rate and direction of the wind, number, class and condition of sails that pass, and whether inward or outward bound. But important as it may be to-day as a meteorological and shipping outpost, Cape Race was much more important before the cable which spans the Atlantic was laid, before steamers had risked a more southerly route. Then all vessels made the Cape to shorten the passage, get into higher latitudes the nearest way or keep there as far as possible; the mail steamers, in addition, to drop their despatches. In setting out from Liverpool or Glasgow, these despatches, chiefly market reports of the day of sailing and such general news as now comes by cable, were packed in cylindrical, water-tight cans made of tin or zinc, about three feet six inches long, ten inches in diameter, with a conical cover painted red from the apex of which sprang a short staff with a small red flag attached. These were flung overboard on reaching Cape Race, floated flag uppermost, being weighted for the purpose, and were picked up by the *Victoria*, a small but powerful steamer which the local authorities maintained there. The cans brought to shore were opened and their contents sent broad-cast over the wires. In this manner readers of the *Globe* twenty-five years ago obtained their telegraphic news from Europe.

Of the *Victoria* and her master, Sluyter, his doings and experiences, innumerable stories illustrative of that time are current in the island. I cull one which rests on good authority. You may picture the Captain as a robust, bushy, representative salt, rough and ready, inured to toil and

hardship, a man who never knew what fear means, in a strong but not most admirable, sense "no respecter of persons," and one, who, amid all his rollicking mischief and practical jokes, had still a steady eye to the main chance. To many persons of middle age it will be no news that, before the civil war, the United States had a foreign, as distinguished from a coastal, merchant navy; that much emulation was manifested between British and American ship-builders, owners, master, sailors, shippers *et omne hoc genus*, and that such emulation grew stronger year by year. The point of contention between them was not safety, the interest of the general public, nor carrying capacity which an increasing commerce loudly demanded, but speed rather. Hence the clippers of New Brunswick and of Maine in the early years of this century. Now, from sailing tables and otherwise, it became known along the Atlantic seaboard that, by a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, the *Vanderbilt* of the Collins line, afterwards transferred to the Pacific route to escape blockade runners, was timed to sail and would sail from Liverpool on the same day, if not at the same hour, with the *Persia* of the Cunard Company. What fairer field for a race than the wide sweep of the Atlantic? What better test of long-disputed, never-settled points could there be, modes of building, rigging, navigating? What ships more representative than these of their rival nations and rival styles?

As the appointed and long-looked for time wore on, enthusiasm grew into excitement. The set-to of Heenan and Sayers drew forth small interest compared with the ebullition which the great race commanded. The millionaire betted his thousands, not a school boy but lost or gained top or knife on the result, jack-tar, whose impecuniosity has for centuries been proverbial, fought out the cause within the precincts of his tavern. Looking back one may see that sides were taken and wagers were laid along lines patriotic, that the conflict was international. What precise relation shipbuilding holds to allegiance I am not aware that any man has fully explained, but who would be niding, turn Turk upon his country? Not Sluyter by any means, over whose birth the stars and stripes are said to have flapped in their merriest mode early one May morning. He had not only shares in all pools that offered or he could find out, but had private bets to the extent of his ready cash, to the extent of the borrowable money of his friends, to the full extent of his credit. The form of the wager was secondary, which should first pass Cape Race, which first reach Sandy-hook, which first docked in New York. For all and sundry whether at odd or even, Sluyter was not only ready but eager, and with wonderful resources. As he was reported to be reckless, he was freely accommodated. By way of proving his loyalty to his land he made a dash at the sublime, and, to the amazement of the old hands, laid heavy sums that the *Vanderbilt* would be ten hours in dock before the *Persia* reached New York harbour. 'Twas afterwards found out that he never hedged.

The passing of Cape Race, that is Raze or shaved cape, as the opposite point of the island is called from its appearance Ray (Raie) or split cape, was in all respects critical. More than half the voyage would then be over, and both vessels would have a straight run of nine hundred and thirty miles to New York harbour. Newfoundland's interest concentrated on her own shores. Many of the betting fraternity in New York and Brooklyn wished to be there, and envied that select few to whom Sluyter sent a card of invitation to spend a week in the *Victoria*, to intercept the rival steamers.

Early one morning Sluyter, always on the alert, mounted deck and before breakfast time detected on the far horizon, about N.E., a narrow streak which grew into a dark ridge of smoke. "The *Vanderbilt*," said he, put his boat about, made for it, and shook up his slumbering guests. No breakfast was to be served then, as his little steamer rushed over the waters. The surmise proved right, it was the *Vanderbilt*. After salutation up to the mast-head ran the signals: "Any word of the *Persia*?" "Passed four hours ago," was the *Victoria's* placid answer. But how Sluyter roared with laughter and careered along deck, much to his friend's astonishment, when he saw the *Vanderbilt* jerk her despatches overboard, crowd sail, for the wind was fair, send forth denser volumes of smoke, and drive wildly ahead, determined to win at all hazards. The steward, dragged heels first from bunk, served them champagne instead of coffee; for this was a red letter day in the diary of Sluyter. He picked the cans up, made with them to the station, and gave word of the *Vanderbilt* passing to every hamlet on the North Atlantic coast, word which, may be, reached Toronto street.

About five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, the *Persia* was sighted. Being signalled, "The *Vanderbilt*, any tidings of her?" Sluyter answered, "None," gathered his despatches and again made for the Cape. In high glee, confident of success, the unsuspecting *Persia* pursued leisurely the even tenor of her way. Four days afterwards, what was her surprise