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RALPH HARDELOT'S MEDIATION

BY WILLIAM MINTO.

CHAPTER I.

The State of England in 1380.

It was the reign of Richard II., one of the most disturbed reigns in English history.

The times were dark, and were growing darker, clouds gathering and lowering on every hand, and, worse than that, ominous tremors beginning to make themselves felt in the very floor and foundation of society itself. The darkness was all the more appalling that it had been preceded by a period of unparalleled triumph and splendor. Under Edward III., in the middle of his long reign, England had been the first nation in Europe, and the king's court had been on a corresponding scale of magnificence. He had realized the kingdom of the fabulous Arthur. The kings of Scotland and France were prisoners together in his capital; his dominion stretched literally from the Orkneys to the Pyrenees; the chivalry of Europe gathered to his feasts and tournaments, and Christian potentates in the East looked to him, as the first prince in Christendom, for aid against the Saracens. But a few short years, though they witnessed no falling off in the magnificence of the court and the nobles, had seen a woeful decline in political power. The expansion had gone too far; the English rule had been spread over a wider surface than its essential strength warranted, into a film so thin that the parts could not maintain their cohesion. In reaching over into Spain, the Black Prince had loosened his hold on Aquitaine, and fortress after fortress, here a little and there a little, Edward's inheritances and conquests in France had been lost. When the great contending parties paused for a short breathing space during the last three years of Edward's reign, there was left to the English crown, of all its Continental possessions, only a few strong towns on the northern and western coasts. The war was renewed, but the record was still of disappointment and disaster. Ill-luck combined with bad management against the success of the English arms. The great captains of the prosperous time were gone; John of Gaunt—an inveterate bungler in matters of war—was a sorry substitute for the Black Prince; and Knolles, Calverley, Harlstone and Trivet, though valiant men of their hands, did not, taken altogether, make up for the loss of Sir John Chandos, the greatest general of the age, the real hero of Poictiers and Auray and Najarra, who had been slain in a miserable skirmish. Luck generally goes against men when they play badly, and it seemed as if the very wind and waves had entered into the conspiracy to bring England as low in her humiliation as she had lately been high in her glory. Relieving expeditions, calculated to arrive in the nick of time without a day to spare, were shipwrecked by storms, or detained in port, or beaten back by contrary winds. Indignities that twenty years before were never in the dreams of the gloomiest prophets of evil had become hard matters of fact, stern and urgent. Scotch cruisers chased the smacks of Filey and Scarborough from their fishing grounds, and French fleets ravaged the southern coasts, menaced the mouth of the Thames, and actually, in the autumn of 1380, the time when our story opens, had the audacity to sail up the great river, and burn and plundered as far as Gravesend. The defense of London itself had become a subject of serious consideration—a deplorable reverse from the time when the most pressing concern for the English government was the maintenance of the border fortresses of Gascony.

Meantime, as in all periods of great national reverse, discontent with the management of affairs was loud throughout the kingdom. Charges of incapacity, extravagance, dishonesty, were freely made. That larger sums should be necessary for the exchequer than had ever been heard of in Edward's most prosperous days, and that yet there should be nothing to show but fresh miscarriages and disasters, was monstrous and bitterly unintelligible. It went hard with the great officers of state and the minor collectors of revenue. They were accused of intercepting for their own use the money that had been raised for the defense of the realm. Frequent changes were tried, while affairs still went from bad to worse. The knights and burgesses, summoned to Parliament again and again to hear the same tale of urgent dangers followed by requests for larger and larger supplies, grew restive, and, with all the care that could be used in their selection, could not be kept from open complaint and remonstrance against "the outrageous cost of wars that the country could in no manner sustain."

And beneath the grumbling middle classes, far down among the lower strata of society, a fiercer and more dangerous discontent and unrest began to spread and take hold. Grievances, grown more and more intolerable, were aggravated by the general distress, and their discontent now became so intense that it was ready, at the slightest disturbing touch, to burst into destructive tempest.

Our story concerns the fortunes of a heroic spirit, who, like many others, saw the mischief that was brewing, but, unlike most, felt called upon to labor with all his might to avert the impending strife. The particulars of his strange devotion and dauntless endeavor to reconcile domestic enemies we have gathered from old and neglected chronicles, and here present to the reader in the hope that they may seem to him as they have seemed to us—not unworthy of preservation.

The most heavily-burdened man in the kingdom—very much over-burdened as the event proved—was Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord High Chancellor. He was head of the Church and at the same time head of the secular administration; and both branches of constituted authority were objects of bitter hatred and clamorous criticism.

As primate he had his troubles—recalcitrant monks to be browbeat, a pestilent heresy to suppress, difficulties between the pope and the clergy to adjust, difficulties between the pope and the government, jealousies between the higher clergy and the baronage; but, grave as some of these troubles were, they were light compared with the desperate cares of the chancellorship, at that time the highest of the great offices of state, as measured by the weight and number of its responsibilities.

There was not in those days the same subdivision of duties that exists now among the king's ministers, and the responsibility of ways and means to replenish the empty treasury fell upon the lord high chancellor. This base necessity was the problem of problems for the government.

To find employment for the restless English chivalry, and to give the youngest of the king's uncles, Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Buckingham, a taste of the glorious game of war, a splendid expedition had been sent across into France early in the summer. But the glorious game is costly; the expenses were not yet paid, nor was there any money in the treasury wherewithal to pay them. The crown jewels were in pawn.

Further, Buckingham's expedition did not promise to be a success. The French would not fight, at least in pitched battle. This was the pusillanimous policy of Charles the Sage, which had rendered so many grand and gallant expeditions abortive—to keep within walled towns and fortresses, to remove to safe shelters all that could conveniently be removed, to leave the rest to the mercy of the invaders, and to keep the track of devastation as narrow as possible by hanging on their flanks and cutting off adventurous excursion parties of plunder. No barbarity of fire and sword perpetrated on the defenseless country had availed as yet to tempt the Sage King out of this cold-blooded policy of endurance. Nothing had been achieved by the expedition to put Parliament in better humor to pay the outrageous cost of the war.

Other debts were urgent, notably the wages of the few English garrisons remaining in France—Calais and Cherbourg, and Brest and Bayonne—which were a year and a quarter in arrear. They were so hemmed in that they could not, as in happier times, make up for the want of pay by pillaging the country.

The noble institution of national credit, whereby such bills might have been left to posterity, was as yet undeveloped. The ministers of Richard II. had no such resource. The pawning of the crown jewels shows how very rudimentary were their methods of finance.

The government had no choice but to go once more to Parliament. Their last reception had not been encouraging, but there was no alternative. And the money had to be raised at once by taxation from a people who had protested last time that they really could pay no more.

It was a desperate case, but the chancellor, trained in the exchequer of the pope, experienced in diplomacy, patient, cautious, and conciliatory, though near his wits' end, did not absolutely despair.

One of his predecessors, three years before, had conceived, or at least proposed a tax of so much a head on every person in the kingdom over the age of fourteen years. It had been complained of, but it had been fairly well paid—better than any form of subsidy that had been tried since.

The chancellor would try another poll-tax, and modify the obnoxious features of the first. The first had been uniform, fourpence a head from poor and rich alike, and the poor had naturally complained of such equality. He would avoid this grievance; the rich should aid the poor; an average of three groats should be raised, but the poorest should be asked for no more than one groat, while the richest paid as much as sixty. Besides, the age should be raised to fifteen.

What could be more reasonable? It was the duty of everybody in such a national crisis to contribute to the national defense.

The plan was to cost the unfortunate chancellor his head; but no mere man could have thought of anything that looked fairer or more promising.

Besides, he was to give Parliament a choice between this and one of the older imposts. Further, he put off the evil day of submitting his budget, and waited for a supremely favorable moment when he might summon the Commons and launch it prosperously.

The favorable moment for which he waited was the death of the King of France. Charles the Sage, to whose crafty policy the deplorable reverses of recent years were attributed, had suffered long from a mysterious illness. Like the illness of the Black Prince, it was suspected to be the effect of poison, and one of the incidents of it was an issue in the arm, through which it was believed the venom of the poison discharged itself. George of Prague, the physician whose skill had partially cured him and kept him alive, had warned the king that when the issue dried up, he had only fifteen days left in which to arrange his affairs and provide for the welfare of his soul.

Sudbury had taken measures to get the earliest possible information of the appearance of the fatal symptom. He knew well, from the temper shown by the Commons when last they were asked for a subsidy, that there was little chance of getting anything from them unless something occurred to brighten the prospects of the English cause in France. It was the policy of Charles that had undone them; his death would give them new hopes, and could hardly fail to put the Commons in a generous mood.

At last the fatal favorable moment arrived. In the autmun of 1380, early in September, just after the insult offered by a French fleet to the Thames, the joyful news reached him that the fatal symptom had appeared, and that the King of France was on his death bed.

CHAPTER II.

The bearer of the good tidings presented himself to Lambeth, where the archbishop lay, more than an hour before midday. He had ridden post over night from Dover to Gravesend, and thence sailed up the river with a favorable tide; his luck and speed had been such that, traveling day and night, he had reached London on the second morning from his start.

They kept early hours in those times; the archbishop, after a close morning's work, had already dined and was preparing to proceed to the chancery at Westminster. It was his custom to sit there at eleven.

The messenger was not held long in waiting for an audience. As soon as the archbishop-chancellor was informed of his arrival from Paris, he dismissed his secretaries, ordered him to be shown up, and received him most graciously.

"Good-morrow, good fellow," he said, in a stately fashion, raising him with the hand which the messenger had knelt to kiss; "what news from Paris? You have made good speed from there, I doubt not?"

The messenger answered the second question first, and then hesitated, glancing meaningly at the usher who had shown him into the chancellor's presence and who remained by the door.

"You may speak," said the chancellor. "Master Hardelot, my young cousin, is of my council."

Thus authorized, he delivered his message. "I am charged, sir," he said, "to deliver to you this ring, and to say that that has happened which you wot of."

The chancellor's face did not betray the joy he felt at hearing what he had waited for so long. He asked no further questions. "You have done the king an excellent service," he said in a voice of well-pleased greatness. "It will be my care to see that you are fitly recompensed. You must be fatigued. Reginald, cause the cooks to provide at once some meat for this gentleman, and see that a well-lighted chamber is made ready for him. Come to me when you have rested and we will talk further of what you have heard and seen in Paris."

The messenger protested with all humility and respect and thanks for his grace's comfortable words about present refreshment and prospective reward, that he was ready at once to answer to the best of his power; but the chancellor, who had heard as much as he wanted, insisted on his taking needful repose after his long and trying journey.

(To be continued)

Rapid Transit.

"Folks hab got to rise up in de middle ob de night to get ahead of my Pomp," announced Mrs. Johnson to an interested friend, as the two women hung out their clothes on neighboring lines one Monday morning. "Is you heard de way he fixed dat trifling mule ob ours yesterday, so we could dribe to de sanctuary in peace and quietness?"

"Laws no, I ain't heard nuffin!" said the other woman, eagerly. "My ole man and me, we nebber got home from spending de day wid Susannah till most midnight."

"Is dat so?" said Mrs. Johnson, who had been alive to this state of affairs, but wished to appear ignorant. "Well, now, you know how dat mule ob ours has most destructed de dashboa'd ob de cart ebery time we tried to ride to de sanctuary?"

The neighbor nodded, with two clothes-pins between her lips.

"My Pomp," said Mrs. Johnson, proudly, "has got de contribance ob Mr. Edison or any ob dose inventing pussons, and he just turned de seat facing round backward, and put dat trifling mule in backward, and set a basket ob oats just behind de dashboa'd, right in plain sight ob dat mule, and he done push us along to de sanctuary faster dan Pomp and me ebber 'speeted to ride in all our days!"

Secretive Yaqui Indians.

For many years the Indians of the Yaqui, Mexico, gold country have sold gold to traders, but it has been impossible to determine how rich the deposits are.

EVENTS OF THE DAY

FROM THE FOUR QUARTERS OF THE WORLD.

A Comprehensive Review of the Important Happenings of the Past Week Presented in a Condensed Form Which Is Most Likely to Prove of Interest to Our Many Readers.

Emperor William has celebrated his 43d birthday.

River navigation has been suspended above the Cascade Locks.

Two Negroes in Louisiana, who had murdered a white man, were lynched.

A train in South Carolina was held up and the express car rifled of its contents.

Governor Shaw, of Iowa, will assume the duties of secretary of the treasury February 1.

Liberals defeated the Conservative forces of Colombia in three successive engagements.

United Mineworkers will levy an assessment to help strikers fight battle with operators to the end.

The delay of the committee in reporting the canal bill to the senate means a saving of much time later.

The treaty for the sale of the Danish West Indies to the United States calls for the payment of $5,000,000.

Intense cold continues to prevail throughout the middle west. Many trains are delayed on account of snow.

An extra session has been called of the Colorado legislature to make corporations pay taxes on full valuation, the same as private citizens.

There is a movement to hold an exposition at Manila in December next.

The Manila chamber of commerce asks that Chinese be admitted to the islands.

An unknown hypnotist put a Spokane man to sleep and doctors can do nothing to rouse him.

Prince Henry will be given a military farewell when he leaves Germany for the United States.

The Prince of Wales received a very chilling reception on the occasion of his visit in Germany.

Investigation of the Iowa mine disaster disclosed the fact that the explosion was caused by too heavy a charge of dynamite being placed by one of the men who were killed.

Fire at Goldfield, Colo., caused damage estimated at $80,000.

Manila banks refuse to accept deposits of Mexican silver.

Colorado union miners have demanded the discharge of nonunion men.

A man and his wife have been arrested in San Francisco for counterfeiting.

Eight of the collieries in the Hazelton district, Pa., were closed because of high water.

It is estimated that the loss by the recent fires in Columbus, Ohio, will reach $500,000.

The wheat crop of the Pacific Northwest for 1901 was, approximately, 44,000,000 bushels.

Governor Taft says 15,000 soldiers will be enough in the Philippines before the close of the year.

Five hundred miners at the West End colliery, at Mocanaqua, Pa., went on strike because nonunion workmen were employed.

All formalities for the purchase of the Danish West Indies have been completed and the treaty will be signed in a few days.

A Cincinnati bookkeeper is almost a quarter of a million short in his accounts. He contends that it is the result of errors and has made most of it good.

Governor Taft says the situation in the Philippines is encouraging.

Hon. Franklin Murphy was inaugurated governor of New Jersey.

Prince Ching will represent China at the coronation of King Edward.

Charges have been brought against officials of the Mineworkers' Union.

A Filipino force in Batangas province, Philippine Islands, surrendered.

Contract for repairs to the transport Dix to the amount of $12,000 has been let.

John D. Rockefeller contemplates giving the Chicago University $26,000,000.

United States Senators Dolliver and Allison were re-elected by the Iowa legislature.

All of the convicts who escaped from the federal penitentiary on McNeill's island have been recaptured.

The senate has begun debate on Philippine tariff bill.

More revolutionary movements are reported in China.

The per capita consumption of spirits in the United States is smaller than any other of the great nations.

Reginald C. Vanderbilt, of New York, has come into possession of $7,500,000 left him by his father.

J. E. Green, a St. Louis mechanic, claims that he invented the airship made famous by M. Santos Dumont, in Paris, and that the drawings were stolen from him and taken to France 10 years ago.

TWELVE YEARS IN HIDING.

G. A. Bennett at Last Arrested for Extensive Cattle Stealing.

Missoula, Mont., Jan. 29.—G. A. Bennett, formerly a prominent merchant of this city, who for the past 12 years has been hiding from an indictment of a grand jury issued October 12, 1890, on a charge of stealing cattle, was brought last night to Missoula by the sheriff.

The story of his downfall, so far as can be learned, is that stockmen, in the summer of 1890, had been missing cattle, and suspicion fell on Bennett and his range riders. A close watch was kept on them with the result that evidence against Bennett, which was laid before the district judge, was considered sufficient by that official to warrant his calling a grand jury to investigate the matter. After a session lasting several days, the grand jury returned a verdict against Bennett and four others, charging them with stealing cattle.

Bennett drove from his home directly through this city to some unknown point on the Northern Pacific, where dressed in woman's garb, he made his escape. The various sheriffs of this county since the escape have constantly been on the lookout for him. Some weeks ago the sheriff located his man at Albuquerque, N. M., and quietly left the city for the south with all the necessary papers for his arrest and return here.

At the time the affair became public Bennett was operating a slaughter house and in searching the place, the grand jury found upwards of 100 cattle hides bearing the brands of several Bitter Root stockmen hid in the river and buried in the ground in that vicinity

TROOPS FOR PHILIPPINES.

Two Companies of the Eighth Infantry Receive Orders.

Helena, Mont., Jan. 29.— Orders were received at Fort Harrison today from General Miles, at Washington, for two companies of the Eighth infantry to prepare for transfer to the Philippines. No time was set for the departure of the troops and the date of their leaving will probably not be known until the arrival at San Francisco of the infantry which is to take the place of the various commands now in the department of the Dakotas.

Two companies of the Eighth are at Fort Harrison, one at Fort Missoula, and one at Fort Yates, S. D. All are ordered to the Presidio, whence they will embark for the Philippines.

Sailing Dates for Returning Troops.

Washington, Jan. 29.—The war department has been informed that the troops which are to come home from the Philippines will sail from Manila as follows:

Twenty-second infantry, February 1; Twentieth infantry, February 16; headquarters and First and Second battalions Seventeenth infantry, February 28. The Third battalion of the Seventeenth infantry will sail from Manila after the arrival there of the Second battalion of the Twenty-seventh infantry, between March 1 and 10.

Pan-American Conference.

City of Mexico, Jan. 29.—The project for an international court of claims was presented at today's session of the Pan-American conference. Though it has not attracted the same amount of attention as the arbitration treaty, it is of even greater practical importance. It is in reality itself a compulsory arbitration plan, applied, however, only to controversies involving nothing but pecuniary claims.

Two Freight Sections Collide.

Houston, Tex., Jan. 29.—In a rear end collision between two sections of a stock train, at 3 o'clock this morning, near Keller, 15 miles north of Fort Worth, one man was killed and another fatally injured. The men were in the caboose of the first section. The wreck was caused by a dense fog which prevented the danger signal from being seen by the second section.

Surprised a Boer Laager.

Pretoria, Jan. 29.—General Bruce Hamilton, by a clever night march, surprised a laager between Ermelo and Bethel, in the Transvaal colony, and charged the Boers, who fled in all directions and were pursued many miles. As a result of this expedition 82 Boers and a quantity of stores were captured. The casualties were small.

Fire in a Well-Known Book House.

Cincinnati, Jan. 29.—A fire today burned the book house of W. E. Davie & Co., 224 East Fourth street, causing a loss estimated at $50,000. The establishment is widely known among book lovers as a repository for old and rare volumes, many of which were destroyed.

Explosion on a Spanish Gunboat.

Vigo, Spain, Jan. 28.—The obsolete Spanish gunboat Condor has been towed into this port in a damaged condition, due to the explosion of her boiler, which killed four men and dangerously injured seven others, including the commander of the vessel. The boat is practically a wreck.

British-Canadian Trade.

London, Jan. 29.— Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, Canadian high commission in London, had addressed letters to the press in which he calls attention to the expanding trade between Great Britain and Canada, expresses his belief that this trade is capable of much greater development, and invites correspondence as to the best means of assisting this development by the dissemination of commercial information.

NEWS OF THE STATE

TEMS OF INTEREST FROM ALL PARTS OF OREGON.

Commercial and Financial Happenings of Importance—A Brief Review of the Growth and Improvements of the Many Industries Throughout Our Thriving Commonwealth —Latest Market Report.

Eugene school district voted a 6 mill tax at the annual meeting last week.

Many hogs are dying around Pendleton from what may prove to be cholera.

The company owning the hot artesian wells at Vale, has decided to erect a fine hotel for the accommodation of guests.

Work is progressing smoothly at the oil well being sunk at Vale, Malheur county.

Fire damaged the Ashland Iron Works to the extent of $1,000 a few days ago.

The merchants of Baker City have agreed to close their stores at 6:30 every evening except Saturday.

A preliminary survey of the route of the proposed electric road from La Grande to Cove has been completed.

Oil has been struck in one of the wells being bored near Nampa, in Eastern Oregon. Samples analyze 78 per cent paraffine.

The Gopher Mining Company, whose property is in Southern Oregon, is installing a five stamp mill, and will have ore to keep it going steady.

The Woodburn school tax will be 16 mills this year. This, with the county and state tax, will make a total of 43, the highest ever known.

The telephone line from Union to La Grande has changed hands.

The net valuation of taxable property in Baker county is $3,523,346.

Hop buyers at Salem are offering 12¼ to 12½ cents per pound.

The postoffice at Independence has been moved into new quarters.

Extensive tests are being made with silage at the agricultural college.

The mayor of Pendleton has ordered slot machines of all descriptions out.

A franchise has been granted for the erection of an electric light plant at Burns.

Asbestos has been discovered in paying quantities in Josephine county, near the state line.

The Salem school district levied an 8 mill tax for running expenses and 1 mill for a sinking fund.

Preparations have begun for the building of a large saw mill on Foots creek near Grants Pass.

Extensive preparations are being made for a thorough test of the existence of oil near Monmoth.

The expenditures of the agricultural college for 1901 were $41,507.93. Total receipts, $63,285.93.

About 400 were in attendance at the annual convention of the Knights of Pythias in Pendleton this week.

Farmers around Ontario are making arrangements to import ferrets to clean out the gophers, which are very numerous.

Portland Markets.

Wheat—Quiet. Walla Walla, 63@63½c; bluestem, 64@64½c; Valley, 63½c.

Barley—Feed, $19@20; brewing, $20@21 per ton.

Oats—No. 1 white, $1.10@1.25; gray, $1.05@1.15.

Flour—Best grades, $2.80@3.40 per barrel; graham, $2.50@2.80.

Millstuffs—Bran, $18 per ton; middlings, $21; shorts, $20.50; chop, $17.

Hay—Timothy, $11@12; clover, $7@7.50; Oregon wild hay, $5@6 per ton.

Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 90c@$1.25 per cental; ordinary, 70@85c per cental, growers' prices; sweets, $1.75@2 per cental.

Butter—Creamery, 25@27½c; dairy, 18@20c; store, 11@13c.

Eggs—20@21½c for fresh Oregon.

Cheese—Full cream, twins, 13@13½c; Young America, 14@15c; factory prices, 1@1½c less.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, $3@3.50; hens, $4@4.25 per dozen, 9@10c per pound; springs, 10c per pound, $3@3.50 per dozen; ducks, $6.50@7.50 per dozen; turkeys, live, 11@12½c; dressed, 14@15c per pound.

Mutton—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7@7½c per pound.

Hogs—Gross, 5¾c; dressed, 6½@7c per pound.

Veal—8½@9c per pound, dressed.

Beef—Gross, cows, 3½@4c; steers, 4@4½c; dressed, 6½@7½c per pound.

Hops—11@12½c per pound.

Wool—Nominal. Valley, 13@15c; eastern Oregon, 8@12½c; mohair, 21@21½c per pound.

A million dollars a week is the cost of the United States army.

American manufacturers of silver are preparing to enter the market in England.

The Italian government has declined an invitation to take part in the St. Louis exposition.

The Baltimore & Ohio road will spend $50,000,000 on improvements, mostly on the line between Pittsburg and Chicago.

MINE DUST EXPLODED.

Disaster in Iowa Coal Mine Many Lives—Several Men Seriously Injured.

Oskaloosa, Ia., Jan. 27.—The Lost Creek coal mine was the scene today of a terrible disaster, which cost the lives of 21 miners. Eight others were seriously injured. The bodies of the dead men were recovered from the mine, and lie tonight in an improvised morgue near the scene of their destruction. The injured, all of whom are frightfully cut, bruised and burned, are under the care of surgeons in a temporary hospital equipped near the mine.

The Lost Creek mine is 10 miles south of Oskaloosa, and three miles north of Eddieville. The explosion occurred at the noon hour, and was what is known as a dust explosion. The miners had just fired their usual noon shots, one of which proved to be a fizzle, the powder flame igniting the gas and causing the explosion. Smoke and debris were blown out of the mine in a column 200 feet high. A part of the top works was torn away, and the fans and cages were wrecked. This made the work of rescue very slow, and it was 3 o'clock before volunteer forces dared to venture into the east entry, where the explosion occurred.

The men of the rescue party fought their way into the mine, where a shocking sight met their gaze. The dead and injured were terribly burned and mutilated, some of them almost beyond recognition. Beyond where the bodies lay the fire was burning fiercely, and for a time it was feared the workings would be wholly destroyed and the bodies incinerated. Finally, however, the flames were subdued. The bodies were then collected and taken to the top of the shaft.

At the time of the explosion more than 100 men were in the mine, but all except those in the east entry escaped with only slight injury. The total property loss will be about $10,000. Nearly all of the men were married and leave families in poor circumstances.

UNFAIR TO THE COLONIES.

Australasia Complains That Meat Contracts Go to Argentina.

Sydney, N. S. W., Jan. 28.—The placing of contracts in Argentina by the British war office, for the supply of meats and other produce for the troops in South Africa, has engendered extreme irritation throughout Australasia. This action of the imperial authorities is regarded as evidence of reprehensible indifference to the claims of the colonies, as ill accorded with the expressions of imperial solidarity, as poor repayment for the sacrifices of the colonists, and generally as grave injustice. Most of the premiers of Australasia and the premier of New Zealand have cabled to the imperial government strong protests in practically identical terms, saying that the two colonies are able to supply the war office requirements in South Africa three times over. Both colonies, it is pointed out, have more meat than consumers, and when they are doing all in their power to build up and strengthen the empire, it is incomprehensible that trade is given to foreigners, especially Argentina, thus bringing into the field a keen competitor with the people of Australasia. The premiers further declare that they feel such action is wrong and unfriendly, and that the blunder should be promptly retrieved.

NEWS RECEIVED QUIETLY.

No Demonstration at St. Thomas, Danish West Indies.

St. Thomas, D. W. I., Jan. 28.—The announcement which reached here of the signing of the treaty by which Denmark sells the Danish West Indies to the United States, was received quietly. There was no open manifestation, but much anxiety prevails regarding the developments. Nothing official has yet been received from Copenhagen. The governor of St. Thomas has declined to be interviewed.

The Danish cruiser Valkiren will remain here indefinitely, it is reported, so as to guard against disturbances, which it is believed, however, are not likely to occur.

Plebiscite of Danish Antilles.

Washington, Jan. 28.—The Danish government will not take the plebescites of the Danish West Indian Islands to determine whether they shall be ceded to the United States until the United States senate has ratified the treaty of cession. This circumspection is supposed to be the outcome of the senate's action in rejecting a former treaty of cession after Denmark had accustomed the islanders to the idea of transfer.

Her Release is Near.

Sofia, Jan. 28.—The semi-official Bulgaria announces that the American delegates bearing the ransom for Miss Stone, the captive American missionary, have arrived at Jumaya, and that Miss Stone and her companion, Mme. Tsilka, will be released within 24 hours after the money is paid.

Tired of Useless Struggle.

Pretoria, Jan. 28.—Lord Kitchener has authorized General Viljoen, a surrendered burgher, to raise an additional Boer corps of 1,500 men. General Viljoen has written a letter to ex-President Steyn, warning the latter of his intention to form such a corps, and adding that the Boers in the concentration camps are tired of the useless struggle and are determined to help the British end it.