

A RACE FOR A GIRDLE.

The Contest Between the Overland Telegraph and the Atlantic Cable.

The race-course was between the Old World and the New. The racers were the telegraph companies. One was called "Russian Overland," the other was the "Atlantic Cable."

The track of the "Russian" lay between New Westminster in British Columbia and Moscow in Russia. Up through the unexplored Fraser River valley it was to run, then on through the untracked wilderness of Alaska, across Bering Strait, over the timberless steppes of Arctic Siberia, and along the dreary coast of the Okhotsk Sea to the mouth of the Amoor. There the American racers, called "Western Union," were to give over the race to the Russian telegraph department, which was to make its best time in reaching Moscow.

Western Union said it would cover the ground in about two years. The Russian would be about five millions of dollars; but what was five millions of dollars if the prize could be won—an electric girdle of the earth?

The path of the "Atlantic" cable was to be on a tableland some two miles deep in the ocean, reaching from Ireland to Newfoundland.

The summer of 1865 found the world watching this race with great interest. It opened when the fleet of the Russian expedition set sail from San Francisco, northward bound. The "Atlantic" people at the same time were stowing away gigantic coils of cable into the capacious hold of the "Great Eastern"—a new cable some 200 miles long.

The Western Union directors were proud business men. Five millions of dollars was little in comparison with the benefit they could receive could they get telegraphic communication with Europe, and they then believed that the only way was by land. The cable agreed with them nearly unanimously. And so the two projects—the overland and the submarine—were fought against each other.

A very unequal race it seemed at the start. The Overland was strong and vigorous. The Atlantic was broken by former failures. The Overland was regular, and had plenty of money back of it; the Atlantic was derided, and "only fools," it was said, "would invest in it."

The fleet of the Russian expedition which sailed from San Francisco in the summer of 1865 was quite a navy. There were ocean steamers, sailing-vessels, coast and river boats, and Russian and American ships of the line, with a promise of a vessel from Her Majesty's navy. The expedition was well officered, and about 120 men were enlisted—men of superior ability in every department. The supplies embraced everything that could be needed. Thousands of tons of wire, some 200 miles of cable, insulators, rigging, etc.

August 29, 1866, the Great Eastern hauled its cable at Trinity Bay and the whole world was electrified by the news that it worked perfectly—that the victory had been won. More than that. The Great Eastern not long afterward picked up the cable lost the year before, and that, too, was won in working order. Two electric cables had been clasped around the earth.

The success of the "Atlantic" was a defeat for the "Russian." An overland telegraph line could never compete with the submarine cables. The first triumphant "click, click!" at Trinity Bay was therefore the death-blow of the Russian scheme, and all work connected with that project was at once abandoned.

But the workers—the brave men facing famine among the wild Chookchees—buried in their lonely huts waiting for some news from their comrades, or straining every nerve to complete their share of the great work—now pathetic that so many of them did not hear what had happened, in some cases for more than a year after the success of the cable!—Jane Marsh Parker in St. Nicholas.

THE PLIMSOLL MARK.

A Device that Has Saved Hundreds of Lives and Much Property.

If you ever walk around the waterfront of a large commercial city and look closely at the big ocean steamships and sailing ships moored along the wharves, you will notice that many of them have a white circle and a lot of white lines marked on their sides close to the water, almost as if some bad boy had been chalking a picture there of a griddle-cake and a gridiron; but when you find that hundreds of ships are marked just the same way, those painted light colors having the marks in black, you know that those marks really mean something of importance in connection with the ships on which you see them. If you should notice more closely you would soon discover that all the ships belonging to Great Britain, even the magnificent passenger steamers like the "Luania" and "Teutonic," were marked with those queer signs, and that ships of no other nation had them. If you were to ask some sailor what the mark meant he would tell you briefly that it is the "Plimsoll Mark," and you would be no wiser than before; in fact, he probably would not know much more than that here fact himself.

That ugly mark, however, is the safeguard to hundreds of vessels on the stormy ocean, and to thousands of lives, and to millions of dollars' worth of freight. It has only been in use about twenty years, only properly used for the last ten years, and is still adopted by only one great seafaring nation in all the world.

Twenty-five years ago it was no uncommon thing for ships to go out to sea laden with valuable cargo and hopeful human beings, never to be seen or heard of again. People on shore, even the owners of the cargoes and relatives of the passengers, would take it as something they must be prepared to expect on account of the dangers of the ocean. Finally, one man determined to make a study of the subject, and see if such terrible tragedies were really unavoidable. He was an inflexible Englishman, named Plimsoll, and a member of Parliament. He spent day after day along the docks watching ships loading and unloading, coming in and going out; he talked with ship-owners, captains, and sailors. He saw ships sent to sea with leaky bottoms, rotten spars, and worn-out rigging, with rusty boilers and rattle-trap engines. He saw them loaded until even in the still waters of the harbor their upper decks were down to the water's edge, and this overloading seemed to be the worst and most frequent fault.

Then he went back to Parliament, and introduced a bill to put a mark on the sides of ships to show how deeply they could with safety be loaded. The mark suggested was a circle with a horizontal line through its center. When this horizontal line was down to the water's edge, no more freight was to be put into the vessel; she was to be considered loaded. Immediately Plimsoll brought down upon himself the wrath of the ship-owners, while everybody else laughed at his cranky idea; but he was not going to be downed. He published a book telling all he had learned about the criminal overloading of vessels, and their wretched condition when sent to sea.

At last he got a vague sort of an act passed, giving the Board of Trade power to survey ships going to sea, and to stop those which seemed to be unseaworthy. This was in 1873, and during the first nine months of the act 286 vessels were surveyed, and 253 of them found unseaworthy. At least one in every ten was found to be so dangerously overloaded as to be in almost a sinking condition before leaving the dock. Of course, this opened the eyes of the Board of Trade and of Parliament, and Plimsoll's mark became an established feature on British sea-going ships; but its establishment was fought against by ship-owners, inch by inch. It was nicknamed the "pancake," and ridiculed and treated with contempt in every way. Some ship-owners put the mark on their smokestacks in defiance and derision. Plimsoll held to his idea, however, even getting himself suspended from the House of Commons one day for being too blunt and violent in his plain talk upon the subject. The result was "The Merchant Shipping Act of 1876," making the Plimsoll Mark compulsory on all British seagoing vessels, and requiring its position to be fixed, not by the ship-owners, but by the Board of Trade.—Lieut. John M. Ellicott, U. S. N., in St. Nicholas.

JEWEL AND SETTING.

Much on Real Value Depends Upon Surroundings.

A few years ago the directors of an Academy of Fine Arts in one of our cities were disunited at finding that one of the most valuable pictures in their galleries was gone. It had been taken from the frame at night, and a copy substituted. Reward was offered, and search made for its return, but in vain.

Some years later an artist found the picture in the tavern of a town in Canada, where the thief had sold it. He telegraphed to the directors, two of whom at once came to him. But they could hardly be made to believe that the grimy canvas, in a broken wooden frame, hanging in the dark corner of a bar-room, was the great masterpiece.

The artist, however, insisted upon its genuineness, and it was taken back with him. He cleaned it and placed it in its proper frame, surrounded by a background of maroon drapery, every beam of light skillfully tempered so as to bring out its beauty, and then brought in the directors.

They burst into loud exclamations of delight and welcome. The artist alone could detect the great picture in its sordid surroundings, but even the careless passer-by recognized it when properly framed and hung.

The Regent and the Saney, two of the imperial diamonds of the world, were cut and set by the best living jewelers. They lost in the process much of their weight, but they gained enormously in brilliancy and consequently in value, so much does the proper presentation of a gem enhance its cost.

Very few of our own great jewels, or works of art for whose framing we are responsible. But each has some treasure, great or small, with which we may brighten and cheer our little world. How do we use it?

This man's brain is filled with knowledge and high, original ideas. But his speech is quarrelsome and his temper uncertain.

That young girl's heart overflows with kindness; she longs to be friends with all the world. But her dress is torn, her hair untidy, her belongings disorderly.

Many good Christians, inspired by noble virtues, are so grim in aspect and curt in speech that few persons respect their religion.

The world does not recognize the pure diamond thus covered with grime, and so its light is lost.

Remember that the light is God shining in your soul to help the world; and the grime which covers it is your own defect of manner, of habits, or of temper.

Cut the gem and frame the picture fitly.

Amusing A1 Reprint.

A few weeks ago I mentioned that Rudyard Kipling was staying near Torquay. Now it so happened that a wagging individual talking to a local reporter noticed an acquaintance meandering along the Torquay Strand, an acquaintance who in appearance strikingly resembles the famous writer and is often mistaken for him. "You see that creature?" the wag remarked, blandly, indicating his friend. "That is Rudyard Kipling. Why don't you interview him?" Within a minute the anxious copy-hunter was pursuing the bogus Rudyard, who, being a quick-witted gentleman with a keen sense of humor, and having, moreover, "been there before," quickly tumbled to the trick. "So you are Mr. Kipling?" the reporter said presently, eying him with admiration. "I am, indeed," replied the jester; "what can I do for you?" An amusing conversation followed, and soon afterwards a long account of an interview with Mr. Rudyard Kipling appeared in a local journal. I hear that Kipling I. is puzzled. I hear that Kipling II. is amused. I hear that the reporter is not amused. I hear that the practical joker has thought it wise to quit Torquay.—London Sketch.

Paper Pulp.

There seems to be practically no end to the usefulness of paper pulp. It is now employed slightly mixed with glue, plaster of paris, or Portland cement, as a stopping for cracks and breaks in wood; it forms a strong stopping which does not shrink in drying. It is most excellent, also, for wash bowls, where joined to the upper slab. The same mixture, when placed by means of a wrapping of cheese cloth, suffices to make good a frost break in an iron pipe. Paper pulp, boiled for several hours with fine sawdust, mixed with glue which has been dissolved in linseed oil, makes a perfect and homogeneous paste for all sorts of filling, that are likely to be subjected to exceptionally hard usage.

What His Wife Heard.

Smythe (half asleep, as the alarm clock goes at 6 a. m.)—Say, Billy, if that's my wife at the 'phone tell her I'm out and won't be back for two hours.—Truth.

Eloquence is never demanded in any one who knows an extremely choice piece of scandal.

A woman will remember a scandal as long as a man will remember the time he killed a bear.

READY FOR BUSINESS.

With a very active, energetic workman, or a man of business, a cane or crutch is a sign of some infirmity, but he will have to use one or both if sciatica sets in and disables his hip. Worse than all this, he may be bed-ridden for a long time, and still worse, may be obliged to resort to surgical treatment. Why all this should be endured when the trouble can be easily cured must be because he don't know that St. Jacobs Oil, the great remedy for pain, is a special cure for this very much dreaded malady. It has proved itself the most soothing and penetrating remedy for reaching the sciatic nerve and effectually curing its agonies that has perhaps ever been tried.

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The human race is but a contest of dollars.

Two bottles of Piso's Cure for Consumption cured me of a bad lung trouble.—Mrs. J. Nichols, Princeton, Ind., March 25, 1885.

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Mr. E. D. Jenkins, of Lithonia, Ga., says that his daughter, Ida, inherited a severe case of Eczema, which the usual mercury and potash remedies failed to relieve. Year by year she was treated with various medicines, external applications and internal remedies, without result. Her sufferings were intense, and her condition grew steadily worse. All the so-called blood remedies did not seem to reach the disease at all until S. S. S. was given, when an improvement was at once noticed. The medicine was continued with favorable results, and now she is cured sound and well, her skin is perfectly clear and pure and she has been saved from what threatened to blight her life forever.

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