

O'BRIEN TO BLAME

For Stranding the Wetmore—The Official Inquiry Proves the Disaster Due to Negligence.

The board of local marine inspectors, in session at Seattle on November 21, gave a decision holding Captain John A. O'Brien guilty of negligence in stranding the Whaleback Charles E. Wetmore the night of September 8, off Coos Bay, and has revoked his license. The following is the text of the board's decision: "It appears that the steamship Charles E. Wetmore sailed from Tacoma September 5, 1892, coal-laden. The weather was hazy, but she passed down the Sound and rounded Cape Flattery at a safe offing. At noon September 6, she took her departure from Tatoosh island from the sound of the fog whistle at that point. It further appears by the courses and distances given by Captain O'Brien that the ship ought to have been nearly 40 miles off shore at midnight, September 8, but half an hour after midnight she grounded on the Coos Bay spit. Captain O'Brien claims that he found her position by observation some eight hours before she struck; that this position agreed with his position by dead reckoning, and he believes the ship was set in shore by a strong easterly current, together with a heeling error. By these causes he accounts for the stranding of the vessel. It is apparent that Captain O'Brien's observations were not correct; neither was his position by dead reckoning correct. It is evident that if the courses given by compass were steered, they were not made, and we have no doubt that a close observer and careful navigator would have noticed the change in water and the character of the swell in time to have changed the ship's course and taken her out of danger. We think there is no reasonable excuse for running a steamer ashore on this coast in fair weather, even though it be foggy. Granting that there was a strong easterly current, and eight or ten degrees westerly deviation, had the ship been carefully navigated she would not, in our opinion, have stranded. When in doubt, the deep-sea lead should be the guide, together with a close and careful watch of the sea and the color of the water. Had the ship's course been changed to south by west, parallel with the land, for a few hours, she would have cleared the cape all right. Therefore, we find that the stranding of the steamship Charles E. Wetmore was due to negligence on the part of Captain John A. O'Brien, as cited above. For said negligence in the management of his vessel, we have this day revoked his license."

The Emerald Vase.

In the cathedral at Genoa there is an emerald vase which is said to have been one of the gifts of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Its authentic story goes back eight hundred years. The tradition is that when King Solomon received it he filled it with an elixir

which he alone knew how to distill, and of which a single drop would prolong human life to an indefinite extent.

A miserable criminal, dying of slow disease in prison, besought the king to give him a drop of this magic potion.

Solomon refused. "Why should I prolong so miserable a life?" he said. "I will give it to those whose lives will bless their fellowmen."

But when good men begged for it the king was in an ill-humor, or too indolent to open the vase, or he promised and forgot. So the years passed until he grew old, and many of the friends whom he loved were dead; and still the vase had never been opened.

Then the king, to excuse himself, threw doubt upon the virtues of the elixir. At last he himself fell ill. Then his servants brought the vase that he might save his own life. He opened it. But it was empty. The elixir had evaporated to the last drop.

Did not the rabbi or priest who invented this story intend to convey in it a great truth?

Have we not all within us a vessel more precious than any emerald, into which God has put a portion of the water of life? It is for our own healing—for the healing of others. We hide it, we do not use it—from false shame, or idleness, or forgetfulness. Presently we begin to doubt its efficacy.

When death approaches we turn to it in desperate haste. But the neglected faith has left the soul. The vase is empty.

The Sweet Face at the Window.

She hustled up to the ticket window in the Michigan Central station and knocked impatiently on the frame for the busy man behind the bars to wait on her at once.

"What do you ask for a ticket to Cincinnati," she inquired, when he appeared.

"I don't ask any thing for one," he replied saucily.

"Why, it isn't a free ride is it," she asked with surprised expectancy.

"Of course not."

"You have tickets, haven't you?"

"Yes, madam."

"They are to Cincinnati, aren't they?"

"Yes, madam."

"Can I get one?"

"Certainly, madam."

"How much is it?"

"Seven dollars and a quarter, madam."

"Well, why didn't you say so at first," she snapped, as she took out the money.

"You didn't ask me."

"Yes, I did."

"I beg your pardon."

"Yes I did. I asked you what you asked for a ticket to Cincinnati."

"And I said I didn't ask for one."

"Well, what did you say that for?"

"Because I didn't want one."

"But I did."

"You didn't say so."

"I did, I tell you. I asked you what you asked—"

"I beg your pardon," he interrupted, "but you will have to stand aside and let the others in to the window."

She moved out, but not until she had jammed her umbrella into the man behind her, and he gave the ticket clerk a cigar in sympathy.

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