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General News.

THE EXPEDITION TO THE PERSIAN GULF.—The unlucky compromise of the 30th of March last, by which the Plenipotentiaries of the great Powers agreed to a peace, when peace could neither be permanently nor satisfactorily made, has produced its natural results, both in Europe and in Asia. In Europe the peace was no sooner signed than it collapsed and dwindled into a truce, leaving every subject of dispute as unsettled as it was on the day when the first gun was fired against Sebastopol. So great was the precipitancy to terminate hostilities, which kept the King of Prussia on a bed of thorns, which made Austria miserable in the fear of losing Italy, and which drained France of more money than she could spare, that statesmen, diplomats, Kings and Emperors gave no thought to Asia or to concerns so remote. They had powder-magazines in their own cellars, and, if Russia could be induced to put out the torch which she held in her European hand, she might still brandish that which she held in her Asiatic, because it could touch nothing more valuable than the Anglo-Indian empire. They devoted their whole energy to the task of patching up the Turkish quarrel, and left all other complications and difficulties to arrange themselves as they best might, by the chapter of accidents. Some of these difficulties were obvious and palpable to many men who were neither ministers, legislators, nor diplomats, and who had no other light to guide them than the light of common sense; but the rulers of the world ignored them, and, like stupid ostriches, put their heads into holes, and fondly imagined that the danger would run past them, and be no more heard of. Little did Austria, Prussia, and our great ally of France heed if the stoppage of the war in Europe should cause the renewal or augmentation of Russian intrigues in Asia, and bring the ever-busy agents of the Czar into proximity and collision with the agents and chiefs of the British empire in India. Hindostan and all the countries between it and the Russian frontier were of no more interest and concern to Austria and Prussia than Timbuctoo or Kamshatka; and the prosperity of France and the stability of the Bonaparte dynasty could but be infinitesimally affected by anything that might happen in Central Asia. But if proof were wanting of the fact that British statesmen committed an error in becoming the faithful squire of France and in making peace with the Czar, until his ambition had received a greater check than any it had received either in the Crimea or in the Baltic, it may be found in the occurrences of which Persia and Central Asia have been the theatre since the year 1853. The objects of Russia were not only to be subserved by the attack on Turkey, but by intrigues with Persia. Shut out from the North Atlantic seaboard by Denmark and Sweden, and from the Mediterranean by Turkey, it was within the power of intrigue or conquest to gain possession of a slice of Asiatic Turkey—or of a corresponding slice of Persia—which should extend the Russian frontier from the Caucasus and Georgia, and the shores of the Caspian—that great Russian lake—southwards towards Bussorah, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Once established in that neighborhood, Russia might be content to forego the splendid prize of Constantinople, and might build and keep aloft such a fleet in the Persian Gulf as would make her a formidable naval as well as military power, and enable her to dominate the world. If foiled by allied Europe in one direction, might she not be more successful in another? If beaten at Sebastopol, might she not restore her credit by Kars; and, after Kars, by Herat? Such seem to have been the calculations

of Russian statesmen; and while all eyes and all efforts were fixed upon Sebastopol, the work of aggression was going on unheeded and unperceived in Persia.

In the *Illustrated London News* of the 11th of October last we succinctly recapitulated the circumstances which have given rise to the war—for war it unfortunately is—which has broken out between this country and Persia, and which has led to the British expedition against the Persian city and port of Bushire. It appears that the expedition which was reported to have sailed at the date of the last advices from India, consisted of twenty-six sailing transports, or an aggregate of 24,000 tons; of three of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam-ships, the Chusan, and Singapore, and Pottinger; besides three larger vessels of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company, of an aggregate burden in all of 30,000 tons, at a freightage charge of above a thousand pounds a day. The men-of-war were nine first class steamers—the Punjab, Assaye, Ferose, Ajdaha, Semiramis, and Hugh Lindsay; the steam tender Napier and steam yacht Goolanar; the sloops Elphinstone and Clive and the brigs Euphrates and Tigris—or twelve vessels in all, the total fleet amounting to forty sail. A portion of these had been sent to Vindoria, to take on board her Majesty's 64th and 20th Native Infantry from Belgium; to Porebunder, to receive the 3rd Cavalry from Rajkote; and to Kurrachee, to ship the Belooch battalion, the 2nd Europeans, and Brett's Battery. The fighting men were calculated to amount to about six thousand, with about double that number of camp followers. Admiral Sir Henry Beeke, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, had been authorized to take the command of the fleet; and within the last few days General Sir James Outram, better known to fame as Colonel Outram, left London to take the military leadership.

An examination of the map of Asia will show the immense value of Herat as a strategical position; and the importance to the tranquility of our Indian empire of maintaining its independence. The Shah of Persia, whose moribund empire is at the mercy of the Czar, whenever it shall please or suit him to attack or purchase it, has been instigated by Russia to besiege Herat, the key of India. The motive is obvious. Herat in the possession of Persia is Herat in the possession of Russia. The business is a partnership. It is as much one concern as the gold dust that was so ingeniously stolen by the clever Mr. Burgess, the clever Mr. Agar, and their two clever accomplices. If there be a difference it is that Persia is the mere tool, and only agent, and that Persia is the mere tool, who is actually to receive none of the plunder. The Russians, once at Herat, would be within the dominions of Cabool; and Cabool, as every one knows, or ought to know, is the next land to the Punjab, and the Punjab is an integral portion of British empire in India. He who holds Herat, commands Cabool; and, although Cabool under the rule of Dost Mohamed, its actual Sovereign, is the friend and ally of the British Government in India, there is no saying how long that Sovereign may be true to us, how long he may hold his place, and what sort of a chief may succeed him on our frontier. We shall not again go over the incidents of the too suggestive history of the rise and progress of this Persian war, but refer our readers to the summary we have already given, that they may clearly understand that the British Government has had no alternative but to coerce Persia into the relinquishment of its designs against Herat. It may be inconvenient and deplorable to make war for such a purpose; but it must be done, if we are to escape greater and more serious difficulties, and more sanguinary and desperate warfare at a future

time. As an overland expedition to the relief of Herat would be too hazardous and difficult, if not impossible, the Anglo-Indian Government seems to us to have wisely undertaken the expedition to Bushire as a means of bringing the Shah to reason, and of impressing him with a salutary notion of the might of Great Britain. At Bushire he is vulnerable. If he cannot be reached at Teheran or Isfahan, the coast line of the Gulf is at our mercy; and, if we cannot strike a blow at the heart of the offender, he may be attacked in the limbs or the heel. The war against Russia grew into giant proportions because our statesmen were not sufficiently prompt and energetic at the outset. In 1853 a little wholesome vigour and the appearance of the British fleet in the Black Sea would, in all human probability, have prevented the war. We are glad, therefore, to see that the Anglo-Indian Government has had its eyes open and its hand ready; and are fain to hope that the Bushire expedition, wisely planned and boldly executed, will stifle the war which it seems to aggravate, and teach the corrupt, nefarious and cowardly Government of the Shah that Great Britain is more than a match for Persia, even although Russia is behind to back and to support her.

A NEW SPECIES OF STEAMER.—Some time since a company was established in Glasgow, under the recently passed Limited Liability Act, for the purpose of introducing to the waters of the Clyde a steamer of a new manner of build, and this vessel has just been launched from the building yard of Messrs. Tod and Macgregor, at Meadowside, Patrick. She is from the design of Mr. George Mills and is altogether of a novel and ingenious construction. She is not a twin, although composed of two distinct bodies, but is what her inventor calls a divided vessel—resembling, in short, an ordinary steamer cut down in the middle longitudinally, with a single powerful paddle wheel between. The object of Mr. Mills is to obtain immense breadth without greater resistance to the water than that offered by an ordinary steamer, and thus to secure cabin and passenger accommodation of a capacity hitherto quite unknown. Not only the ordinary deck room, but the space occupied by the wings and paddle-wheels, is thrown into the area set apart for the saloons and cabins—the paddle-wheel, according to the new mode, working below the saloon flooring in the centre of the steamer. In the fore part of the vessel there is placed a little paddle wheel, the floats of which stand vertically to the passing water, so as not to obstruct the progress of the steamer. This is called the "manoeuvrer," and serves an important purpose—that of turning or manoeuvring the vessel while going along or leaving a pier, and thus rendering unnecessary the use of poles or ropes. It is the aim of the designer to give the advantages already spoken of without any loss of speed.

You will rejoice to hear that the Temperance enterprise is not lost sight of. The National Temperance League have sent a deputation to Ireland with the best results, and they held a great tea meeting on the 20th, with a Bazaar looming in the spring. The United Kingdom Alliance is arousing the nation to the evils of the liquor traffic. The first edition of 11,000 of the Prize Essay having been sold, a second edition equally large is on the eve of publication, a large portion of which is already ordered. The Kingdom is being divided into districts with a superintendent over each, and large meetings in the principal towns are being held every week, almost every night. May all Ministerial undertakings have our cordial support, joined to prayers that God would make them all subservient to the glory of his name, and to the establishment of His kingdom, which is "righteousness and peace and joy—in the Holy Ghost."—*London Cor. Religious Intelligencer.*

Almonds raised in Nova Scotia! We never expected to see that day, yet proof of it may be seen at the News Room, where W. B. Fairbanks, Esq., has exhibited specimens of the fruit full grown and ripe—and stated to be raised in the open air, at his beautiful residence, Spring Gardens. We hope this fact will be duly noted in all forthcoming works on the climate and productions of abused Nova Scotia.—*Halifax Journal.*

An exchange says:—"Great are the mysteries of Ocean Postage. It costs more now to send an ounce of paper to Europe than it does to send a barrel of flour. A man may have a state-room; eat, drink, sleep and lounge all over the ship, and yet a quiet Mail-bag, that has stood all the time in a dark corner, is charged seven times as much passage money as he is."

INTRODUCTION OF BENT SHIP KNEES.—The American Timber Bending Works are furnishing most practical evidences of usefulness in supplying ship-builders in New York with bent knees. We observe that the bark Jane Daggett, built by Webb & Bell for Messrs. Dunham & Dimon, has had all her lower deck hanging knees, and partner knees between decks, manufactured at these works. The superiority of bent knees over natural grown knees has been proved by reliable experiments, and bent knees now bid fair for a general introduction to use.—*N. Y. Nautical Magazine.*

RELIGION IN AMERICA.—It is estimated by the Rev. Dr. Baird that, "including the Roman Catholic priests and the Unitarian, Universalist and other heterodox preachers, there is the United States one preacher for every 810 souls." The average salary of these preachers is \$500 per year. Dr. Baird also estimates that 18,000,000 of the 26,500,000 people in the United States in 1855 were under the influence of the "Evangelical" churches and 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 under the influence of non-Evangelical bodies, of which the Roman Catholics is by far the most numerous. The total cost of public worship in the United States, annually, is set down at \$25,000,000.

VALUE OF DIRT.—M. R. S. Whitfield, resident medical officer of St. Thomas's Hospital, states that the corporation of Antwerp now receive 120,000 francs a year for the sweeping of the streets and the contents of the cesspools, contractors converting the nuisances into powerful guano. Formerly the corporation used to pay 20,000 yearly to get rid of the city refuse. At Paris and Milan "town guano" is manufactured which has extraordinary power as a fertilizer.

A NOVA SCOTIAN ABROAD.—At the recent State Elections in California, Joseph Austen, Esq., formerly of Halifax, and well remembered by thousands of our citizens, was elected Justice of the Peace for third Division, by a majority of 370 over his Democratic opponent. The term of office is two years, and the salary attached is \$3000, with fees.

THE LATE DISSOLUTION.—We have heard it currently reported, that His Excellency has received Despatches from the Imperial Government very condemnatory of his arbitrary and unconstitutional dissolution of the Assembly some months ago.—*Tem. Tel.*

Some dissatisfaction is felt in Canada on account of the Messrs. Cunard and Company having purchased an extensive River frontage nearly opposite Quebec, where they are about to construct wharves intending to place on the line, next spring, between Liverpool and Quebec, four of their R. M. Steamers. These Steamers draw too much water to allow of their proceeding to Montreal, which of course is not pleasing to that city; while they will draw considerable trade from Quebec to the opposite side of the river. But the principal cause of discontent lies in the fact that the owners draw largely from the Imperial Treasury for carrying the mails, while the line of Steamers already established between Liverpool and Montreal will be obliged to compete with them without any such bonus.—*Ec. paper.*

THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.—It is probable that the next four years will bring into the Union more than one new State, and perhaps nearer a half dozen of them, and in our opinion they will come in as free States. If Kansas comes during that time, we think it will so come, and had it not been for the attempt at colonizing that Territory for political purposes, we feel sure it would have come in a free State, in less than four years.—*Milwaukee Daily News.*

Pennsylvania is our greatest wheat State, and is estimated to raise this year 18,500,000 bushels; Ohio is next, raising 16,200,000; New York is next, raising 16,200,000; Illinois next, raising 14,600,000; Wisconsin 14,000,000; and Virginia raises 12,500,000.