AFFAIRS AT THE NAVY YARD

ARREST OF CONTRACTORS CALLS ATTENTION TO A NEW PHASE OF MISMANAGEMENT.

A DOCTOR APPOINTED TO "INSPECT" THE WORK OF MASONS—THE COLUMBIA SAILS TO JOIN THE FLEET—THREE OF THE PURITAN'S TWELVE-INCH RIFLES IN PLACE.

While the absence of the fleet of Rear-Admiral Bunce on its summer cruise of evolution has made the affairs at the yard relating to the equipment and fitting of vessels for sea of less importance than they were a week or two ago, another phase of the business of the North Atlantic station has come before the public through the office of the United States Commissioner, and there is a prospect that before the trouble is settled there will be some lively times among contractors. The arrest of the men interested in building the rubble wall at the Naval Hospital in Flushing-ave., a full account of which has been published in The Tribune, reveals a phase of naval mismanagement to which attention has been called before, but which never came out in such bold contrast to ordinary business methods as in the present instance. The plain facts of the case are these. Here was a contract calling for the expenditure of nearly $40,000 of Government money, intrusted to a firm supposed to be reputable and entirely competent to carry out the terms of the agreement. The contract called for a certain quantity of work of a certain specified quality, and it is well known among contractors that the Government standard is a high one. The original contractors sublet their contract, and visited the scene of the work occasionally. The work, according to the evidence, was carried on under a system of signals, which permitted a lot of "scamping," and the faulty work put into the wall was covered up on the approach of the Government inspector by dumping a lot of cement over the places where dry or nearly dry bricks had been put in. The inspectors saw nothing wrong in the work, and as soon as they had gone away the workmen resumed their practice of saving cement and time. It was not until an expert happened to go over the work that the defects were found, and then, of course, an investigation followed. The peculiar point brought out by the affair is the fact that it was a medical officer, attached to the staff of the hospital, to whom was intrusted the task of "inspecting" the work of the contractors, who were masons and builders. In view of this fact the pertinent question has been raised as to why a member of the civil engineer corps was not detailed to the work instead of a man who could hardly be supposed to know anything about the technical details of building a brick wall.

A COMPLETE OVERSIGHT.

When the trouble was discovered the first people called on were the civil engineers, but, as was said at the yard yesterday, there seems to have been an entire oversight of the fact that if a competent officer had been appointed to the duty of inspection in the first place the trouble would not have happened. It is well known that an application for the post in connection with the contract was made by an officer of the civil engineer corps, but the application was refused, and a doctor appointed, leaving the possibility open that a civil engineer might be appointed to inspect a supply of medicines for the use of the doctors, on the principle that "turn about is fair play." Just how the affair will turn out cannot be predicted, but it is hoped that the present entanglement, together with the knowledge that a large part of the wall built will have to come down and be reconstructed, with the probability of a large loss in money and much inconvenience in the way of trouble and delay to the Government, will show the authorities that it is just as well to put men on work with which they are familiar, and that since the day of the specialist has come in and is recognized in all other branches of work, public and private, it is better to put a specialist in that work to watch a tricky contractor who wants to make a big profit on a brick wall contract, than to trust the work to the inspection of men who are more familiar with other lines of duty.

SANDS-ST. GATE STILL CLOSED.

The same contractors have apparently "weakened" on the contract for the quay wall at the end of Main-st., work on which has been at a standstill since July 3. No further word has been received from the sureties of the contractors, and at present the attention of the yard engineers seems to be occupied with the hospital wall case and other work in hand. Reports have been received that the new shipwright shop, building No. 44, is completed, and the big building No. 115 will be finished within a week as far as construction is concerned. No settlement has been made of the trouble over the new Sands-st. gate, and the expert carver who was sent for last week to pass on the merits of the carving on the stone gateposts, which is the point in dispute, evidently thought the affair entirely too trivial to be worth attention, for he decided that some one better acquainted with stonecutting would be the proper person to pass an opinion on the work. And there the matter stands. The public is compelled to go around by the noisome, dirty way leading to the York-st. gate, passing through one of the filthiest parts of the city, if business or pleasure calls for a visit to the most important naval headquarters on the Atlantic coast, while the Commodore and the contractors for a small piece of work are at odds over the merits of the carving around the tops of a couple of gateposts.

THE CRUISER COLUMBIA SAILS.

The squadron, which was due at Hampton Roads yesterday, is still short a number of vessels, the Raleigh and Columbia having remained in port all last week, together with the monitor Terror and the ram Katahdin. The latter vessel will not take part in the manoeuvres, as it is now announced that she will remain at the yard until October, as it will require until fall to make alterations found to be necessary. The Terror and the Raleigh are practically ready for sea, and that the departure of the Columbia was expected at an early date was shown by the sending down on Friday of a detail of sailors from the receiving-ship Vermont for distribution among the other ships of the fleet. The cruiser left port yesterday afternoon, bound for Hampton Roads. The old, familiar cry of a scarcity of men has again been raised, and the ships of the fleet, especially the New-York and the Montgomery, which is on duty at Key West, are deficient in numbers. This latest call for more men is due to the fact that a large number of enlistments have expired within the last month, and the Department is having much difficulty in making new enlistments. The present shortness in the way of enlistments is partly due to the demands of the yachting season, which has taken all the available supply of men of the class demanded by the service, and these men will not enlist until fall, when the yachts are laid up for the season. The crews for the Massachusetts and the Texas are not yet made up, and they, as well as the other ships, will have to "go shy" until cool weather releases the men now afloat on the pleasure fleets.

There has been considerable comment caused by the announcement that it is not probable that a member of the Civil Engineer Corps will be appointed on the Santa Monica Engineering Commission, to determine the location of a harbor and station on the southern coast of California. It is understood that the Secretary has determined to advise the President to appoint a line officer on that duty, and in that case it is likely that Commodore E. O. Matthews, at present at the head of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, will get the billet. Two of the officers of the yard, Civil Engineers White and Prindle, have made application for the place. A. G. Menocal, Chief Civil Engineer in charge of the Department, started yesterday on a thirty days' leave of absence.

RUSHING WORK ON THE TEXAS.

In the Norfolk yard work is being rushed on the Texas, day and night, and it is expected that she will be able to get away and join the fleet within a week or ten days. She has had a dock trial of her engines, and they are said to work satisfactorily. The Maine was placed in the drydock on Monday for a cleaning up, and on the same day work in the compartments over the boilers of the Texas was suspended, as the painters were unable to stand the heat and had to get out.

An incident of importance at the Brooklyn yard last week was the mounting of three of the twelve-inch rifles of the monitor Puritan. The big guns were lifted into place by the floating crane, and the fourth one will go into its place in the forward turret this week. The equipment of the vessel is nearly completed.

PREPARING FOR THE BROOKLYN'S TRIAL.

It is now expected that the Minneapolis, the sister ship of the Columbia, will return home early in the winter. Before she starts for home waters she will meet the San Francisco and transfer to her a number of officers and men, and receive those whose tours of sea duty and terms of enlistment have expired. The trial trip of the Brooklyn is set down for August 22, over the Cape Porpoise course, and Captain F. C. Cook and Lieutenant-Commander E. P. Wood will represent the Bureau of Navigation at the trial. Commander Charles H. Davis, who was recently relieved of the command of the Montgomery by Commander R. B. Bradford, will be assigned temporarily to the billet on the Board of Inspection and Survey made vacant by the transfer of Commander Bradford.

Among the new jobs under way are the laying of tracks for the big travelling crane to connect with the tracks now laid around the stone drydock, the placing of a number of new keel blocks in the stone dock, the construction of the retaining walls of the big timber dock, the caisson of which was recently floated into place, and the fitting of torpedo boat No. 2, originally intended for the decks of the Maine, for use by the Naval War College at Newport, R. I.

GOLD FOR FARMERS.

MURAT HALSTEAD SPEAKS TO HIS COMPANIONS OF THE PLOUGH.

HE REVEALS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF FARM LIFE AND SHOWS THE FALLACY OF SWALLOWING FREE SILVER AS A PANACEA FOR PRESENT ILLS.

No one has ever thought of Murat Halstead as a hayseed. Knowing him as a dashing war correspondent, the editor of widewake Cincinnati and Brooklyn newspapers, a prolific special writer in this country and Europe, it is difficult to picture the hand that reels off hot metaphors and similes by the yard as being equally facile in removing the overcoat from the ripened corn when the frost is on the pumpkin. But it comes from the highest authority, from Mr. Halstead himself, that he is, in the language of the "come-on," a genuine "Reub."

Like many other editors and political teachers, Mr. Halstead considers his early connection with the farm as a priceless treasure, now that so much missionary work is to be done among the farmers to keep them from being dazzled by the silverite promises that currency is to grow on currant bushes. He seems to take special pride in his ability to turn a straight furrow with a plough, as witness this introduction to an article published yesterday, in which he assures his horny-handed brethren that he is one of them.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.

"I desire to introduce myself to the farmers by saying that I am by trade one of them," writes Mr. Halstead, "though for a long time engaged in daily labor on the daily papers. There are still some frosty old friends of mine who can testify of their own knowledge that fifty years ago there was no ploughboy in Butler County, Ohio, who could turn a furrow better than I, or was more expert in using ploughs left or right handed, on hillsides or level lands, so as to leave less unbroken land at the turns than I, and there is no light work I would like better now than ploughing corn when it is about as high as a ploughboy. The trouble then is it is so brittle and it is very provoking to have the pretty stalks broken—and many a horse I have lammed as a punishment for putting his rude foot into a hill of corn. I was a great boy to bind wheat, rye, oats or barley with double bands, and once I tied up a blacksnake in a sheaf of wheat so tight he could not get out, and there never was a snake or a boy more astonished. I could beat the girls dropping corn—four grains to the hill—and I know all about husking frosty ears of corn with a bone husking peg, held by a strap over the two middle fingers of the right hand, and the accomplishments of digging potatoes without cutting them, and mixing green and dry food for horses, and watching calves become cattle, colts evolve into horses, lambs and pigs bloom into sheep and hogs, and I am familiar with all the hopes and fears associated with them. The practical farmer will detect in these observations the presence of a line of information not pulled out of books or picked up in schools. I know, too, about the way good old farms grow less valuable, in spite of faithful attention, and how it is that some farmers who do not buy pianos on the instalment plan find it a pleasant experience to borrow money."

GETTING AT THE SILVER QUESTION.

Having thus established his right to talk "craps" and the weather with his fellow-toilers in the earth, Mr. Halstead then gives the urban part of the population assurance that he and the rest of the farmers are not going to swallow the silver hook dangled before them by Boy Orator Bryan, but may be counted upon to know the difference between real and flat money all the year round, in the following language:

"The news has been circulated a good deal, and not conclusively contradicted, that this year a good many farmers are so discouraged by the way their affairs have been going that they are ready to do something unexpected in politics—that some of them think may be there is something in free silver that would just fit their case—therefore, that there are Republican farmers who, if not enlightened, are liable to vote for Bryan and Watson or Bryan and Sewall. They have heard so much about free silver as a patent medicine to cure the rheumatism, heartburn, earache, fistula, dyspepsia and vertigo, that they do not know but they will try it. If they do, they will make the same mistake the workingmen did four years ago and invite even a greater misfortune than they tumbled upon themselves. There is absolutely nothing in free silver for farmers. Whatever they want for relief, it certainly is not depreciated money—dollars debased. We have been going on now with dollars of the same value as that of gold for eighteen years, and a change in the purchasing power of a dollar will not help any honest man, unless it is incidentally and in a petty and fractional way.

REAL ESTATE.

There were no sales of realty reported yesterday. The number of mortgages given in the last week of July shows a large decrease as compared with the same period last year. This is said to be due to the strained financial situation and the action of trust companies and savings banks. Below is the table:

1896—From July 24 to 30 inclusive:	
Total number of mortgages	205
Total value	$502,197
Number of purchase money mortgages	34
Value of purchase-money mortgages	$87,125
1895—From July 26 to August 1, inclusive:	
Total number of mortgages	234
Total value	$389,881
Number of purchase-money mortgages	50
Value of purchase-money mortgages	$258,950

The important recorded transfers were as follows:

Lots Nos 183 and 184, map J A Willinks' lots, on Vernon-ave, Flatbush, Edward R Vollmer to Charles Le Bihan, N Y	$4,800
Ridgewood-ave, n s, 60 ft w of Shepherd-ave, 40x100, Theodore L Stewart to Adolph Rose, mortgage $900	14,000
Montauk-ave, w s, 90 ft s of Eastern Parkway, 20x100, Denis Kelly to Annie M Donovan, San Francisco	2,500
Same property, Annie M Donovan to Denis Kelly and Bridget A, his wife	2,500
Sackman-ave, w s, 108 ft s of Dumont-ave, 18x100; Sackman-ave, w s, 90 ft s of Dumont-ave, 18x100, foreclosure, William J Buttling to William B Fleming, trustee Alfred Harris, deed	2,440
Driggs-ave, w s, 80 ft n of North Sixth-st, 20x50, Catharine Bangstrom to Patrick McNamara and Mary, his wife, tenants by entirety	2,000
Washington-ave, w s, 97.7 s Degraw-st, runs w 122.7x s to n x E Eastern Parkway x e 112 x easterly on circular line 75.3 to av x n 125, City of Brooklyn to Edward D Bloodgood	14,100
Eighty-ninth-st, s w s, 260 ft s e of Third-ave, 175x100, foreclosure, William J Buttling to Henry Gubner	5,051
Canarsie Bay, about 111 ft n e of Gaupal Creek, 50x100, Flatlands; James Savage to William C King, 1895	1,600
Linwood-st, e s, 150 ft n of Liberty-ave, 25x100x irr, Herman F Keepke to Carrie Batty	2,300
South 1st-st, s w s, 125 ft s e of Havemeyer-st, 25x100, Mary W Conlin to Emanuel and Joseph Zoeller	3,000
North fifth-st, n s, 150 ft w of Bedford-ave, 50x100, h&l; Cornelius Mayer to John O'Grady	6,000
High-st, s s, 225 ft e of Bridge-st, 25x95, to 16 ft alley, Harriet Royle, indiv and as extrx Robert J Royle, to Thomas Coyne, mortg $3,129	6,000
Halsey-st, e s, 252.3 ft w of Ralph-ave, 17.8x100, h&l; Tobias Silverstone and Jacob Tohs to Andrew H Schmidt, mort $4,250	6,800
Fulton-st, n s, 115 ft e of Tompkins-ave, 20x58.9 to Decatur-st x 20.6x54.3, foreclosure; William J Buttling to John T Willets, N Y	7,000
Franklin-ave, e s, 207.9 ft n of Myrtle-ave, 25x100, h&l; Augusta A Blixt to Hannah Hilding, mort $6,500	12,000

SAID SHE WAS DETERMINED TO DIE.

Mis Ivy Pietsch, of No. 207 Clarkson-st., Flatbush, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Herman Pietsch, swallowed a dose of muriatic acid on Friday afternoon, and for over two hours her life was despaired of. After she was out of danger, the young woman told Dr. William H. Nafis that his labor was in vain, as she was determined to die and would kill herself at the first opportunity. The relatives of the girl scout the idea of intent in taking the poison, and say it was purely accidental. She has been suffering from nervous prostration, due, it is said, to overstudy. Dr. Nafis, however, reported the case to the police, and the young woman is nominally under arrest, and may be arraigned as soon as her condition will permit.

SHOT AND KILLED HIS COUSIN.

WILLIAM BRADY DID NOT THINK THE REVOLVER WAS LOADED, SO HE FOOLED WITH IT.

Another sad case of accidental shooting occurred yesterday afternoon when William Brady, twenty-nine years old, shot and instantly killed his cousin, Isaac Brady, on the doorstep of their home, No. 42 Chapple-st., near Jay-st. The two Bradys were brought up together in Mella, Va., and have been life-long companions. The man who did the shooting came North about three years ago and secured a place as porter in the clothing-house of Stein & Block, No. 720 Broadway, New-York. Three months ago he sent for his cousin Isaac to come North and live with him. Isaac came here, but was unable to get work, so three weeks ago he went to Philadelphia in search of a job.

William Brady, who is a good-looking negro, was seen at the Adams-st. police station last night, and told the story of how the tragedy occurred. He said:

"Last week I got a job as porter for Isaac, and wrote to him to come back. This morning I bought two large pistols, one for him and one for me. This afternoon I was rubbing the dust off them upstairs by the window. One was loaded and the other wasn't. I saw Isaac coming up the street and picked up the pistol I thought wasn't loaded and went down to the door to let him in. We were glad to see each other, and he began foling before he saw the pistol. Then he grabbed hold of my hand and saw the pistol. He said: 'Don't, Bill, I'm afraid of that.' He let go my arm and the pistol fell and its weight pulled the trigger and let it off. He dropped on the stoop and never said a word. I tried to pick him up and was holding him in my arms when the people came up and the policeman took me away. I wouldn't hurt Isaac for anything in the world. We were just like two brothers. My father brought us up together."

Then the poor negro went back into the corner of the cell and buried his face in his hands. The body of Isaac Brady was taken to the police station where it was found that the bullet had penetrated the right temple, causing instant death. Later the body was taken to the Morgue and an inquest will be held this morning.

Sergeant McCormack arrested William Brady, and he will be held to answer to the charge of homocide.

HIDDEN FOR HALF A CENTURY.

ANTON WEBER FINDS A BRACE OF PISTOLS THAT HE HID WHEN A BOY.

Anton Weber, former City Auditor, and Mrs. Weber have returned from a tour of Germany, from which country Mr. Weber came to America fifty years ago. While visiting his native town, Mr. Weber went to the house in which he was born and where he spent the early years of his life.

While revelling in the memories of the golden days of boyhood that his surroundings flooded him with, Mr. Weber thought of a day when his father's estate was being sold and he begged his mother not to sell a brace of pistols his father had used in the Napoleonic wars. His mother insisted that they must be sold, so the lad took the weapons when no one was looking and, climbing to the garret, hid them under a rafter. This flashed through his mind while standing in the old home, and, going into the garret, he found the brace of pistols where he had secreted them half a century before. Mr. Weber has the weapons in his home in Flatbush, and treasures them highly. They are of the flintlock variety, and are almost as big as small guns.

TOO MUCH ELECTRICITY FOR A CENT.

The slot machine has heretofore been considered dangerous only as an absorbent of the small change of the country, but yesterday it showed its possibilities in a new field. Alice Saunders, eighteen years old, of No. 570 Lewis-ave., was testing her nerves on a penny-in-the-slot electrical machine at Bergen Beach, when suddenly the machine manifested some mysterious hypnotic influence, and the young woman became unconscious. The police of the Twentythird Precinct telephoned for an ambulance from St. John's Hospital, and Miss Saunders, after being attended by Surgeon Holcomb, of that institution, was taken to her home.

FATHER MURRAY'S BODY FOUND.

The body of Father Michael M. Murray, of St. Malachy's Church, who was drowned while bathing at Rockaway Park on Tuesday, was found yesterday morning. Father Ward was informed by telegram, and left at once to bring the body back. The body was found near Curley's bathhouses, and it is believed that the thunderstorm was instrumental in bringing it to the surface.

LONG ISLAND NEWS.

SEA CLIFF.

The annual election of officers of the Sea Cliff Yacht Club was held on Thursday evening at the clubhouse. The Nominating Committee, of which Cleveland D. Fisher, of New-York, was chairman, made up the following ticket, all of whom were elected: Commodore, Theodore W. Sheridan; vice-commodore, Henry F. Noyes; secretary, Dwight W. Pardee; treasurer, Clarence S. Dunning; trustees, Samuel Stenson, C. L. Shellboy, F. D. White, John Graham and Paul H. Grimm. The club is in a prosperous condition, twenty-nine new members having been added to the roll and twenty new boats to the fleet during the summer.

At the Sea Cliff house on next Wednesday evening the young folks will have a fancy-dress ball, and on the evening of the 15th inst. there will be a leap-year german for the guests and cottagers.

Progressive hearts was played at the Sea Cliff House on Thursday evening. The prizes were all articles of sterling silver. Some of the ladies took the places of men at the tables, and were rewarded by winning men's prizes. The following were the winners: Gentlemen's prizes—First, Miss Sarah Graham; second, Miss Dailey; third, F. C. Burys. Ladies' prizes—First, Mrs. Starett; second, Miss Mooney; third, Miss Pomares. Consolation prizes—Mrs. Hunton and Ferdinand Carstein.

The annual aquatic sports of the Sea Cliff Yacht Club will be held next Saturday afternoon. They will include swimming, rowing and tub races, polo games, etc.

CARRIE ROHFLING HYSTERICAL.

Carrie Rohfling, the young woman of Herrick, a small village near Manhanset, Long Island, who was arrested on Friday afternoon by order of Coroner Schenck on suspicion of having poisoned Andrew Smith on the farm of George Fowler, spent yesterday in the Queens County jail, in Long Island City, in an almost hysterical condition. On Friday night she did not sleep and kept the other prisoners on the top tier of the jail awake by her screams and crying. Yesterday she said that she didn't care what became of her and wished she was dead. She is about twenty-five years old, of Swedish birth, and light complexion. Her intellect appears to be a little weak. She refused to say anything about her arrest, other than to state that she is innocent.

A CHURCH CORNERSTONE LAID.

The cornerstone of the new Methodist Protestant Church in Eastport was laid yesterday afternoon. The Rev. Mr. Hull, of Brooklyn, a former pastor of the church; the Rev. Mr. William Dalziel, of East Moriches; the Rev. Mr. Miller, of Westhampton, and the Rev. Mr. Morgan, of Remsenburg, made addresses.

MADE CRAZY BY THE HEAT.

John Welsh, a laborer, forty-five years old, who lives on the Shore Road, near Astoria, was driven crazy by the heat last evening. He was at work in a trench laying gas pipes, when he was overcame. Later he went to the shore to go in bathing, and had most of his clothing off when he became hysterical. Policeman Brown, who was passing, noticed him and took him to the station-house, where a doctor of the Astoria Hospital attended him.

A CHILD KILLED BY A FALL.

John Scannel, the two-year-old son of Michael Scannel, of Ninth and Grand aves., Long Island City, fell from the third-story window of his parents' home yesterday afternoon and received injuries which caused his death. He was looking out of the window when he lost his balance.

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING.

Captain George Udell, his son Bert and Parson Dawson had a narrow escape from being drowned in Gardiner's Bay, near Greenport, Friday, by the upsetting of their boat. They went to Shelter Island, after which they spent several hours picking berries. In getting off shore the boat struck a sunken rock, making a hole in her. It was discovered after they got some distance from shore, and immediately she was put about. When within a short distance of the shore the boat sunk. The men, however, managed to reach the beach with the berries they had gathered.

SUICIDE IN LONG ISLAND CITY.

Valentine Smith, sixty-six years old, of No. 519 Pomeroy-st., Long Island City, committed suicide yesterday afternoon. He was alone in his house and, securing a revolver, shot himself three times near the heart. The shots aroused his neighbors, who called the police. An ambulance was sent from the Astoria Hospital and Smith was taken there, but he died in a short time. It is thought the heat drove him temporarily insane.

BISMARCK DAY AT THE POINT O' WOODS.

The first half of the Chautauqua season at Point o' Woods was closed yesterday with John M. Gregory's lecture on "Municipal Problems." This lecture was the last in a series of ten, devoted to economic questions.

The second part of the season's programme will begin on Monday with a lecture on "Bismarck and His Part in Two Great Wars," by Dr. G. W. Hinman, of New-York. Among the other speakers of the next three weeks will be George R. Howell, architect of the State Library in Albany, and Mrs. Lillie Devereaux Blake, whose subject will be "Trial By Jury."

A NAVAL FAILURE.

THE KATAHDIN BELIEVED TO BE INCAPABLE OF EFFECTIVE WORK.

TOO SLOW TO FIGHT LIGHT CRUISERS AND HER RAM TOO HIGH TO INJURE HEAVY BATTLE-SHIPS.

After all the hurrah and glorification attending the placing in commission of the Ammen ram Katahdin (so called after her designer, Rear-Admiral Daniel Ammen, U. S. N.), there is a well-grounded suspicion, to call it by a mild term, that the new naval engine of destruction is not capable of performing the duty which would be expected of her in case of war. During the time this now celebrated vessel was in course of construction, many noteworthy examples of the terribly destructive effect of the ram on an enemy's ships were cited, and history was ransacked to show that next to the torpedo ranked the ram as an agent of destruction, and the opinion went abroad and grew in strength that the new vessel was to be a most excellent defender of the seaboard city at whose harbor gates she might be stationed. On general principles these views were correct, and this fact lends additional gravity to the mistake which it is now claimed has been made in the construction of the Katahdin.

When in March, 1862, the United States sloop of war Cumberland was struck and sunk by the Confederate ram Merrimac, the naval world was startled at the demonstration of the enormous offensive powers of the ram as a naval weapon. It was not, however, until the battle of Lissa, in July, 1866, when the ships of Austria and Italy met in what was termed "the greatest naval duel since the great day at Trafalgar," that the value of the ram was demonstrated on a large scale. In that battle the Ferdinand Max, a wooden ship of Austria, plated with iron five inches thick, going ahead at a speed of eleven knots, struck, fair and square, the Italian Re d'Italia, which was plated with iron 4.5 inches thick, bolted to a teak backing 20 inches thick. The Re d'Italia careened under the impact until her gunwale was at the water, and as she righted the Ferdinand Max backed away uninjured. The armor and backing of the Italian ship were pierced as if they had been paper, and the story of the fight says: "In two or three minutes the victim plunged heavily down, leaving nothing to tell of her whereabouts but a few shrieking, struggling remnants of her ill-fated crew of 600 men."

Other engagements in modern naval warfare, together with the accidental sinking of the British ship Victoria by the Camperdown, tended to increase the favor in which the ram was held by naval authorities.

LACK OF DEPTH A VITAL ERROR.

In all instances, however, where life and valuable property have been destroyed through the power of the ram, that point of the vessel which has caused the damage has been enabled by its location to attack a ship in the most vulnerable portion of its anatomy. It is in the lack of power to strike a ship where it is least capable of defence, which in modern battle-ships is below the heavy armor, that the Katahdin falls short of its intended power, and the great "destroyer" stands forth a monumental fizzle.

The original design of the vessel was based on the experiences of Rear-Admiral Daniel Ammen in the Civil War, when the question of the defence against and the use of the ram in attack was brought directly to his attention. The plans were made in the Bureau of Construction and Repair in 1890. The machinery was designed by the Bureau of Steam Engineering, under the supervision of Commodore George W. Melville, its chief, and the contract for construction was awarded to the Bath Iron Works, the only bidder, for $630,000. In March, 1893, the Navy Department approved the suggestion of the builders to lengthen the vessel eight feet, the increase in the displacement (133 tons) to be utilized in increasing the coal-carrying capacity, and providing for a battery of four six-pounder rapid-fire guns for defence against torpedo attacks, the original design having no provision for a battery. The size and type of the boilers were also modified, and with these changes the dimensions of the vessel are as follows: Length over all, 251 feet; length on the normal water-line, 250 feet 2 inches; extreme breadth, 43 feet 5 inches; breadth on water-line, 41 feet 6 inches. The total depth from the base to the crown of the arched deck amidships is 22 feet 10 inches, and the normal draught of water is 15 feet, the corresponding displacement being 2,155 tons.

HER PROW OF LITTLE USE.

These statistics lead up to the real purpose for which the ship was built and the means by which that purpose was to be carried out. The lower portion of her hull is dish-shaped, the rise forward terminating in a sharp knuckle, which runs all around the vessel six inches below the normal water line, the angle of the knuckle amidships being about 90 degrees. Above this knuckle is an armor-plated deck, with a thickness tapering from six inches at the knuckle to two inches at the crown of the deck, shaped like a circular arch, with a radius of 39 feet amidships, rising from six inches below to six feet above the normal water line. It is the apex of this knuckle, an accurately fitted, removable, forged steel ramhead, which is intended to do the work of destruction. That the vessel is remarkably strong is admitted, even by those who realize how weak she is in the matter of ramming, and with her construction as a work of shipbuilding no fault can be found and criticism is disarmed. Her hull is framed by continuous longitudinal girders, both below and about the knuckle, which, gathered at the bow and stern, make a structure so rigid that if the ship could be placed on two supports, one at either end of her framework, the line of her keel would not be deflected by her weight. A continuous water-tight inner bottom two feet from the outer skin is carried nearly the whole length of the vessel and up to the armor shelf on either side. The vessel is really designed on the longitudinal bracket system, the frames and beams being intercostal—that is, placed between the ribs. The double bottom is divided and subdivided by longitudinal and transverse frames, making seventy-two water-tight compartments, and is further subdivided by water-tight bulkheads, both longitudinal and transverse.

The motive power of the ship consists of two sets of triple-expansion horizontal engines, operating twin screws, the steam generators being two-double-ended and one single-ended cylindrical, horizontal, five-tube boilers, placed in water-tight compartments. The quarters for both officers and men are as roomy and comfortable as is possible on a vessel of her dimensions and peculiar construction, and in all minor respects she is a model of which the Department may well be proud.

But she was built to ram other ships, and it is with this one particular phase of her character that this article has to deal, statistics being given only for the purpose of accentuating the enormity of the error made in sending her into commission to do work of which she is not now believed to be capable. Intended to ram the enemy, and in that way to do the utmost possible damage, her whole offensive power is concentrated in her formidable ramhead of cast steel. With this piece of metal, driven forward at a speed of nearly seventeen knots an hour and backed by a weight of more than 2,000 tons, it is proposed to deliver a blow equivalent to 56,000 foot-tons, or to exert the force developed by the falling of a weight of 56,000 tons through a distance of one foot. To provide for taking up the force of the blow, or what corresponds to the recoil of a gun when a shot is fired, the vessel is constructed in such a way that her whole frame is called on to bear the brunt of the shock; the impact is felt equally, or nearly so, in all her parts, the cigar-shaped hull facilitating that end.

With all this undoubted power, it is hard to see how the Katahdin will be effective. To what class of ships can she give battle? As the Katahdin, when submerged to her fighting trim, cannot make even the seventeen knots an hour called for by her design, the chances of her catching a light cruiser are too slim to consider. There remain, then, only the slow-moving battle-ships, those belted monsters which have taken the place of the "wooden walls of Old England," for the new craft to attack with her steel prow.

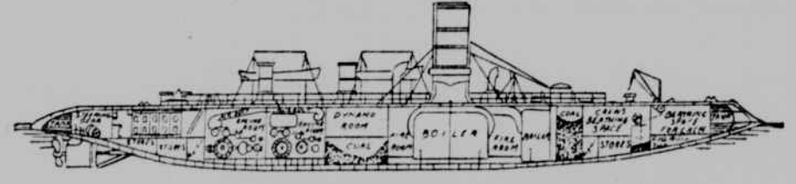
CANNOT CATCH A SHIP SHE COULD SINK.

But the ships of the Blake class are not only too swift for the Katahdin to catch and strike, but should she accidentally run against them her blow would necessarily be a glancing impact, and she would be simply brushed aside and exposed to the galling fire from rapid-fire guns, any one of which above a 3-inch calibre would be able to penetrate her 3-inch deck and fill her interior with wreckage, while a semi-armor-piercing projectile from an 8-inch gun, carrying a large explosive charge, could make her engine-room a tangled mass of useless iron, and by exploding only one of her boilers convert the craft into a 2,300-ton coffin.

Larger ships, of the Ramillies or Hood class, or of the later type embodied in the Magnificent, are so protected by their armor that even if they remained motionless on the water and permitted the Katahdin to strike her hardest blow, the chances are strongly against a fatal contact. The reason for this is obvious. At her light flotation waterline the attacking point of the Katahdin is buried only six inches under water, and at her fighting trim the increase of submersion is not sufficient to carry her steel nose to a point where the heavy armor ceases and nothing remains to resist her attack save the cellular bottom of the ship she intends to sink. In the contest between the gun and the armor the present method of its manufacture has given to the plate a resisting power which even the enormous projectile of the 13-inch gun, striking with a velocity of 2,500 feet a second, is scarcely able to penetrate, even when sent on its mission at short range and against a stationary object. That the enormously heavy armor of the present British battle-ship would not suffer from the Katahdin's blow to an extent sufficient to put the ship out of action seems a logical conclusion, and it is one which has been arrived at by naval officers who have given the matter much thought and careful study.

The chief defect of the vessel is in the one point that her ram is not and cannot be made sufficiently deep in the water to reach under the armor-belt of a battle-ship and strike at her vitals, the only part it can reach being the very portion on which the most time and money have been spent in devising means of protection. The monitors, with their heavy rams buried to a depth varying from twelve to fifteen feet, can strike a blow "below the belt" and sink any warship now afloat. This the Katahdin cannot do. The Katahdin relies for additional attacking power on the so-called "knife-edge" of her upper deck, but it is easily seen that even should her nose penetrate thin armor, that edge in itself would prove an element of danger, as the return heel of the ship struck would exercise a crushing force while if the vessel struck was under good headway, the projecting edge would permit a wrenching, twisting or torsional strain which would work irreparable injury to the ram.

With inability in point of speed to overtake vessels lightly protected, and with her chief weapon of offence so situated that it must necessarily strike that portion of a battle-ship best fitted to withstand its assault; with her smokepipe so low when in action that an open way is afforded for a plunging fire to reach her boilers and make wreck and ruin of everything below the deck, and that deck not thick enough to afford adequate protection against the crushing effect of a heavy shot or the devastating work of an armor-piercing explosive projectile, it is little wonder that her designer is not satisfied with changes that have been made, and that naval men look askance at the vessel, regarding it more as an expensive mistake than a factor of any importance in the great problem of National defence and supremacy on the sea.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE RAM.

HER DOG AS BAGGAGE.

From The Washington Post.

A young lady with a pug dog tied up in a shawl strap attracted considerable attention on a Metropolitan car from Georgetown the other day. The pug was wrapped in a small rug, to protect him from the straps, and seemed quite contented to be carried in this new fashion, which left his head and legs free. The conductor glanced inquiringly at the bundle of dog as the young lady tendered her fare with this explanation:

"You see, I'm going away on the train, and I want to take Punch with me. They would put him away off in the baggage-car if he were free, so I put him in my shawl strap. He's baggage this way, and they can't object to him on the passenger car. Why, I have a friend who carried her pet pug all over Europe that way."

HE CAST HIS LOT WITH THE BLACKS.

A WHITE MAN BROUGHT UP AMONG SLAVES ACCEPTS THE NEGRO'S SOCIAL FATE.

From The Chicago Times-Herald.

Take the case of the Rev. W. J. White, the editor of a Baptist weekly published at Augusta, Ga. White is a man of intelligence and integrity, and his account of his early life has never been disputed.

Briefly, this is the story. A few years before the war, a dark-faced boy made his appearance on a large Georgia plantation. He was supposed to be a mulatto, and when the planter died the youngster was sold with the estate.

After the war this alleged mulatto picked up an education and investigated his ancestry. He was not much surprised to learn that he did not have a particle of negro blood in his veins. His mother was an Indian and his father was a white man.

White was not long in deciding to cast his lot with the blacks. He had always been classed with them and had been a slave. It seemed to be the will of the Almighty that he should share the burdens of the negro race, and he made up his mind to stick to his old companions.

He prospered and became a leader among his people. He has the respect and confidence of both races, but he has never attempted to rise above what he believes to be his divinely ordained sphere. It is easy to see at a glance that this man is not a mulatto or a quadroon, for his mixed Indian and Caucasian blood cannot be mistaken; but he has no desire to cut loose from the ex-slaves, with whom he has spent the best years of his life.

Many of the white ministers of his denomination know the peculiar facts of his case, and they treat him with great consideration. Uncomplainingly he leads his life of self-sacrifice, and his only object seems to be the advancement of his adopted race. He married a mulatto, and submits to all of the laws and social distinctions which separate the two races in the South.

Few men similarly situated would have followed White's example. As a rule, people of Indian and white parentage claim to be the social equals of the whites, and if they have a Pocahontas strain in their blood they are proud of it.

A Courage Producer.—"There is no need to be afraid of mice," said she, "if one will but think."

"Think what?" asked one.

"That the mouse is merely a sort of bargain-counter marked-down rat."—Indianapolis Journal.

Picture of any distinguished New-York citizen taken in his early youth.—(Truth.

ABRAHAM AND STRAUS

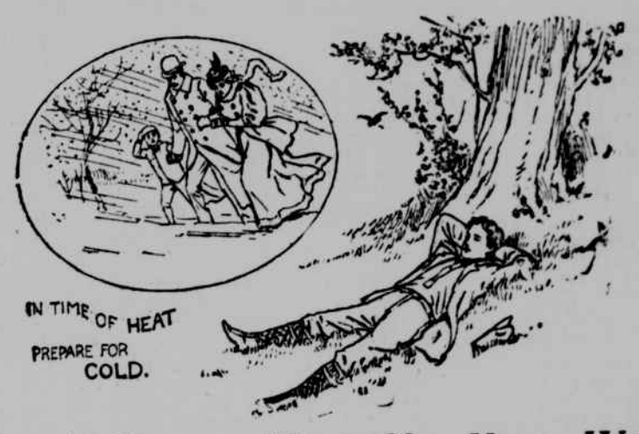
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Purchases and mail orders amounting to $5.00 or more will be delivered free of charge to any point in New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania and the New-England States until further notice.

Purchases of less than $5.00 will be sent free to all points within a radius of 100 miles, as usual.

MAIL ORDERS PROMPTLY FILLED.

A Summer Offering of Winter Underwear



A Great Chance That No Man, Woman or Child Should Miss.

Buy Winter Underwear in August! Why not, if you can save money thereby? And that's just what you can do by taking advantage of our offering. You can save enough to make it worth while to lay in a supply now against your Winter needs.

The goods are new, having just been made for the coming Fall trade, and they're excellent in every way. A few of them are what are known as manufacturers' imperfections—that is, a stitch was dropped in the knitting—but the defect is scarcely noticeable and the garments will wear just as well as if flawless—the majority, however, are absolutely perfect—The values are remarkable—Every garment bought at the sale which starts tomorrow will prove a paying investment, because when wearing time comes you wouldn't be able to buy its equal under double the price—We've all sizes in all the lots mentioned below, but not all sizes in every color.

Men's Underwear.

Men's All Wool Shirts and Drawers, splendidly made and finished—some with silk fronts—in natural, Camel's hair, white, scarlet and blue mixed—also some in medium weight—regular $1.00 to $1.50 grade, at ..... 59c. each

Men's Half Wool Shirts & Drawers—finished with pearl buttons, in Camel's hair, natural and white—regular 75c. grade, at ..... 39c. each

Men's Merino Shirts & Drawers—finished with pearl buttons, white only—regular 60c. grade, at ..... 29c. each

Women's Underwear.

Women's All Wool Vests and Pants—in natural and scarlet, regular $1.25 grade, at