

NINETEENTH CENTURY BRIGANDS.

Herr Under, one of the men captured some weeks ago at Bellona by brigands, has given a narrative of the affair. «We were taken prisoners on the Sunday evening at half-past eight, he says, «Messrs. Serikofsky, Landler, Mitkol, and myself were sitting quietly at the Café Manto, in Bellona, when five brigands entered, their yatagans in hand. The brigands brandished their yatagans over our heads, and all resistance would have been in vain. We were taken away about one kilometre, to a pit where the brigands had put me before in 1881. There we found 13 brigands waiting for us. We marched the whole night till three in the morning, when we rested till noon. On the Monday we sent the first letter to Frau Landler, asking her to make every effort to obtain our release. «The labourer captured with us served as messenger. The same day the brigands heard the mounted gendarmes were coming, and consequently changed their quarters. On the Wednesday our provisions, consisting of bread, mutton, tinned fish, and cognac, taken by the brigands from the café at Bellona, were exhausted. The next two days all we had to eat was beet-leaves, clover, and grass. Tobacco we had in abundance. Six of the band were sent to capture somebody provided with eatables. In four or five hours they returned with two Turks, one of whom received 12 francs the next morning to go and buy bread with. He was told that if he did not come back his comrades would be put to death. We withdrew to a small wood three kilometres off. The Turk, however, did not return. The chief was furious, and wanted to slay the other Turk with his yatagan, but his followers prevented him from doing so. Afterwards we set out again, and marched for some time. The brigands took bread and buck-wheat from a shepherd, which was distributed among them and us prisoners.

Towards nine that morning the Turk, whose name was Hassan, asked to go on one side, which, accompanied by several of the band, he was allowed to do. Presently we heard a terrible howling. Hassan had tried to escape, and the brigands had beaten him till he had lost consciousness. It was then decided that he should be killed. The question arose as to who should do the deed. Amongst the brigands was one Gegergi, a butcher by trade, who wore a long knife. Marks were drawn in a hat, and the lot was drawn by Gegergi. Hassan was standing five yards off. In an imploring tone he called out, «I have 60L at home, and you shall have it if you spare my life.» The brigands laughed incredulously. Hassan was not killed directly. He was left in mental agony another 18 hours. Towards five o'clock the next morning Gegergi and three others lagged behind, and we knew Hassan was to die. Shortly afterwards they came up without Hassan, and the horrible Gegergi, with an air of satisfaction, wiped his knife, from which the Turk's blood was dripping. «They said it was difficult to cut off Hassan's head. The executioner had to try three times before he succeeded. Hassan's murder furnished the brigands with matter for conversation for a whole week. «When our ransom-money came,» continues Herr Under, «there was a quarrel as to how it was to be divided. Eventually it was distributed in four categories. We ourselves got 4L each as luck-money, with the remark, «This is a present from our band.» The 32L found upon us when we were captured was also returned to us. The brigands who took us are pious. They cross themselves morning and night, and before each meal. They live in accordance with certain laws. None of them may marry, as they are afraid a woman might betray them. They are not even allowed to talk about themselves. Every prisoner has to pay a ransom, as it would destroy their authority to release their captive without one. If payment is delayed the amount claimed is increased. Each shot that the brigands are obliged to fire in defending themselves costs 100L.

TOWN DARRIES AND DISEASE

In the House of Commons recently, Mr. Stuart Wortley announced the preparation of an Order in Council embodying such recommendations of the Departmental Committee as can be promulgated and carried into effect without further legislation. The Report of this Committee, though thrown into the background by passing topics of more sensational interest, is of great importance, not only to rural, but to urban communities. The town dairies are strongly suspected centres of disease and it is not only the infection of animals and the sale of diseased meat that have to be guarded against in our cities, but there is the more serious risk to be avoided of the communication of tuberculosis to man.

The Committee in these circumstances recommended the most drastic measures. Incubation and other preventive operations found little favour with them. They commended and advocated a vigorous persistence in the policy of slaughter. They cited the example of Holland, where the extinction of pleuro-pneumonia has been accomplished in this way, and where slaughter has been found to be not only the safest and most certain, but, in the long run, the cheapest mode of procedure. In our country this stamping-out policy, has hitherto been uncertain and unequal in its operation. Some local authorities have co-operated vigorously, with the Privy Council. Others have not given the same assistance. The result has been that the loyalty, the labour, and the money losses of one county have failed to guarantee them against a disease which their neighbours have not attempted to resist with equal vigour.

The inadequacy of the compensation in certain cases also has led to the concealment of disease. The dairymen in particular have had the grievance that compensation was awarded them, not on the basis of the value of their cattle for dairy purposes, but on the basis of their value to the butcher. Now the dairymen is the first person to be encouraged to declare his suspicions of disease. The dairies and cowsheds of the towns are declared to be scenes of the most

virulent and frequent outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia. Ireland is in this matter, as in others, a source of trouble; but it was remarked by the Committee that though Ireland for many years had not been free from pleuro, the disease had been of late years almost entirely confined to Dublin and to those districts of the eastern counties into which the cows from the dairy yards of Dublin were introduced.

The obvious moral drawn by the Committee was that the strongest efforts for the extermination of the disease should be put forth in Ireland. A stringent and systematic inspection of town dairies and cowsheds was next, in the circumstances, most reasonably urged. Then a more generous scale of compensation was proposed in the case of the slaughter of dairy cattle. More stringent penalties for the concealment of disease was a proper accompaniment of this recommendation. The proposed increase of power in the central authority, and the recommendation that the compensation should be awarded out of Imperial funds, raised debatable issues, but two other suggestions were excellent.

One was that every encouragement should be given for the removal of dairies and cowsheds from crowded centres of population; and the other, that wherever practicable local authorities should be called upon to erect public abattoirs as a substitute for private slaughter-houses. It is a curious illustration of the socialistic tendencies of the day that the Committee even suggested that corporations should undertake the erection of the buildings to be let to dairymen and cowkeepers. With modifications due to the recognition of difficulties in the way of diagnosing tuberculosis in animals in its early stages, the Committee made nearly similar recommendations in regard to the stamping out of that disease.

THE EMPRESS FREDERICK

The Berliner Tageblatt, in a leading article on the Empress Frederick, explores the fact that the envy with which people in general regard any woman of unusual intellect and firm and independent character reaches also those who occupy the highest rank. «It is strange,» says the article, «that until the year 1836, the then Crown Princess of Prussia was much beloved by every one in Berlin. It was recognised that she had rapidly adapted herself to German life: her domestic sentiments, her fidelity to the duties incumbent on a wife and mother, and her intellectual qualities were duly praised and valued. But after 1846 it was observed that this general sympathy began to decrease in certain quarters.

Mendacious reports were circulated concerning the Crown Princess's opinions on the events in Hanover, and were believed by many persons. A feeling of dislike increased as time went by, and there were some persons who were not ashamed recently to hint that the Empress exerted an influence in the question of the Regency and in the Puttkamer affair, and even to invent that a coolness existed between the Royal mother and her son, &c. Scarcely had the Emperor Frederick closed his eyes in death, than the same persons spread all kinds of reports through a section of the Press, according to which the widowed Empress was about to take up her permanent residence out of Berlin, or even out of the country. The same game was being played before, and those who were jealous of the rare gifts and fine character of the Royal lady would gladly have banished her from Berlin. How mistaken were they in judging the aims and inclinations of the Empress!

Certain newspapers would not in any way acknowledge the self-sacrifice of the Empress. Disgust and contempt were excited against the ungrateful people who had had time during 25 years to see that the Empress Frederick had always been true to her aims, that she had indeed become the mother of the country, and that she was absolutely necessary to that country in leading the work of assisting the poor. Such a woman could not turn her back upon her husband's country, and those who spread such a report can never have understood her faithful heart. The endeavours of the Press to persuade the Empress that it would be better for her to leave Berlin were impotent. She will remain, and the terrible misfortune she has suffered in the loss of her husband has only made her feel that the more her duty to dedicate herself entirely to the noble work she had commenced.

The most treacherous act of a stupid Press was the invention of a disagreement between mother and son. The Press is now silent; it cannot deny the truth that the relationship between her Majesty and the Emperor William is a loving and sincere one. The noble monarch responds to the faithfulness of his mother by equal fidelity on his own part. Circumstances will soon force these people to take up their position in face of actual facts, and no doubt that position will be as servilely flattering as it was before. We, on our side, see in the unity between mother and son a blessing for the land, and all really patriotic persons will rejoice that the Empress Frederick remains true to her adopted country. May she find, in her beneficent activity, some slight consolation for the great loss she has suffered. The love of the people will not fail her.

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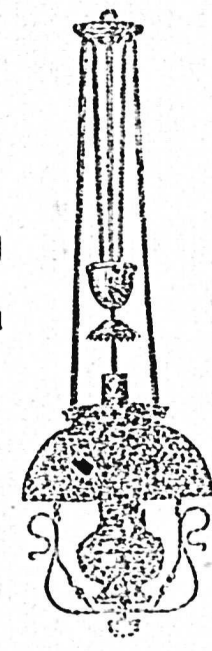
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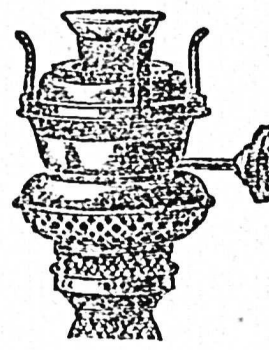
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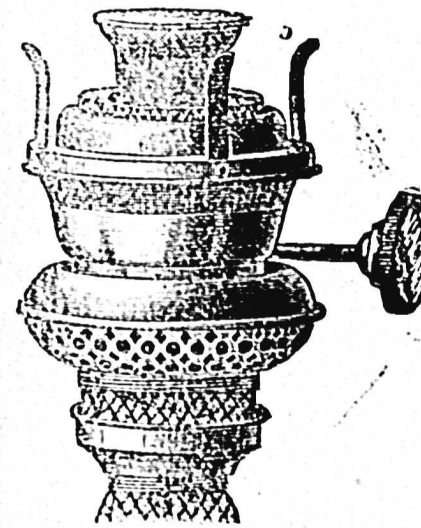
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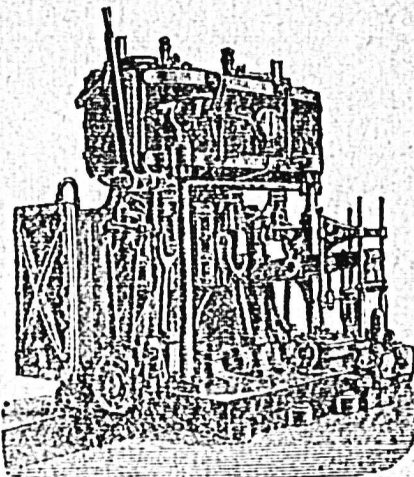
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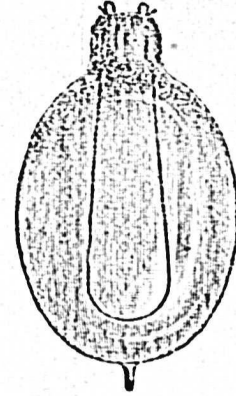
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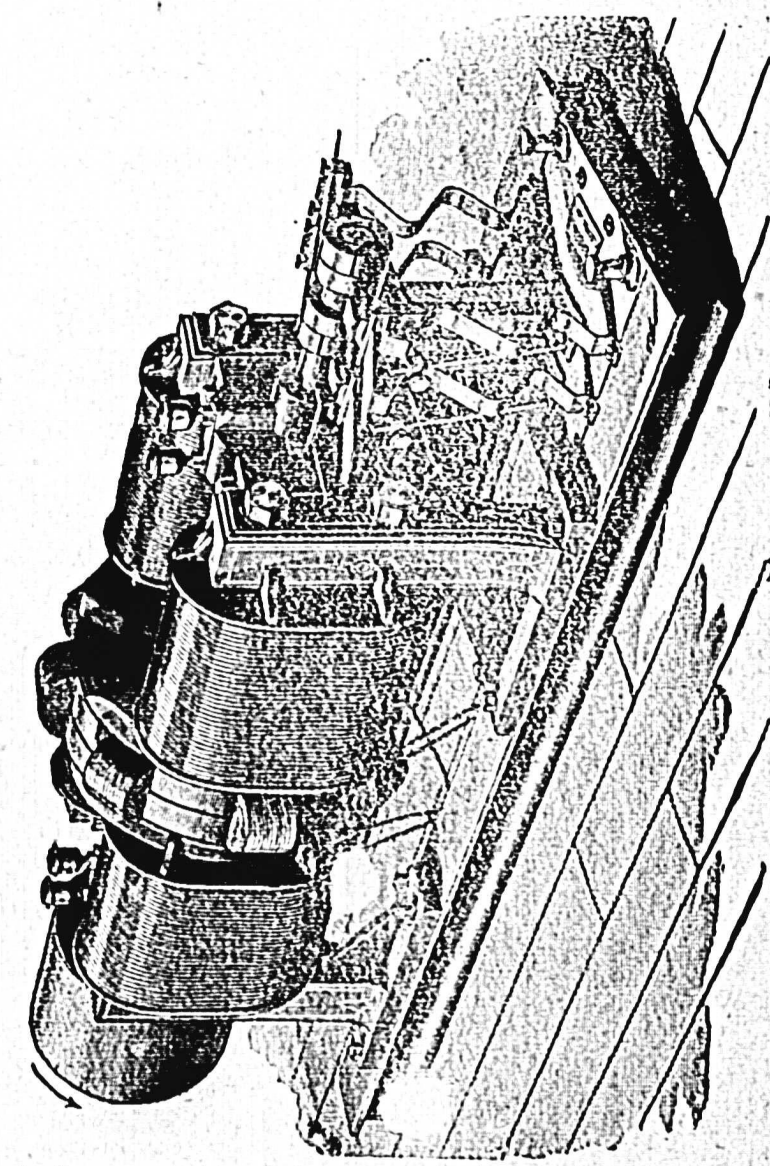
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