ABOUT CHARLESTON.

THE HISTORY OF A PICTURESQUE CITY.

How It Was Settled and by Whom—Historical Landmarks—The Chief Buildings of the City, and Its Modern Attractiveness—The New Postoffice.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Jan. 3.—In balmy April, 1670, Governor William Sayle, a querulous, bigoted octogenarian, described by one of his contemporaries as "a man of no great sufficiency," landed with colonists from England, Ireland and Bermuda at what they called Albemarle Point, on the west bank of Ashley river, directly opposite to the present city of Charleston. The Indian name for the stream was "Kiawah." On the 4th of March, 1671, Sayle died, and Sir John Yeamans was appointed governor. Twenty months after this settlement Joseph Dalton, secretary of the province, wrote to Lord Ashley that the total number of persons in the colony was 391, of whom at least two-thirds were men able to bear arms. Other families came from England, Barbadoes, New Amsterdam and Germany, the latter settlers being attracted to South Carolina by a widely circulated description of John Lederer's horseback journey from Virginia to the country lying between the James and Santee rivers. The revoking of the edict of Nantes, in 1685, started a tide of French emigration westward, and four Huguenot colonies were planted within a short time on the Cooper river. Many of these cultured, expatriated Protestants remained in the growing new town on the peninsula at Oyster Point, for which the Albemarle Point settlement was finally abandoned about 1679. It is said that the lot of ground on which the Huguenot house of worship stands, at the corner of Church and Queen streets, is the oldest continuous title of real estate in modern Charleston.

John Archdale, an English Quaker, became governor in 1696, and the "Friends' meeting house" was erected outside the limits of the old town on the west border of Archdale's square, then occupying the larger portion of the land from Queen to Broad street and from King to Meeting street. Numerous Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, German Lutherans, English Churchmen, French Calvinists and Irish Catholics, with a few Quakers, were the leading elements of Charleston's population at the close of the Seventeenth century, varied by distinctly marked characteristics of men whose indolence betrayed a tropical nativity. Writing of this prosperous settlement, in 1700, John Lawson notes that "the town has very regular and fair streets, in which are good buildings of brick and wood, and, since my coming thence, has had great additions of beautiful large brick buildings, besides a strong fort and regular fortifications made to defend the town. The inhabitants by their wise management have much improved the country, which is in as thriving circumstances at this time as any colony on the continent of English America. They have considerable trade, both to Europe and the West Indies, whereby they become rich. * * * The gentlemen seated on the river plantations are very courteous; live very noble in their houses, and give very genteel entertainments to all strangers and others that may come to visit them."

Today's mirror of South Carolina geniality and hospitality is a brilliant reflex of Charleston's urban and suburban home life one hundred and eighty-nine years ago.

Switzerland, Holland and Germany contributed many families to the colony between 1730 and 1750, and in 1755 twelve or thirteen hundred Acadians came from Nova Scotia to the beautiful town facing a summer sea. In 1740 Jewish immigrants began to arrive, and within ten years a synagogue was erected. This first building, by Charleston Hebrews, was located in Union (now State) street, near its junction with Queen street. The name of the congregation, "Both Elohim," is still preserved. It has, at the present time, a strikingly handsome temple on Hasel street, in the very heart of the city, reared on land purchased in 1795, when Charleston's entire population was less than eighteen thousand.

Incorporated in 1783, at the close of the Revolutionary war, from which the Carolinas had greatly suffered, the history of Charleston has been vividly identified with that of the whole country. The spacious and magnificent harbor, which has been the theatre of desperate artillery duels, fierce bombardments and masterly counter assaults, environed as it is by insular picturesqueness, easily becomes a choice theme for eloquence, poesy and romance. Every child in the United States, old enough to con the newspapers, or who cares to listen to tales that charm and sadden, knows why Forts Moultrie and Sumter are famous. Approached from the open sea, Charleston's famed roadstead is a panorama of scenes that artist and author never tire of depicting, and no traveler of leisure, who wants to view Charleston aright, ought to neglect the steamer chance to first behold the city's grace and beauty from the bay channel, between Fort Johnson, Castle Pinckney and White Point Garden, at the end of South Battery.

* * *

Age has not withered, nor have sky whirling shells, devastating cyclones, tidal waves and postmeridian earthquakes blurred the luster of Charleston. It is pre-eminently America's phœnix city; rising from its occasional ashes to a broader and more sublime attractiveness. Old St. Michael's white and lofty spire fixes the voyager's eye, as, with engines slowed down, the vessel which has brought him from New York safely passes the jetties. He is quick to catch and applaud the harmonious chime of this venerated pile. Once landed, his steps are hurriedly turned from Bay street by the postoffice (that now exists) into Broad street, the daily haunt of money getters and changers, fire, marine and life insurance and stock brokers, note shavers, politicians, journalists, lawyers, highly respectable fossils, and men of commerce whose brains vegetate on crushed phosphate rock. Then he reaches the corners of Meeting street, where on one of them the new and grand postoffice is to be; where glorified St. Michael's church and graveyard always have been, since 1752. Here he stops, a reverent, curious man, to listen intently for the quarter hour chime musically tolled from the clock tower, and to hear from one who delights to recite it the true, strange and eventful history of that chime of eight bells. **How after an hundred years of prayer call and jubilation they had been recast in England by trade successors of the very founders that first made them. How, since bright morning in 1867, they have awakened in the breasts of old and young Charlestonians the touches of nature whose language is universal.**

The church interior, with its old fashioned mahogany pews, quaint pulpit and organ loft and interesting mural tablets, is well worth a visit. In the churchyard lie buried many who, in life and after death, were greatly honored. Chiseled on shaft and pedestal are the names of Pinckney, Rutledge, Petigru and Hayne. Immediately to the rear of the church a marble slab rises above the grave of a younger brother of Arthur Hugh Clough, the English poet, who rests at peace far from the land that nurtured him in infancy.

Opposite St. Michael's is the city hall and council chamber, with a public park, containing a sadly vandalized statue of William Pitt. Further up Broad street are the ruins of the Roman Catholic cathedral, St. Finbars, destroyed by fire in 1861. It was a stately edifice. Plans for rebuilding it are nearly completed. In different parts of the city are other churches of ornate architecture; private mansions with elegant grounds, where the magnolia flourishes and the palmetto stands a bristling sentinel; colleges, academies and public schools; hospitals and asylums; halls and hotels; mills and foundries. The Euston home is an unique charity, intended for the solace of aged and decrepit gentle folks. King street and Meeting street, extending north from the battery (and running nearly parallel to each other) are the chief business thoroughfares and contain numerous fine stores. The citadel on Marion square and the United States custom house are notable buildings.

HENRY CLAY LUKENS.

STEAMBOAT EXPLOSIONS.

How and Why Mississippi Travel Is Now Safe and Pleasant.

[Special Correspondence.]

CAIRO, Ills., Jan. 3.—Two appalling disasters, within a few hours, and after an exemption so long that steamboating had come to be looked on as quite as safe as life on land, have naturally set all our old pilots, captains and travelers to giving their reminiscences. I note two curious facts, the first that steamboat explosions and other disasters on the Mississippi appear to run in sets, quite a number coming in rapid succession; and the second, that in many of the worst cases no satisfactory reason can be assigned.

While not a steamboat man, I have several times voyaged from the head of navigation on the Mississippi to its mouth, and was at one time familiar with all its noted passenger steamers. And noting the fact that explosions appear to come in groups, I have suspected that the state of the atmosphere had some mysterious influence. There is no "science" in this—it is only one man's guess. Or it may be that a certain number of boats started on their career about the same time, and so their "constitutions" wore out about the same time.

Once in a long time you will meet an old pilot whose recollections begin with the Helen Macgregor, which exploded at Memphis some fifty years ago. The cause of the explosion was plain. The steamer lay broadside at the Memphis landing while the river was falling fast; the result was that her shore side was hard aground, and she was careened so that one boiler was almost empty, while the other was nearly full. The fires had been kept at their highest for some time, preparatory to making a start, and when she was worked off and took her level, the water rushed into the empty and overheated boiler; the result was the instant creation of an excess of steam, and an explosion which tore all that end of the boat to splinters and instantly killed every person near.

About 1840 the great "boom" of New Orleans began, and by 1855 it had reached its culmination. This was the era of "racing" on the Mississippi. Those were the days when we heard so much of "lamming in the rosin," "try some tar," "break open them lard barrels and heave it in," "give her more, more," "nigger roosting on the safety valve," etc. Of course frightful accidents resulted; the newspapers ran a crusade against racing, and the more conservative era of steamboating came in.

Steamboat travel on the lower Mississippi, which had always been a pleasure, then became a poetic delight which roused the enthusiasm of visitors from all lands. And it was and is peculiarly American. Our art and our great public buildings are too often poor imitations of foreign models; but the Thompson Dean, the Richmond, the Great Republic and their handsome rivals are purely original. Their architecture, from "Texas" to boiler deck, is peculiarly American, and is almost the only form in which appears a perfectly original American system.

Of course the owners of such high priced craft employ only the most thorough engineers, the most skillful pilots; and so the danger of accidents is reduced to a minimum. There is really more danger from snags than explosions. Travel on the lower Mississippi is today the safest of all American diversions—averaging passengers and casualties. Even baseball is more dangerous, if ardently pursued.

The work of Mississippi steamers during the war has employed a thousand pens, but I have often wondered that so little was said of the steamer Sultana. At any other time it would have been the sensation of the year and made the cars of all who heard it tingle. But what did the loss of 1,400 men amount to in April, 1865? On the 21st of that month the Sultana reached Vicksburg with crew and passengers to the number of 110. There she was boarded by 1,996 soldiers and thirty-five officers, nearly all just released from southern prisons, many suffering from disease and wounds, but all overjoyed at thoughts of peace and home. At 2:30 a. m. of the 27th, when eight miles above Memphis, her boilers exploded without warning and more than half of those on board were instantly hurled into eternity. She was carrying more than five times her capacity, and the men were huddled together on every part of the boat. In a few minutes she was wrapped in flames, the survivors were afloat in the great river, and of the 2,141 on board only 786 were afterwards rescued, 1,355 having perished. It is a thrilling experience even now to hear one of the survivors tell of that night. C. C. BROWNE.

An Interesting Diner Out.

Young Mr. Casey (to coming hostess)—I—aw—am rahther timid about appearing at dinner, my deah Mrs. Hobson, among so many elevah people. I assuah you that I shall scahcely know what to say.

Mrs. Hobson—Don't say anything, Mr. Casey, and then you'll be all right.—Harper's Bazar.

Luck and Ill Luck.

Minks—My stars! The worst has happened. I cannot pay ten cents on the dollar.

Winks—You are luckier than I am. When I failed I had so much property left that I had to pay fifty cents on the dollar.—New York Weekly.

Their First Experience

WITH THAT SORT OF THING.

—Life.

Poor Percy.

"Calliope," said the youth, in soft, thrilling, tender tones, as he gazed fondly in the face of the beautiful girl who sat beside him on the crimson crush plush tidy decorated sofa, "Calliope," and he pressed the snowy, velvety and shapely hand which he had taken in his, and which was not withdrawn, "the time has come for a perfect understanding between us. I can no longer live in uncertainty. I must know my fate. Drifting about in the 'Dismal Swamp' of doubt and suspense is making my life a torture. I must declare myself. Calliope, I love you deeply, passionately, devotedly, tenderly, and it is for you to say whether that love is to be my happiness or my misery. Tell me, Calliope, sweetest, dearest, fairest, tell me, can you return my affection?"

"Oh, Algernon," murmured the beautiful maiden, a deep blush overspreading her lovely and expressive countenance, as the shadow of a cloudlet passes over the silvery surface of a stream on a sunny June day, "this is so sudden!"

"Oh, answer me," he implored, "do not spare my feelings. Death is preferable to suspense."

She turned away her face to conceal her confusion, as she replied, in tones as soft, sweet and musical as ever trembled on the strings of the lyre of Orpheus:

"It is useless for me to deny that you have made a deep impression on my heart, and—and—but let that admission content you. Maidenly modesty forbids me to say more."

"Oh, my darling!" he exclaimed, as he passionately kissed her hand, "you have made me the happiest of man. But there is one thing about which I wish to be satisfied—have I a rival in your affections?"

"You have not."

"There is nothing between Percy Yardstick and you?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"But he loves you and swears he will win you."

"Be not afraid," she said, "he is"——

"Poor?"

"Worse than that."

"He is what?" and in breathless excitement he awaited her answer.

"He is"—and placing her rosy lips close to his ear while her color came and went, revealing in her face alternately the lily and the rose, she murmured in a voice as soft as the sigh of a zephyr—"he is in the soup."—Boston Courier.

Expensive Trousers.

Mike, an irrepressible boots at a Dublin hotel, announced to a guest recently returned from a trip, "We've had a moighty big wedding in the house, sor."

"Indeed!"

"It was so, indeed, sor, and a pretty expensive one, too. Wery, sor. The trousers cost 20,000 pounds!"

"The trousers, Mike? What kind of trousers would cost that?"

"That's what puzzles me, sor," replied Mike. "I'd never have thought it if I hadn't read it with my own eyes in the paper."

"Are you sure it wasn't trousseau?"

"Faith, then," said Mike, scratching his head, "whatever it was, sor, it was written trousers, or something very like it.—Youth's Companion.

How He Lost Time.

Pedestrian—B-b-boy, can you t-t-tell me how f-f-far it is to the po-po-postoffice?

Newsboy—What d'ye say, mister?

Pedestrian—I-I-reckon you-you heard me. How f-f-far is it to the po-po-postoffice?

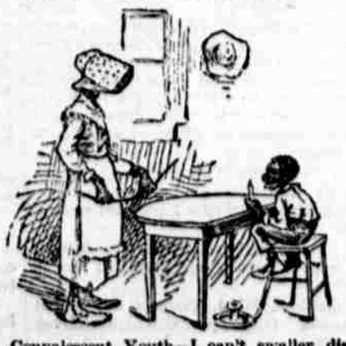
Newsboy—Only half a block, mister. If you hadn't a stopped to ask me you'd a bin there a'ready.—Life.

Interested in the Result.

"I threw myself at her feet," moaned a disconsolate youth.

"Did you hit them?" inquired a cold hearted, unsympathetic listener.—Washington Post.

Bound to Follow the Directions.



Convalescent Youth—I can't swaller dis tallow, mammy, 'deed I can't.

Mother—You better eat dat candle, you triflin' nigger! Ain't de doctor charged mo ter keep you on a light diet?—New York World.