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Daily Alta California, Volume 3, Number 163, 12 June 1852 — Cheap Postage. [ARTICLE]

Cheap Postage.

There was a period when for many years the United States set an example worthy to be followed by the world in the matter of cheap postage. And although reforms have since been gradually going on in the rates of our postage, yet England has of late years fairly outstripped us in this respect, and presents a picture which the United States with all its boasted advancement may blush to look upon. An intelligent English gentleman writing on this subject, not however, in allusion to America, has made the following remarks:

“The London *Times*, a huge sheet, weighing nearly three ounces, or as much as six letters of the single legal rate, after it has circulated through several circles of readers in the metropolis, from nine o'clock till five, may be posted to some person residing in Manchester, or some other provincial town. After having perused and perhaps loaned it to his neighbor until the following evening, he posts it to a friend at Leeds, who finds it on his table next morning, at breakfast. Thus it may be posted and re-posted for the space of eight days. During this period it may be conveyed from London to Aberdeen, and back again, stopping over night to be read in half a dozen intermediate towns, one hundred miles apart. To be sent abroad it must be posted within eight days of its issue from the press. So, on the eighth, it may come back to London, in season to be dispatched to Nova Scotia or New Zealand. During its circuit round the kingdom the government has performed twenty-four distinct services upon it. It has been received and posted eight different times; it has been transported over eight different spaces, in eight consecutive days, and it has been distributed eight times to individuals in different parts of the country. And all this for one penny! All this? aye, more! England now takes that copy of the *Times* and conveys it to Nova Scotia or New Zealand, without the additional charge of a farthing! Nor is this all; at the end of 3,000 or 10,000 miles, she delivers it without additional charge to the colonist to whom it is directed, though he may live 500 miles from the coast. Here, then, are twenty-six different services performed upon that colossal sheet for one penny!”

vices performed upon that colossal sheet for one penny :
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How long is America to remain behind the mother country in this great object of reform ? It was but a few months since when the Californian was forced to pay the enormous postage of forty cents on a single letter that he might desire to send unto the bosom of his family at the East.

It is true, through the untiring exertions of Mr. Barnabas Bates, and other friends of cheap postage, a reduction in the letter postage all over the Union, was extorted from Congress at its last session. Under the new law our postage was reduced from forty to six cents on each letter. This was a long step towards a perfect reform ; but all are well aware that the obnoxious and burthensome rates of newspaper postage have been so sensibly felt by our citizens that they have hardly appreciated the vast reduction on letter postage.

Mr. Bates was enabled, however, to effect a portion of the reform only at a time. Finding that he could not succeed to the utmost of his wishes, he concluded to rest satisfied with the reduction on the letter postage, and try at the next session to secure a reform in the rates of newspaper postage.

Congress met again, and after much exertion on his part, a bill on the subject was introduced into the House of Representatives by Dr. Olds, on the 29th of January last. It provides that "each newspaper, pamphlet, periodical, magazine, book, (bound or unbound,) circular, catalogue, and every other description of printed matter, unconnected with any manuscript or writing, and of no greater weight than two and one-half ounces, shall be charged with one cent postage, and one cent for each additional ounce or fraction of an ounce for any distance under 2,000 miles ; and for any distance over 2,000 miles, double those rates." If not pre-paid, double the above named rates are to be charged.

In accordance with this bill the *Alta California* steamer paper, with its wrapper, can be sent by mail

steamer paper, with its wrapper, can be sent by mail to any city in the United States for the sum of two cents only. Mr. Bates is using his utmost endeavors to effect the passage of this bill. We sincerely bid him God-speed in his righteous work.

This gentleman has in fact devoted years to the postage reform. He is the Rowland Hill of America, and certainly deserves the gratitude of every man, woman and child in our country for the good he has already done. We perceive that Messrs. Brown Brothers & Co., and other New York houses, feeling that some substantial testimonial of the sense entertained by that community of his valuable and gratuitous services in the postage reform, to which several years of his life have been devoted, have recommended that a public subscription be raised to support him in his old age. They have subscribed largely themselves, and the work has become a national one. The citizens of New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville and many other places, have made handsome collections for the "Bates Testimonial," and, in view of the benefits which California is enjoying from cheaper rates of postage than she has heretofore been forced to pay, as well as those which she may expect to enjoy in the future, we hope she will not be backward in this work. We doubt not some humane citizen will take the matter in hand, that we may send our contribution to the national testimonial; and we trust our citizens will, when the time comes, open their purses freely.

THE INDIAN DIFFICULTIES UPON THE MERCED.—
 In our journal of day before yesterday was published a paragraph detailing some further atrocities by the Indians residing upon the sources of that river. We have been requested to state that in all probability the Indians who were guilty of the outrages detailed in the account published were a band of the Yo-cum-itoes who are commanded by a chief named Willuma. This tribe have always refused to treat with the agents of the Government, notwithstanding many presents have been made them, and much effort used to induce them to come to terms.

much effort used to induce them to come to terms. They are extremely treacherous and vindictive, and deserve to be punished. We are informed that the United States officer in command in that vicinity has discretionary orders to chastise them as they deserve.

EXECUTION OF A BANKRUPT.—A Hamburg correspondent of the *London Times* thus describes a strange custom of that commercial city :

“ At noon, just as the Exchange at Hamburg was crowded with merchants, and presented its busiest aspect, two drummers in the civic uniform came up and rolled their drums for the space of ten minutes, causing a great commotion both within and out of the Bourse. While this was going on, workmen were seen over the principal gateway of the building, elevating a black board, on which was painted in white letters the name of a merchant who had lately suspended payment, and absconded with all his assets. When the name had been fairly set up, a bell, called the “ *schand glocke*,” or shame bell, only rung on such occasions, was sounded for two hours from a tower of the Bourse. This penalty of disgrace, called the “ execution of a fraudulent bankrupt,” is ordained by a law which can be traced to the 14th century, when the Hanseatic League was at the height of its greatness. At that period, however, the bankrupt’s patent of citizenship, and his certificate as a merchant, were also burned by the hangman.”

AUCTION SALES.—*Henry S. Fitch & Co.* offer for sale, to-day, some valuable Real Estate, among which is the Auckland House, on Ohio street ; likewise, a large iron store on Washington street.

Theodore Payne & Co. will sell, at 12 o’clock, the Baltimore clipper brig *Mary Ann Jones*. Also, at 11 o’clock, a sale of stocks.

W. W. Beckus has a large sale of Clothing, Dry Goods, Boots, Shoes, &c., at 9 o’clock.

J. & R. Ridd & Co. have a sale of some splendid horses. For further particulars, see advertisements.