

San Francisco Daily Morning Call
July 12, 1864

Chinese Slaves

Captain Douglass and Watchman Hager boarded the ship Clara Morse, on Sunday morning, the moment she arrived, and captured nineteen Chinese girls, who had been stolen and brought from Hongkong to San Francisco to be sold. They were a choice lot, and estimated to be worth from one hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars apiece in this market. They are shut up for safe-keeping for the present, and we went and took a look at them yesterday; some of them are almost good-looking, and none of them are pitted with small pox—a circumstance which we have observed is very rare among China women. There were even small children among them—one or two not two years old, perhaps, but the ages of the majority ranged from fourteen to twenty. We would suggest, just here that the room where these unfortunates are confined is rather too close for good health—and besides, the more fresh air that blows on a Chinaman, the better he smells. The heads of the various Chinese Companies here have entered into a combination to break up this importation of Chinese prostitutes, and they are countenanced and supported in their work by Chief Burke and Judge Shephard. Nowadays, before a ship gets her cables out, the Police board her, seize the girls and shut them up, under guard, and they are sent back to China as soon as opportunity offers, at the expense of the Chinese Companies, who also send an agent along to hunt up the families from whom the poor creatures have been stolen, and restore to them their lost darlings again. Our Chinese fellow citizens seem to be acquiring a few good Christian instincts, at any rate.

The Bigamy Case

The bigamy case came up in the Police Court yesterday morning, and Judge Shephard dismissed it, because the charge could not be substantiated, inasmuch as the only witnesses to be had were the two alleged wives of the defendant—or rather, only one, the ephemeral lager-beer wife, as the old original wife, the first location, or the discovery claim on the matrimonial lead, could not be compelled to testify against her husband, and thereby also knock the props from under her own good name and her eternal piece of mind. The injured and deserted relocation now proposes to have Hingman arrested again and tried on a charge of assault and battery. This unfortunate woman seems to have been very badly treated, and it is to be hoped she may get some little soothing satisfaction out of her assault and battery charge to reconcile her to her failure in the bigamy matter.

United States Circuit Court

The case of Captain Knowles, late of the ship Charger, indicted for manslaughter, in not attempting to rescue a sailor, named Swansea, who had fallen overboard, was ably argued by

Messrs. Hall McAllister and the District Attorney, yesterday, and a verdict returned by the jury of “Not guilty as charged in the indictment.” The jury were charged that if they had any doubt of the man’s having been alive after he struck the water, to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. That little doubt saved Captain Knowles, as, in the opinion of at least one member of the jury, he was guilty of a criminal indifference as to the fate of his lost sailor. He seized the wheel after the steersman had begun to put the ship about, put her on her course again, and then coolly marched down to finish his breakfast. He did not even throw over a chicken-coop for the poor fellow to rest upon while he watched the disappearing ship with his despairing eyes. The prisoner has been discharged from custody, and the witnesses also, who have been drearily awaiting the trial of the case, in prison, for the past two months.

Police Court Testimony

If there is anything more absurd than the general average of Police Court testimony, we do not know what it is. Witnesses stand up here, every day, and swear to the most extravagant propositions with an easy indifference to consequences in the next world that is altogether refreshing. Yesterday—under oath—a witness said that while he was holding the prisoner at the bar so that he could not break loose, the prisoner “pushed my wife with his hand—so—tried to push her over and kill her!” There was no evidence to show that the prisoner had anything against the woman, or was bothering himself about anything but his scuffle with her husband. Yet the witness surmised that he had the purpose hidden away in his mind somewhere to take her life, and he stood right up to the rack and swore to it; and swore also that he tried to turn this noble Dutchwoman into a corpse, by the simple act of pushing her over. That same woman might be pushed over the Yosemite Falls without being killed by it, although it stands to reason that if she struck fair and bounced, it would probably shake her up some.

Astounding Cheek

The writer of the blanket sheet’s altographs, the same who described young ladies as “female misses,” is taking its contemporaries to task for committing errors. Shade of Mary White, and Saccharina, ghost of departed maple-sugar sweetness! Watch over this reporter and guide his pen.

(Source: <http://www.twainquotes.com/callindex.html>)