

The Weekly Colonist.

Tuesday, December 6, 1864.

OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT.

If there is one thing more disagreeable than another which the recent police case has forced upon the attention of the Victoria public, it is the unreliable character of our police force. No man who has read the testimony of the various witnesses in the case of Regina v. Smith can help coming to the one and only conclusion, that our police establishment has been a danger and a disgrace to the entire community. When we read of the cool, audacious manner in which the laws of the country have been compromised—when we learn that the force has been not only an instrument for carrying on a system of blackmail generally, but a means to extort money from men who have been afraid that their private lives would be made public—we have some faint idea of the chaos that has been yawning beneath our feet. The most astonishing thing, however, about the matter is that greater outrages have not been perpetrated—that houses have not been often robbed, and murders more frequently committed. With a police force, what security is there, with all the protective power of the English law, for life or property? With men who, according to their own showing, were willing to accept money as a compromise for the breaking of the law, what degree of safety can we reasonably expect? If the sentinel slumbers at his post, the enemy may steal past unawares, but there is still the risk of awakening the sleeper; there is no peril, however, no fear of detection—when the sentinel is paid to shut his eyes. Crime then ceases to skulk, and confines itself no more to "dark Cymmerian caves" but stalks forth boldly in the light of open day. It shakes honesty by the hand and robs it with all the self-confidence which impunity can give. It becomes in fact the greatest power in the State and is less vulnerable than Achilles himself.

Have all the evils ceased since the recent exposure? Is society any more secure? Have we for our police force men who are not mercenaries, but sleepless and vigilant guardians of our property and the peace? If we have not, let the public look to it. We have been depending too long on rottenness. We have seen department after department tumble to pieces from its own inherent corruption. The process of decay had been going on for years, but it was only when the public light and the outer atmosphere were admitted that the whole edifice seemed undermined and fell, like a child's card-built castle, into a shapeless heap. Various, no doubt, have been the causes of so much dishonesty, but poor pay, inadequate salaries, have had the most to answer for. Men who were obliged to go into debt for almost the bare necessities of life were not, as a general thing, likely to refuse a considerable sum of money for merely keeping their eyes shut. It was natural and only natural that they should receive bribes and wink at crime. The evil, however, of inadequate pay commenced to show itself in the class of men who came to be enrolled in the force. Falsely recruited were a fashionably dressed multitude compared with many of the unfortunates who used to apply for the position of policeman. The establishment came to be, in fact, a kind of refuge for the destitute, and it had the peculiar characteristic of keeping every officer in a destitute condition so long as he adhered to the strict paths of honesty.

The time has come when all this must be changed—when a policeman must depend upon his legitimate pay for his livelihood, and not upon blackmailing the timid, sharing spoils with the criminal, or receiving "hush money" from the gambler. We want respectable and reliable men to watch our property and guard our laws, and we must pay them. If we cannot afford to give proper wages to the number we have at present, let us reduce the force to one more commensurate with our means. A couple of honest, vigilant men are much more efficient than a dozen who depend on the crumbs thrown by the gaming saloon or the Indian whisky seller. The same rule of economy must indeed be laid down in connection with every department of Government. We have urged the desirability of placing the police department under the control of the corporation, as a means of not only insuring a more attentive force, but a very great reduction in the public expenditure. If we are to have a dual government for Victoria we do not want at least a double staff of paid public servants. We want, in fact, fewer officials and higher salaries—more work and less temptation to dishonesty.

Dr. Thompson took occasion to exhort his man David, who was a namesake of his own, to abstain from excessive drinking, otherwise he would bring his gray hairs prematurely to the grave. "Take my advice, David," said the minister, "and never take more than one glass at a time." "Neither I do, sir," says David; "neither I do; but I care less for how short the time be between the two."

A profound dealer in statistics says, "Only 55 persons out of 1,000 marry; of this 65, three are divorced, eight run away, fourteen live like cats and dogs, thirty are indifferent, and ten are happy. Miserable world."

THE ASSEMBLY'S LEGISLATION.

When an acute observer of human nature remarked that the clashing interests of society and the double yet equal and contrary demands arising out of them made the profession of a statesman an office neither easy nor enviable, he spoke almost a self-evident truth. The most talented legislator, the most upright senator, cannot perform an act that will satisfy every person. While all interests cannot be equally benefited, and certain ones are even required to be injured for the benefit of the whole, it follows almost conclusively that practical legislation will educe from some corner or other a growl of disapprobation. This man in public life must expect, and be satisfied with. If he goes too much into compromise, seeks too anxiously to please all parties, he will end as usual, like the man with the donkey, in pleasing none. The interests of Vancouver Island have not yet grown up into that well defined antagonism which exists in older countries, and our legislators have, therefore, escaped much of the intensified abuse which is heaped upon men representing great and opposing interests. They have, however, been subject to a more wide-spread, if milder, vituperation, because their acts have rarely aimed at very practical results. Their legislation has been injurious only by its meagreness or want of adaptation, but it has been injurious to all. Our representatives have, therefore, been more censured for what they have not done than for what they have.

There are gratifying indications, however, that our legislation is beginning to assume a more substantial character. The present session is certainly a great improvement on its predecessors in this respect. We have within the past few days no less than four actually much-required measures—the Incorporation Bill, the Common School Bill, the Census and Statistics Bill, and a notice of motion for a bill to provide for the registration of births, deaths and marriages. The first two measures, it is true, are not entirely new to the House of Assembly. They have been introduced in some shape or other for several years past; but the House has hitherto shown a total incapacity and inclination to grapple with them. As we said, however, the Assembly is becoming more practical and the older members are beginning to get rid of their narrow-minded views; and so we expect that the Common School Bill, eliminated of those portions that are a little contrary to the spirit of the school report, and reduced a little in its bulk of penal clauses, will pass speedily through the House. The Incorporation Bill will require more careful pruning, since the demands of the public in reference to a total change in the machinery of the Council will necessitate a good many transformations in the context of the measure. The second reading of this bill comes on on Tuesday next, and the public have, therefore, but little time to concert measures for the radical changes required. We have before shown at some length the economy of making use of the machinery of the general government for assessing property and collecting taxes, and of bringing the police department under the exclusive management of the Corporation. The whole of the official expenses, with rent, &c., can in fact, be saved, relieving the inhabitants of an expenditure of little short of \$60,000 annually. Surely there is something practically—something desirable in this? We are not wealthy enough at all events to despise the amount, more especially as the means by which it would be saved would improve rather than deteriorate our Municipal Government. It is to be hoped that those who hands the agitation for the retrocession have fallen will spare no exertion to obtain the support of every inhabitant in the place.

Mr. DeCrom's statistical measure is just the thing required, but we object to postponing the taking of the census until next winter, as stated in the bill. The matter should be completed before the coming February at farthest. The five years' interim between the taking of the census is also a little objectionable. Three years is quite sufficient in a community so young as our own. The *modus operandi* of the measure may be briefly summed up as follows: His Excellency is to appoint three members of the Executive as a Board of Statistics. The Board, so far as the census is concerned, is to appoint the necessary enumerators and superintend the operation generally; it is also to supervise the statistics of the colony, and lay before both Houses of the Legislature at an early period of the session in each year, a general statistical report, containing returns of births, marriages, and deaths, owners' inquests, and of all convictions, fines, and forfeitures; also such information relative to the trade, manufactures, agriculture and population of the colony, as it may be able to obtain; and all such other statistical information respecting the colony as may seem to be of public interest. We are glad to see so comprehensive a measure introduced at even this late period of the day, and hope that it will meet with no delay in its passage.

Cowper says that "the tear that is wiped with address may be followed, perhaps, with a smile." An exchange says, if it is a woman's tear, the "perhaps" is unnecessary; you can generally dry it with a dress.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN GUNS.

It is stated in some of the papers that orders have been issued for arming the whole of the British infantry with breech-loading rifles. Experience in our war has shown that this would be equivalent to increasing their numbers five fold. We have been accustomed to consider the English Government as very conservative of old methods, and slow in adopting improvements, but if the above statement is correct, it would seem that they are more prompt to profit by our experience than we are ourselves.

In heavy ordnance, too, the British Government is making gigantic strides. The strange favoritism shown to the absurd breech loading system of Sir William Armstrong, so fondly supported by the leading daily press, has been shaken by the intelligent criticisms of the *Mechanics Magazine* and *Engineer*, and is now being overturned by the results of extensive trials. The English are not following our practice at all in heavy ordnance, their heaviest guns of this material being of 8-inch caliber, while we have them in use of 9, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 20-inch caliber. In England the attention of the Government and manufacturers seem to be directed wholly to the use of wrought iron or steel, or to combinations of these two materials for the construction of heavy ordnance. The largest gun yet made of wrought iron is 13½ inches caliber, and weighs 22 tons. This is the gun that Sir William Armstrong chooses to call the 500-pounder, we suppose on the ground that a bolt might be put into it of sufficient length to weigh 600 pounds. It is rifled but with a turn of only 1 in 56; and it is found that this is not sufficient to prevent an elongated bolt from tumbling over. Its most destructive effects have been produced by a shell nearly spherical, weighing 300 pounds, and discharged by 40 pounds of powder. But the delusions in regard to Sir William's humbugs, though supported by the most powerful of the daily press, are being rapidly brushed away by the costly lessons of experience, and the enlightened discussions of the mechanical journals. The best form and material for our heavy ordnance will doubtless be arrived at, and then the enormous appliances of the English workshops will enable them to turn out cannon equal in quality to any that can be made in the world.

The strange supremacy which this country has so long enjoyed in ordnance, we doubt less owing to the contempt in which our naval and military establishments were held by the fighting monarchies of Europe. This contempt is now in a measure removed, and our arms are being watched with jealousy by all military powers. France, Prussia, and other nations are constructing heavy ordnance of wrought iron and steel, and we shall need all of our skill and energy to keep pace with them. England is even taking a stride far in advance of us in infantry arms, an advance that will render 50,000 of her troops equal 200,000 of ours in any engagement. We trust that our Government will allow no other nation to get the advantage of us in the all important matter of arms.—*Scientific American*.

NEWSPAPER OFFICERS AND NEWSPAPER MEN.

During this visit to London I had an opportunity of taking a close view of the members of the Fourth Estate, and of visiting their official and private residences. The *Star*, although the most democratic of the lot, is so far as its surroundings, the most aristocratic. The manager sits in a room where the finest dressed lady might sit down without discomfort, and the cashier has a neat little domicile quite free from dust or printer's ink. The *Daily Telegraph* office is in a dirty place indeed, filled with Jews. The staff of that other fast friend of the American Union, the *Daily News*, are, if very well paid, not so comfortably quartered, although you will be glad to hear that the finances of this paper are in a very flourishing state. The principal editor works in a dark, dingy, ear-piercing room. He drinks the tea which serves to keep him awake when writing the articles for the morning edition out of common white delf tea cups; and his reading candlestick is neither of silver nor of bronze, but of tin, which he melts through a battery and discolored coat of Japan. But as the glory of the second Temple consisted chiefly in its moral and intellectual greatness, of him who came to abolish Judaism, so the glory of the office of this paper are the upright, high principled and swift-minded men who occupy the editorial rooms. What chiefly struck me about them was the high views they held of their mission, and the total absence of everything partaking of the nature of worldly ambition. I do not believe that any with whom I came in contact could be in any way corrupted, and not one of them was a man of fortune. I very much doubt if the best paid among them had little more than his day's bread secured; for men absorbed in intellectual pursuits, especially when they bear directly a question of general interest, are not inclined to provide for the morrow. Nor can they well do so. It is impossible for a man to succeed as a publicist in a city like London and think twice about every expense that he spends; and the brain does not work well if the body be not treated to an amount of luxury, which, to use an Irishism, of ten times the purse of a successful publicist full of empires. On the whole, close contact with the leading members of the London press gives a higher opinion of it. In this instance I am glad to say that familiarity does not breed contempt and I can only regret that the wealth of the working members of the fourth estate in England does not bear a closer proximity to the power which they wield.—*Cor. S. F. Bulletin*.

THE TUNNEL THROUGH THE ALPS.—The benefit that this stupendous work will bring to France and Italy will be very great. To say nothing of the increased passenger traffic, goods will then be sent from the one country to the other easily and rapidly, avoiding the long and laborious passage of the Mont Cenis as well as unloading and reloading at St. Michel and Susa. When, regardless of snow-storm or avalanche, the train in less than an hour passes under the Alps, it will indeed be a change from the time when the Carthaginian troops toiled painfully over the chain, and after winding their way through treacherous fogs, perished by snowdrift and precipice before they could reach the narrow plains on which they had gazed from the ridge above the plateau of the Mont Cenis.—*Once a Week*.

THE NEW MEDICAL BILL.

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST.—Sir:—I have been waiting for some more able pen to call the attention of the public of Vancouver Island to the Medical Bill which is being carried through the House of Assembly, and I regret I have waited in vain. The public do not appear to be at all aware that any one has any interest in this measure besides the medical practitioners themselves; whereas, if the act be allowed to pass in its present form, the public will be egregiously wronged; a serious impediment to progress will be raised by discouraging foreigners from locating themselves in this colony. It is all very fine so far as the words sound to aver that the people ought to be protected against the quackery of unqualified medical men. The real fact is that some of those who talk most grandiloquently on this subject care only to protect their own pockets. The people are quite old enough and quite sensible enough to protect themselves, and perhaps they will be found to have quite discernment enough to divine the real intention of this new bill. The honorable member for Saanich might well express his surprise "to find that honorable gentlemen who had been so anxious to keep out sectarianism in education should now show so sectarian a spirit in the medical profession. Why, sir, I would ask, should a law be enacted that shall effectually shut out every foreign physician from practicing in this colony? Are not they as a rule as well qualified as the British? Are they not welcomed to our hospitals—to our hearths in England? Often are they met at our operating theatres—in our chemical wards in London—listened to with much respect, and perhaps with advantage in consultation. Do not people of other nationalities form a part of our Vancouver population, and who prefer to consult medical men of their own country when disease or accident may invade their household? Why then should an act be passed that shall outrage the feelings of this valuable portion of our community? Can we afford to drive them from among us? Is our retail commerce so flourishing that our storekeepers may dispense with their customers? Or are we so unneighborly that we desire to exclude all but ourselves from the trumpeted advantages of this little colony? We are already in the hands of an American physician who practices here, whatever may be his skill, because, forsooth, no American College or University requires four years of study at its school for a diploma. All their chartered institutions require but two years, and also that the candidate shall have passed two years previously in medical studies. Yet according to the proposed law, all such will be forbidden to practice on Vancouver Island, or even to use the title M. D. under penalty of imprisonment!

There is another view of the subject. Parents may wish to bring up one of their sons to the medical profession, and as we are at present situated this may easily be done. He may article him here to a duly qualified surgeon, as in England. When he has passed two or three years of his apprenticeship he may send him to the chartered medical college at San Francisco, under the presidency of the celebrated Dr. Toland, and where there are nine other physicians of the highest standing to conduct the students through their course of study. After having passed his two years there he can graduate by passing the usual examination, and return and practice on his qualification. But let the new bill pass, and what then? He must be sent to England to qualify, for nowhere else that I am aware can be attend a hospital which requires four years to be passed in it. This will require an outlay of at least \$700 or \$800 sterling, besides placing him for nearly five years far beyond the parental eye leave him exposed to the worst temptations. But what judicious parent would allow his son to be thus situated and that at so critical a period of his life? And who among us could in justice to other branches of his family expend so large a sum on one member? After we have been induced by sad misrepresentations to bring our families to this distant part of the earth, it would be an infamous cruelty to raise such a barrier to our progress. Let the fathers of families, young and mature too, look at these facts and say whether they have not an interest in the passing of this medical bill. Surely we have quite enough of difficulties and disappointments to contend with far from our native homes, and many of our most beloved and life long friends, without having such an unexpected barrier thrown in our path. There are many other objectionable features to which I will not now refer, but will merely observe that if we require a medical bill at all in the present infatigable state of our colony it should be simply a registration act, requiring every practitioner to register his qualification, paying a fee of say \$5 and not \$65 as the present bill proposes.

I am, sir, yours faithfully,

AN ENGLISHMAN AND A FATHER.

A PARISIAN CHEAT.—An impudent cheat has been put upon the Parisian public. A person advertised in all the papers that he had an infallible receipt to attain long life, which he would be willing to communicate to anybody who would send him 25 cents in postage stamps. Everybody paid 50, and almost everybody of wealth sent him the required sum of money, and received in reply this method of longevity. Get your own elected member of the French Academy. All members attain great age; for instance, M. Dupin is 82, M. Berryer is 76, M. Guizot is 75, &c.

GEOMETRICAL PROGRESSION.—The schooner Alfred Crosby, which sailed on Tuesday from this port, carried an immense cargo for a schooner, according to our commercial report of the same, which quoted "454,000 sacks" of wheat, oats, barley, &c., making in the aggregate, with other items of the shipment, not far from 27,840,000 pounds, or 13,920 tons. The vessel had cleared for Victoria, but some of our friends were fearful she would not get over the bar, which led to the discovery that a big blunder had been made by the compositor, who had escaped the eye of the proof reader, and that instead of so many thousand sacks she really carried but about 800 in safety. The problem confronted a great many of the disciples of Euclid, and a great many pencils were sharpened in summing up the "general average" and other important features of so great a cargo on so small a craft. We acknowledge that "mistakes do occur" sometimes.—*Oregonian*.

JOHNSON'S ATLAS: Johnson and Ward, New York.

This is the latest Atlas published, comprising as it does discoveries and reconstructions of territory up till the spring of the present year, giving the most recent researches of Livingstone in Africa. For the American continent and especially the United States it is by far the best work of the kind that has yet been published, while it is certainly equal to any similar production as an authority on other parts of the earth's surface. Not the least valuable characteristic of the Atlas is its statistical information connected with every country that possesses statistics—gives the population, trade, revenue, imports and exports, &c., &c. The information in connection with the British North American Provinces and the United States up till the most recent date is exceedingly valuable to those living on the American continent. Besides being a handsome atlas it deals largely in physical geography, and natural phenomena, and enters into the history and present condition of almost every country in the world. The events of the American civil war are given in chronological order since the firing upon Fort Sumter. The work is also beautifully illustrated by engravings. Altogether it will form a valuable acquisition to the library of every person who is desirous of being informed of the general and individual condition of countries up till the present year. The agent for the work is at present in Victoria soliciting subscriptions.

TWOPENNY TOWN.—Looking from my window at this moment, I have a full view of all the wonders of science and art at one glance. That great invention, steam, displays itself in all its remarkable applications to the purposes of man. I see railway trains incessantly rattling along, tearing madly after each other, and apparently playing at follow-my-leader among the chimneys; underneath I see a steam barge puffing up the canal like an amphibious locomotive; I see also the mast of a ship, and, above all, the electric telegraph ruling the sky, like a sheet of blue wire Bath post, for music. Right and left photographers meet my view, exhausting the beams of the summer sun, and as it appears to me, bringing on winter prematurely, in their endeavors to fix the lineaments of the Twopenny Townian on slips of card, at the charge of ten shillings a dozen. My wonderful prospect takes in any number of yellow omnibuses that go "all the way" for twopenny; any number of red ditto that go all the way for a penny; three pastrycooks, ready and willing to execute wedding orders at five minutes' notice; four undertakers, equally willing and ready to execute funeral duties, with the same promptitude, at charges to suit any length of pocket and any depth of grief. When I add to this an emporium for the supply of claret at twelve shillings a dozen, I think you will allow that my view is a most comprehensive one, and that the wonders of nature, art, science, and commerce are concentrated in Twopenny Town in a tableau well adapted for the frontispiece of a school edition of the *Wonders of the World*. Stay! I forgot to mention a figure of Britannia on the top of a public house, and a lion standing on the summit of a brewery. When a balloon happens to travel this way, my view may be said to embrace the whole circle of the sciences. If Zerkel should be in need of a good telling hieroglyphic, let him come up and take a sketch from my window. There was a fine chance for him the other day, when the British lion was asleep on the top of the brewery, Britannia was having her shield taken down for repairs, and a locomotive engine was taking a leap from the railroad, into the street below. It was a deeply impressive portrait of grief to Britannia.—*Dickens' All the Year Round*.

MARRIAGE BATHS.—The *London Court Journal*, referring to the visit of the Empress to Swabach says:—"The waters of Swabach are known all over Continental Europe for their gentle influence over the married portion of the fair sex; indeed the famous Ehebrennen (or marriage spring) to which the youthful matrons of every class, from the Empress to the peasant women, crowd in such numbers during the season, is strictly forbidden to the unmarried, and it is one of the merry-sights of Swabach to behold the fair maidens looking on with envy in sad and isolated groups, while the joyous laughter of merry matrons gathered around the source oozes with ringing peals through the grove, and the jingling of glasses and the confidential whisperings going on between the shy virgins of this generous Hygieia, give to this particular Brunnens the aspect of one of those classical fountains of ancient Greece, whence the sparkling waters exhilarated the spirit, and produced oblivion of past sorrows, with bright and gleaming hopes of the future. Is it to this particular fountain that her Majesty has hied?"

ARTEMUS NOTY-USED.—In his new lecture Artemus Ward makes some fun of Dr. Windle, the New England "strong man," who advertises that he will lift twelve able-bodied men at one time. At the close of his lecture, Artemus travesties the muscular New Englander by facetiously inviting twelve agreeable young ladies to the platform, stating that he will lift them one at a time or perish in the attempt. That's pretty good; but out in Indiana, at a town rejoicing in the name of Nolan, they rather more than got even with him, for when he extended the aforesaid invitation twelve fair damsels solemnly arose and advanced to the platform and demurely arranged themselves to be lifted. The audience gave a regular Hoosier scream, but the showman failed to say anything particularly funny. 'He didn't lift 'em.'

ON THEIR TRAVELS.—It is reported that the American news reporter of the *London Telegraph*, G. A. Sala, has been recalled from his post here, and is now in London. Charles Mackay and Mr. Doy, correspondents respectively of the *London Times* and *London Morning Herald*, are in Quebec—sent thither to report whatever they can gather up respecting the convention, which meets at Quebec on the 10th inst., to discuss the question of a British American Confederation. Mr. Mackay had a portion of his family pensioned on one of the Provincial Governments years ago. He is himself a pensioner on the British Government.—*N. Y. Times*.