

The Weekly British Colonist.

Tuesday, October 17, 1865

THE COMMERCE OF VANCOUVER ISLAND.

It is always a sad task to record a death, serious illness, or even a casual misfortune; at it is very frequently a necessary and wholesome duty not only to record it, but to ascertain the origin of the calamity. Human life is made up of so many stumbles and so many falls, that it is only by careful attention to the cause and nature of our blundering we can ever hope to walk erect. In this way many of our misfortunes, it has been said, frequently turn out blessings in disguise. The cholera, and even typhus fever, have taught us more clearly and more forcibly than the best medical authorities in the world that cleanliness and pure air are indispensable requisites of health. Philosophy might have preached in the ears of wealth till Doomsday, before active steps would have been taken to ameliorate the condition of the poor and convert their wretched dens and hovels into fit habitations for man. What philanthropy, what even duty pointed to in vain, self-preservation at once undertakes. The rich man cannot afford to have his home disrupted by vulgar epidemics that spring from poverty and filth; hence sanitary regulations. We of Vancouver Island have hitherto been signally blessed with an immunity from many of nature's dreaded visitations; but if we have escaped those calamities that waste and destroy the body, we have not been so free from similar misfortunes that waste and destroy the purse—catastrophes, as the world goes, almost equally to be dreaded as the Russian plague. Let us therefore not shrink from recording what is unpalatable, if by so doing we get a closer glimpse at the cause of evil, and, consequently, clearer view to its removal.

At the commencement of the present year we disclosed the morbid condition of our body commercial. We took away the silver covering which, like the reluctant veil of the eastern prophet, hid so much that was bad and diseased. What seemed to the superstitious multitude an object of worship turned at, when its real nature came to view, a base counterfeit, and the free-port god, like many an ancient idol, was quickly tumbled in the dust. When a population find they have been deceived in institutions which they have been taught to worship, a kind of general scepticism arises that frequently tends to a less dangerous extreme in the opposite direction. The people of Vancouver Island, however, did not rush to this extreme. They were content with dethroning the wretched deity. The erection of a new idol, if indeed any policy could be again worshipped, was wisely postponed for more important changes, here never yet was an exploded fallacy, however, which had not its defenders and partisans; there are indeed people still extant who believe that the sun revolves round the earth, just as there are unfortunate persons at Vancouver Island who believe that Victoria is the centre of the commercial system of the Pacific. The latter deluded victims are for gain erecting their old idol, although the very atmosphere around its body is fetid and laden with disease. As statistical dose No. 1 brought the counterfeit to the ground, we shall apply dose No. 2 to keep him there.

The following figures which we have carefully compiled from the proper sources will show exactly how we stand, and how the free-port is progressing. For the nine months ending 30th of September we find our imports had reached \$2,242,166, giving for the year \$2,989,500. This shows a decrease on the imports of 1863 of nearly a million of dollars, and a decrease on those of last year of \$569,000. The falling off, unfortunately for the reputation of the "entrepot of the Pacific," is chiefly in our English imports. In 1864 these amounted to \$1,408,000 while for the present year, taking the past nine months as a guide, we shall have but \$917,929—a diminution of thirty-five per cent! A man must have a good deal of enthusiasm in his composition who can extract comfort out of this and an argument in favor of our present commercial policy, which was based entirely on the supposition that we would have an immense import trade with England. From California our imports have diminished about 16 per cent., the figures being in 1864 \$1,627,663, and in 1865 something less than \$1,370,000. From Oregon, however, there is an increase, which tells rather against us than otherwise; for while London and San Francisco are the great marts from which we obtain our merchandise for exportation, Portland is the place we depend upon largely for our necessities of life. While, therefore, our merchantable commodities are decreasing in extent, our provision imports, from Oregon at least, are on the increase. Last year the figures showed \$160,500, while this year we shall have something like \$190,300, or an increase of about nineteen per cent. Puget Sound shows a decrease of fourteen per cent., the imports for 1864 having been \$279,000, while the present year they will only reach \$240,000. The British Columbia imports are much the same as those of last year, which were \$81,000. Altogether the imports of 1865, including, besides the above, consignments from Valparaiso, China, and the

Sandwich Islands, will show a decrease on those of 1864 of 18 per cent. Much of the diminution in our imports may, no doubt, be attributed to the falling off in our population, a result in its turn of our free port policy; but we cannot overlook the great feature in the statistics we have just given and in others we have yet to give, and that is a continued failure of our free port itself. Every year our exportations of merchandise are becoming smaller, until at present they amount to something so insignificant that any port might well be ashamed to put them forward and glory in them as the result of seven years trial of a commercial policy. In 1863, our exportations of merchandise to the American territory were \$384,000; in the following year, instead of showing the vigor and advantages of our free port by a great increase, we had the startling falling off of \$165,000; the exports to the above places for 1864 being \$219,000. This was bad enough, and might have shaken the confidence of any reasonable man, if it had not taught him a sounder experience; but there is something still worse to come. The past nine months show a continued diminution. To the American territory our exports have reached, for the three-quarters of a year just ended, \$129,575, which would give for the year \$172,769—showing a decrease on 1864 of \$47,000. Our space will not admit of much further comment, but we will recur to the subject in our next.

FRANKLIN'S EXPEDITION—ACCOUNTS OF THREE SURVIVORS—A New York despatch, dated September 29th, contains the following singular announcement: Henry Grinnell has received a very important and interesting letter from Captain Hall, the Arctic explorer; which announces that he has discovered such facts in his recent expedition as to lead to believe that there are yet surviving three men from Sir John Franklin's expedition. Crozier, who succeeded Sir John Franklin in command of the expedition, and three others had been seen. Crozier was reduced to a skeleton, and being starved to death, while his men were fat, they having lived on human flesh—the flesh of their companions—who all deserted the two ships that were fast in mountains of ice, while Crozier would not live on human flesh. The man finding the party took them in charge, and, catching seal, fed Crozier sparingly day by day until his life was saved. He thus cared for the men during a whole winter, during which some of the men died. Crozier and the two remaining men were then taken to Neitzschille on Bothia Felix peninsula, where were many Innuit and Eskimauz. Having guns and plenty of ammunition, they were enabled to shoot plenty of ducks, etc. The Innuit treated them very kindly. At length they started for Cockburn's Land, since which they have not been seen or heard from. All this was previous to 1854, but the Innuit insist that Crozier and his friends are still alive.

THEATRICAL—The San Francisco Alta of the 5th has the following: The Academy of Music was well filled last evening, on the occasion of Madame Anna Bishop's first grand concert, and the gratification of the audience was unbounded. The world-renowned cantatrice never sang in better voice, and her every effort was a triumph. She was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Charles Lascelles, the vocalist and pianist, completely surprised the audience. His singing of the duet "Robin Rough," in two voices, base and tenor, was one of the most astonishingly successful efforts in vocalization which we have ever heard. He was encored every time he came upon the stage. Madame Bishop, assisted by Lascelles and Evans, will give her last evening concert tomorrow night. "Arrah-na-Pogue" for the ninth time drew a very full and fashionable audience at the Metropolitan last evening. The interest of the public in this play, thanks to Mr. Wheatleigh's skill and taste, and the able support rendered by his company, is unabated, and the demand for reserved seats, days ahead, is really surprising. It will be repeated again this evening. The interdiction of this play by the British Government will only add to its popularity here. Tomorrow evening Mr. Bandmann will appear for the first time in San Francisco in his great character of Shylock, at Maguire's.

LATEST FROM SANDWICH ISLANDS—The fast-sailing bark Constitution arrived at Port Angeles, W. T., on Monday, having left Honolulu on Sept. 20th, thus making the passage in the short space of 18 days and a few hours. She brings over ten of the Shendooah victims. We are indebted to friends on the other side for the latest copies of the Advertiser, but the news was anticipated by the arrival of the Albemarle in this port on the same day. The Constitution made the round trip from Port Angeles and back in seven weeks and two days.

FORTUNE'S FAVORS—We hope the following piece of good news, which we extract from the San Francisco Bulletin, will not prove too overpowering for our theatrical friend Marsh, and that his performance this evening will be in no way jeopardized. "Marsh, the originator of the well known Marsh troupe of juvenile comedians, has been, it is said, left a fortune of \$200,000." After experiencing the ups and downs of a stage life, this would be a nice little sum wherewith to settle down under one's own vine and fig tree. We hope it is not too good to be true. The next play, we suppose, Mr. Marsh will take part in, at this stage of events, will be that of Money.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?—Our New Westminster contemporary is in a high state of indignation at the unwarrantable assumption of the London Dispatch in daring to call the sister colony "English Columbia!" Was there ever such assurance?

OUR LONDON LETTER.

FROM OUR REGULAR CORRESPONDENT.

London, August 26, 1865.

It is no easy matter to "spin a yarn" without the materials which make up that commodity. But that is precisely the predicament I am in again, as I was in my two former letters. In all the years I have dwelt in this "great Beelzebub," as Mrs. Malaprop would call "the modern Babylon," I have never seen it so empty, and certainly in no instance within my remembrance, which extends pretty far back, have I ever found the "daily broad sheet" so stupid and uninteresting. But for the meeting of the allied fleets at Oberbourg and Brest, and the approaching return visit on Monday at Portsmouth, there would be "nothing stirring but stagnation" in public matters. There is not the ghost of a sensation about them to dwell upon. Politics are voted a bore, and but for murders, as plentiful, alas! as blackberries, your printer's devil would hardly find matter enough to "swear by." You and your readers must, therefore, take us as we are and make the best of it, and looking for something new by and by in the political world, be content to put up with such scanty pabulum as this letter will contain.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE. By this time you know the greatest scientific undertaking of the times has come to grief, and is "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried." Thousands of pounds sterling lie full 2500 fathoms deep; and this is enough to dishearten the most sanguine proprietor, one would think; yet there is such a spirit of "never to say die" in the Anglo-Saxon disposition, that the scheme will be tried and tried again, if needs be, until it succeeds. It is, as most other things are now-a-days, a matter of money, and that will be found. About this great event I have, however, little to tell you, since I send you the very first copy of Macmillan's Magazine for September, with which the proprietor has favored me, that I may transmit it to you. It not only contains an admirable and trustworthy account of the laying of the cable, but furnishes maps of the course, showing latitude and longitude, and tells how near the process was completed, and how certain it is that the cable will yet be laid. The intention is to lay another next May, and when it is down to take up that left behind, repair it, and complete the undertaking, so that there will be two means of communication instead of one.

MURDER. We have had this "most foul and unnatural" crime happening wholesale within the last week or two. A monster called Forward alias Southey, who figured about a year ago in an assault case against the Earl of Dudley, whose brother he attempted to "pigeon" by means of a gambling debt, dishonestly won—murdered the three children of his paramour, in Holborn, and turned up two days after at Ramsgate, where he shot his lawful wife, whom he had deserted for eight years, and his youngest child, whom he had never seen. It will be attempted to make him out mad, but there is a marvellous "method in his madness" if he be so. To my mind he is a most consummate blackguard, of whom the world will be well rid. Scarcely had the public mind recovered from this crime than a private soldier of the Royal Engineers, named Carrie, shot Major de Vere, at Chatham, whilst that officer was on parade, the excuse for his doing so being that he had been spited and unjustly punished by that officer. After lingering several days the officer died, and Carrie will to a certainty be hung. There seems to be very little doubt—indeed I may say I know it was so from private information—that the murdered officer was a great martinet and had punished the man again and again for the most trivial faults, which inspired a spirit of revenge. Nothing can excuse the crime, but the military authorities would do well to look into the state of many regiments in the service, where unhappily anything but a loyal spirit prevails, chiefly on account of the over-severe discipline of some one or other high in command. Whilst this affair was on everybody's tongue, a Yorkshire volunteer sees the girl to whom he had offered marriage dancing with an accepted lover, and immediately follows her home, knocks her down with the butt end of his rifle, breaking the stock in doing so, and then stabs her and her mother with his bayonet, ending by attempting to commit suicide himself, in which he is defeated. Ere the news was cold an unhappy mother, steeped in poverty up to the very lips, cuts the throats of her three children in London to save them, as she said, from starvation. That this poor wretch is mad there seems to be little doubt, her insanity being that which often results from ignorant people devolving religious tracts of very questionable theology. I might enlarge the catalogue for the cases I have jotted down are only the most prominent; but, by this time, you have doubtless sufficiently "supped full of horrors."

THE CATTLE PLAGUE. The whole country is in a state of ferment on account of the fearful visitation which has more than decimated cattle in every district, and none more so than in and about the metropolis. Whether the disease be the Rinderpest, or Steppé visitation, is in doubt, and veterinary surgeons are quarrelling right and left about this, when they had far better be employing their time in devising means for checking so fearful a calamity. The general impression seems to be that it will soon pass away, and certainly the most energetic means are being resorted to, the Government having taken up the matter with spirit, and every country being more or less agitated so as to preserve our flocks and herds as far as possible. I hope in my next to be able to tell you that the worst is past; but the weather being most unpropitious for gathering in the harvest, the crop being below the average, and this visitation accompanying such misfortunes make it inevitable that prices will rule fearfully high during the approaching winter.

THE QUEEN is still at Coburg, where there is quite an assemblage of Royalty. She is to go to-day to Bonn, to inaugurate a statue of the Prince Consort, this being his birth-day, that object being given out as the cause of her visit. Not only are the Prince and Princess of Wales with her, but the Duke of Cambridge, his mother and sisters are also of the party.

Her Majesty will return in about a fortnight and will then proceed to Balmoral, where she will continue to reside for about a month, after which she will make Windsor her home for the winter, going occasionally to Osborne.

AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA. The Convention between Austria and Prussia with regard to the Duchies has at length been signed. By this Convention the military occupation and civil administration of Holstein are vested in Austria alone.—Prussia is to discharge the same duties in Schleswig. Kiel becomes a Prussian port. Rendsburg is to be a Federal fortress, garrisoned by Prussians. The Duchy of Lauenburgh is ceded to Prussia in consideration of Austria receiving a pecuniary indemnity for a surrender of her rights therein. Thus it will be seen that the lion's share falls to Prussia. Who is to succeed to the throne of Schleswig-Holstein is a matter that still awaits solution. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia had a meeting on the 19th instant at Salyburgh, when these matters were arranged. So ends the robber-mark against the King and Kingdom of Denmark.

THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH has been paying a visit, in company with the Empress, to Arenberg in Switzerland, once the residence of his mother, Queen Hortense. At this chateau many of his early days were passed, and it was there, after his escape from Ham, he took a last farewell of his mother. The Emperor's reception was most cordial, and testified loudly to the respect of the inhabitants, many of whom remember him when he was in exile. His reception of old friends is said to have been most gracious.

CONSOLS. Money, 89½@89¾; for Account, 89¾@89½.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.

The schooner Domitila sailed on the 9th for Valparaiso with a cargo of molasses. The U. S. S. Saranac, Capt. Scott, arrived from Victoria at Honolulu on the 10th. She was about to leave when the Albemarle left. The local papers are occupied with lengthy dissertations on the disease of leprosy, which is spreading in the Sandwich Islands. The following were some of the retail market prices in Honolulu: bread, 6½ cents; fresh butter, 37½ cts.; eggs, 50 cts. doz.; hams, 30 cts. lb.; bacon, 38 cts.; beef 8 cts.; mutton and veal, 10 cts.; turkeys, 50 to 75 cts. each; chickens, 25 cts.; oysters, 1 lb tins 50c.; 2 lb do 75c.; smoked salmon, 25c. lb.; pickled do 12c.; salt codfish, 10c.

EXCITING BOAT RACE.—The race between the Neptune and Kearsage, took place according to agreement, from the foot of Third street yesterday morning. A large number of spectators were present. The ends of all the wharves and the decks of vessels lying at them, which commanded a view of the racing ground, being crowded. Each boat was manned by four experienced rowers, each pulling one oar. About half-past 11 o'clock the signal to start was given by the firing of a pistol, and the contestants darted forth amid the huzzas of the multitude. The Neptune was in advance a length at starting, but lost it in a few yards by running under the bow of a schooner lying at anchor, compelling the oarsmen to haul up and lower their heads in order to miss the ropes hanging under the bowsprit. The Kearsage then took the lead and maintained it, until rounding the stake boat, about three miles distant from the starting point, when the Neptune hauled alongside and the contest commenced in hot earnest. As seen from the shore they appeared to be running side by side, and they continued so until very near the goal, the contest being so close that bets were made upon both boats when they were within only a few feet of the wharf. At the close, however, the Neptune darted in advance and came in ahead, winning the race and money, by, however, less than a length. The stakes were \$1000. The Neptune was built at Victoria, and the Kearsage at this city. The whole distance, about six miles, was made in 20 minutes and 30 seconds.—S. F. Flag.

NEW DISCOVERY ON WILLIAMS CREEK.—A discovery that is likely to lead to the opening up of new and extensive diggings in the hills on Williams Creek has lately taken place, nearly opposite Richfield. The companies having bill claims between Richfield and the canon have been washing away the ground extensively during the present season. One company called the Forest Hill, at a height of 300 feet above the bed of the creek, have discovered an old channel from which they have already taken out a large amount of coarse gold. We yesterday saw two nuggets, worth more than \$20, which came out of the claim. The general opinion is that a rich and extensive lead has been discovered, that may soon bring bill claims into great favor.—Sentinel.

THE COUNTRY IN DANGER.—The following alarming document was picked up on the sidewalk yesterday: "Notice.—The friends of 'Arrah-na-Pogue' are requested to attend a meeting to be held at—on— By order. N. B.—Tickets of admission may be obtained on application to any of the Brotherhood, who can be found generally around town." The place and date of meeting we withhold as the document savors too strongly of an attempt to get up a sell. In the meantime however we may add that the handwriting on the paper is recognised and the author would do well to drop the acquaintance of the Brotherhood around town or they may possibly lead him into trouble. Verbo sap.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.—The following books, purchased at the sale of the library of G. H. Cary, Esq., have been added to the library of the Mechanics' Institute: Read's Cloister and the Hearth; Love me little, love me long; Mrs. H. B. Stowe's Pearl of Orr's Island; The Bay Path, a tale of New England Colonial Life, by J. G. Holland; Byron's Works; Longfellow's Works; Milton's Paradise Lost; Motley's history of the United Netherlands, 2 vols.; Hadji in Syria, by Mrs. Sarah Barclay Johnson.

LATEST FROM CHINA.

Particulars of Losses by the Typhoon! Shipping for Victoria and San Francisco.

(DATES TO AUG. 1ST.)

By the arrival of the Albemarle, we have the following later news from China via Sandwich Islands: A severe typhoon with heavy rains had visited the coast; several sailing vessels and five steamers are reported lost or unheard from, and the extensive inundations of rice fields are said to have largely advanced this staple, and in consequence much distress was felt in certain localities. We cut the following from the North China News, of July 27th: "The country people in the neighborhood of Changchow, and westward to Wusi, have suffered dreadfully from the late rains. The fields are completely inundated, the crops destroyed, the cattle drowned, and numbers of the boat population lost. We understand that a subscription list is now being sent around amongst the more wealthy Chinese with a view to providing relief to the more urgent cases of distress."

In regard to the wrecks of the steamers Hellepoor, Lalla Rookh, Corea, Chanticleer, and Oriflamme, we take the following from late Shanghai papers: We received our files of Hongkong papers per Promise at six of an hour yesterday, that we can do no more than give a bare abstract of their contents. The only intelligence of importance is comprised in a condensation of the log of the P. & O. str. Azoff, published in the Daily Press of the 17th inst., wherein all the facts known as to the fate of the Corea and Chanticleer are placed in a connected form. The Azoff had been sent on the 9th inst. in search of the missing steamers, and had made a searching examination of all the bays on the coast, into which either vessel might have been driven for shelter. Nothing was learned until she reached Swatow, when it was ascertained from the master of the Wm. Gundall, that a steamer supposed to have been the Oriflamme, had been seen on shore after the gale, and that a quantity of wreck together with a considerable number of bodies had also been seen, but on account of the disabled state of the Wm. Gundall, no attention had been paid to them. The Azoff subsequently visited the Pratas shoal, but discovered nothing to throw light upon the fate of either steamer. The only intelligence of importance is comprised in a condensation of the log of the P. & O. str. Azoff, published in the Daily Press of the 17th inst., wherein all the facts known as to the fate of the Corea and Chanticleer are placed in a connected form. The Azoff had been sent on the 9th inst. in search of the missing steamers, and had made a searching examination of all the bays on the coast, into which either vessel might have been driven for shelter. Nothing was learned until she reached Swatow, when it was ascertained from the master of the Wm. 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