The Colonist.

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THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

Recent excavations in Java have brought to light in what are known as the Tertiary beds, the name referring to the geological era when they were deposited, a great many remains of extinct animals and among them the greater portion of a skeleton, including the skull, of a creature that must have very closely resembled the ordinary type of man as he exists to-day. The chief difference consists in the fact that the ears were placed a little nearer the crown of the head than is the case with most races of men, but the brain cavity is of good size and the skull as a whole indicates that the individual to whom it belonged would be at least as far advanced intellectually as most of the native African races. The lower jaw was not found, but the teeth in the upper jaw were worn very much as those of modern man, thus indicating that they were used for masticating cereals and that their possessor was not wholly carnivorous. The discovery is regarded as of very great interest as furnishing almost conclusive evidence that man lived in the Tertiary Age.

It is impossible even to approximate in years the time that has elapsed since the close of the Tertiary Age. Various suggestions have been made as to how the interval can be measured, such as the wearing away of the rock at Niagara Falls, the growth of the coral reefs on the Florida coast, the thickness of various deposits of gravel; but there is such an element of uncertainty about the data upon which such calculations are based that the conclusions reached vary all the way from 10,000 to 10,000,000 years. In a general way it may be stated that the Tertiary Age was brought to a close by the upheaval of the great mountain ranges, and was marked by the extinction of almost all forms of life, including the great reptiles and the mastodons and mammoths, whose tusks are found in such vast numbers in Yukon, Alaska and Siberia.

There is a very great deal of evidence of the existence of man at this remote era. In excavations for a sewer made in New York about three years ago some copper articles were found in what was supposed to be a Tertiary bed. At various depths in the gravels of the Pacific Northwest stone implements have been found. At Neanderthal in Prussia a skull was found that evidently belonged to a man who had lived in a previous geological era. In France human bones, stone implements, shell heaps, fire places and other evidences of the existence of man have been found under circumstances indicating an extremely ancient origin, but it may be said that the Java discovery is the most convincing of all.

But, it may be asked, why is it that if man existed in the Tertiary Age has so little evidence of that fact been preserved? Upon this point a tentative answer may be suggested, which will at least have the merit of being interesting to those who are curious in such matters. The reason why the remains of Tertiary man and his civilization are not more common may be that the principal site of his domicile is not accessible to examination. If the nebular hypothesis is correct, it is demonstrable that the first portions of the earth that became fit for the abode of animal and vegetable life were at the Poles. It is theoretically demonstrable that the earth cooled at the Poles more quickly than at the Equator, and hence that the Polar regions must have passed through every stage of temperature from one of intense heat to the present intense cold. At one point in this gradation the conditions must have been ideal for the development of animal and vegetable life.

Let us for a moment consider what the polar seasons must have been in the days when the grape and the magnolia grew in perfection in Greenland, as the fossil remains show they once did. In the first place it is necessary to correct the general idea that the polar year consists of six months of day and six months of night. Taking into account the long period when the sun does not set at all, the longer period when it sets for a few hours, the period when it is above the horizon for less than half the twenty-four hours, and the long spring and autumn twilight, and we have left a period of less than four months that can be called the polar night. But this is never a period of darkness as we understand darkness here, except when the sky is obscured with clouds, and for more than half the time the moon does not set but revolves around the zenith point, never going below the horizon. Add to this the splendor of the Aurora, concerning which dwellers in Southern latitudes have absolutely no conception and we find the Arctic night, so far as darkness goes, robbed of all its terrors. Fancy a subtrophical climate and such an abundance of light and we have conditions for the perfect development of life.

Was such life developed in the Polar regions? The answer must be in the affirmative. Speaking of the remains of the Siberian mammoths, Sir Charles Lyel, the great geologist, says that whole islands are made up of their crowded bones. Once or twice travellers in Siberia have come upon the bodies of the mammoths standing erect in the perennial ice fields, grim monuments of the days when, somewhere within the realm where the Ice King holds unbroken sway, there was abundant food for herds of creatures of gigantic size. The flesh of these animals has been in some instances so well preserved that travellers have fed their dogs upon it. As a matter of fact it was the discovery of such remains that suggested the use of cold storage for the shipment of fresh meat. There is no evidence of the existence of man at the Poles in the days referred to except such as traditions furnish. Of these there is abundant, but we have no space to refer to them now. The existence of the Eskimos and the Samoyedes along the shores of the Arctic ocean is better explained by the hypothesis that they are the survivors of a race that once dwelt there under favorable conditions than by the suggestion that they were driven North. If their origin had been in the South they would have made their way back again, but there is no evidence that a single Eskimo or Samoyede ever voluntarily went to a more southern clime, although there is absolutely nothing to prevent them all from so doing.

To bring this article to a conclusion it may be added that if the earliest home of man was, as it might have been, at the Poles, the fact that the North Pole is surrounded by an immense ice field, and that the South Pole appears to be covered by an ice cap hundreds of feet thick, around which an immensely deep ocean flows, renders the discovery of human remains or the monuments of human skill, if any such there were in those latitudes, an impossibility. The consideration of this subject may be worth resuming in a future issue.

THE GOVERNMENT IS STRONG.

The estimates were passed with no difficulty and with very little discussion. The well-understood practice of British legislative bodies is to fully and freely ventilate all grievances against the administration when the house is in committee of supply, the several items affording an opportunity to deal with every phase of the public business. The very meagre criticism to which the estimates were subjected shows in the most conclusive manner possible that the opposition have very little except generalities to allege against the administration. We are sure that no one will deny that the opposition are willing and ready to expose everything wrong that they can discover. So eager, indeed, are they that they have professed to have discovered monstrous scandals in matters that would stand the most searching criticism. We are not going to deny to the representatives of the opposition in the legislature the ability necessary to adequately criticize the government's policy and administration. We leave that to the critics within their own party who have lately taken occasion to speak their minds on the subject very freely. We prefer rather to attribute the inconsequential character of the opposition attack to the fact that the position of the government is practically unassailable, and we think this is the correct explanation. There are undoubtedly some abstract questions upon which a difference of opinion exists between the two sides of the house, but these do not touch the actual administration of affairs in regard to which all that can fairly be said is that the opposition have found some minor points which called for explanation but have failed to adduce a single reason why there should be any change in the occupants of the treasury benches.

The position of the government before the house and the country have greatly improved during the session. During the recess the public were promised all manner of disclosures by the opposition press, and to such an extent did this go that some of the friends of the government, though quite satisfied so far as their own observation went that nothing was wrong, were a little anxious as to what the session might bring. They naturally supposed that where there seemed to be so much smoke there necessarily was some fire, but the portentous clouds proved to be only like the columns which rise from "smudge" fires, and they disappeared the moment their source was touched. The result of the complete collapse, not of the opposition's case, for it would be a mistake to suggest that they have made out a case, is that the government stands to-day more firmly entrenched than ever in the confidence of its supporters, and we believe that when the results of the session have become fully understood by the electorate, Mr. Turner and his colleagues can look forward with confidence to the verdict of the people.

THE YUKON TRADE.

The Yukon trade may easily become of very great importance to Victoria. At present most of it goes to Seattle. "Alaska steamboat day" is always a phenomenally busy one in the Sound city. Hundreds of miners go to Seattle, an American city, to outfit to engage in mining in Canadian territory. They ought to outfit in Victoria, and if they could be induced to outfit here they would make this city their first stopping place on their way out in the fall, would sell their gold dust here, fit themselves out with clothing, and in many cases remain here until it was time to start out again in the following spring.

The Board of Trade recognizes its duty in this matter, and, it is greatly to be hoped, will be able to devise some means of getting this city its due share of the enormous business that will be developed in the North. The matter is one that comes home to every businessman in this city, and to every business man in Vancouver as well. One thing can be done at once, and that is a systematic effort can be made to let it be known everywhere that the so-called Alaska mines are for the most part not in Alaska at all. Every day we read in the American papers of the rush to Alaska, which is really not a rush to Alaska at all, but to the Canadian territory of Yukon. Another thing that can be provided for at once is the appointment of a Dominion customs house officer at the Chilcoot Pass. His presence there might not be of very great value, so far as the spring's trade is concerned, but when it once became known that duties will be collected on all goods going into the Yukon, miners will come to Canadian cities to buy their goods.

It was pointed out at the Board of Trade meeting that at present the American authorities collect duties on Canadian goods at Dyea although they are intended for consumption in Canada. Place a custom house officer just across the line in Canada and let him collect duty on all American goods going through Canadian territory to Alaska points and we will soon find our American friends seeking a mutual bonding arrangement under which Canadian goods intended for the Yukon can pass in bond over the narrow strip of United States territory near the Coast in exchange for the privilege of carrying American goods in bond down the Upper Yukon waters to points in Alaska. Canadians hold the whip-hand in that matter.

THE RAILWAY SUBSIDIES.

In common with the citizens of Victoria, without distinction of party, the Colonist would like to see a line of railway constructed so as to give the Coast cities shorter connection with Kootenay points than can be afforded by way of the Canadian Pacific. We do not think that Mr. John Grant at all overdrew the brilliant prospects which are before the great Southern mineral belt or the advantages which the Coast will derive from its trade. But something more than an idea is needed to enable people to construct railways. Railway construction is an intensely practical matter and must be approached in a thoroughly practical way. The promoters of the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway & Navigation Company can hardly claim in fairness that they have submitted a practical business proposition either to the public or the government. That they have shown the advantages of the line for which they agitate may be fairly conceded. They have made out a very strong case as far as they have gone. The trouble is that their case breaks down at a vital point. They have not shown that the line which they propose to build is feasible—we do not mean theoretically feasible, but practically so; they have not shown what such a line will cost; they have not stated what aid they require, and they have omitted to make a Victoria connection, to be maintained and operated as a part of the through line, an integral part even of the vague proposition which they have submitted.

Representatives of the cities of Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster waited upon the government yesterday with a proposition asking for a subsidy of $4,000 a mile from Chilliwack to Penticton via Hope, and for a stipulation for a connection with Victoria. We are not advised as to the views of the government on this application, but however reasonable it may be in its terms there is no organization behind the proposition as submitted, which it seems to us is the weak feature of it. We earnestly desire to see this road built, but repeat that its construction is a practical business matter in which sentiment cuts no figure whatever. We note that although representatives of the company were present at the meeting with the government they did not sign the memorandum submitted.

The Victoria correspondent of the Toronto Globe either ignorantly or wilfully completely mis-states the facts in regard to the Columbia & Western Railway Company's bond. He alleges that the condition of that company's charter was that a bond for $75,000 should be put up before November 15, but that the government, without legislative sanction, accepted Mr. Heinze's personal bond in January for the amount, although at that time he had no property in this province. The correspondent insinuates that this alleged illegal deal was due to the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor is a director in the company. This matter is very well understood here, but in order to correct an erroneous impression elsewhere we may briefly recapitulate the facts. The charter of the Columbia & Western provided that $50,000 security for the construction of the railway should be put up by November 15, 1896. Mr. Heinze, the principal stockholder in the enterprise, asked to be allowed to give first mortgage bonds on the road between Trail and Rossland, as security. The government agreed to accept these bonds provided the amount was made $75,000. This Mr. Heinze agreed to. It was found impossible to get the bonds engraved and printed and the necessary formalities completed by November 1, and therefore Mr. Heinze, who was then the owner on the record of property in this province to many times the amount, gave his personal bond for $50,000, for which bonds of the railway were to be substituted as soon as practicable. It was not until sometime in March that the railway bonds were forwarded to the government. What happened in January was that the directors of the Columbia and Western passed a resolution authorizing the Union Trust Company, of New York, to hand over the bonds to the British Columbia government. At that time Lieut.-Governor Dewdney was a director in the company. He was not a director at the time of the arrangement with Mr. Heinze. The Globe ought, in fairness, to print the true facts of the case.

The answer given by the Columbian to our request that it would formulate some plan whereby cheap money can be provided for the farmers, is that it does not believe the request a sincere one. It was entirely sincere, and we believe that the reason why our contemporary did not comply with it is because it cannot. It has been attacking the government for not doing that which, if it controlled the legislature of the Province, it could not itself do.

France has raised the duties on products imported from the United States as a protest against the Dingley tariff; Germany threatens to do the same thing; Jamaica is arranging to offset the measure in some way, and Canada is going to foster her trade with the United Kingdom as a consequence of this measure. Why does not Congress fence the country in and be done with it?

Hon. Mr. Costigan in his speech on the address said that hereafter he will occupy an independent position. He gave as his reason the abandonment of the school question by his party.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

A raw Scotch lad joined the volunteers, and on the first parade day his sister came with his mother to see the regiment. On the march past Jock was out of step. "Look, mither," said his sister, "they're a' oot of step but oor Jock."—Glasgow Herald.

Ethel—Oh, dear me! I don't know what to think! Algy asked me last night if I wouldn't like to have something around the house that I could love, and that would love me. Edith—Well? Ethel—Well, I don't know whether he means himself, or whether he is thinking of buying me a dog! Puck.

Crocuses in bloom, buds bursting, bikes on the scoot, smoke rising from backyard debris, sidewalk saunterers soaking themselves full of sunshine, invalids crawling out from under shelter, kids spinning tops, young onions and radishes on the green stands, strawberries awaiting purchasers, shad glistening on the fish counters, suckers biting, hens cackling, robins chirping—well, who says spring hasn't sprung?—Warren (Pa.) Democrat.

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EASTERN ASSISTANCE.

Citizens of Winnipeg and Toronto Friendly to Victoria Trade Extension.

The Central American Line Likely to Obtain a Liberal Bonus at Ottawa.

THE project of adding a Central American line to Victoria's steamship connections, which has on several accasions of late been before the British Columbia Board of Trade, advances apace. With their usual shrewdness in realizing trade opportunities, Messrs. F. C. Davidge & Co. months ago had their eyes upon the Isthmus, and early in March Mr. Yates was sent to Ottawa to present the advantages of the proposed service to the government, and ascertain if its inauguration would be assisted. Mr. Davidge has now advises which are most encouraging. This representative has not only been received with the utmost cordiality by the business men of Winnipeg and Toronto—who have stated their intention to assist the line by every means in their power—but he is with good reason hopeful of securing a $100,000 subsidy from the government, a promise having been obtained that the matter will be brought before the House of Commons with a recommendation to favorable consideration. With the pledged support of Winnipeg and Toronto, and the anticipated aid of Montreal, the subsidy should be gained without difficulty, as the operation of a line of steamers to Central American points would open an entirely new and profitable market to a great variety of Canadian products, while the returning steamers would have no difficulty in finding cargoes of articles in demand throughout the Dominion, but not capable through climatic conditions of being produced at home.

JAPANESE COMPETITION.

How much longer the Nippon Yusen Kaisha Steamship Company intends having Seattle as its American terminus is a question that is just now bothering the promoters of the contemplated Asano line. The report that the latter had definitely decided on a certain course of action is not correct, and the big conference of steamship and railway representatives that was held in San Francisco a week or so ago was, it is said, almost barren of results and tended to arouse antagonism rather the allay expected competition. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha company has completely tired, it is stated, of running to Seattle, and fancying that a wider range of business is to be found in the Bay City, is now contending with the Asano company for the San Francisco support. As the differences of the two companies could not be settled at San Francisco the matter was referred to the directors of both lines in Japan, and these have yet to be heard from. From present indications everything seems to point towards the Nippon Yusen line cutting off its American service and confining itself to the more lucrative Asiatic business, for the Asano company having contracted for three large vessels to be built in England at a cost of £90,000, and having, it is understood, the promised support of the Southern Pacific, will stand prepared to go as far in its project as its competitors did in theirs. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha Company's disappointment in failing to get the subsidy from the Japanese government, with which, by the way, it is very closely connected, has made it the more desperate in opposition.

A BRUSH WITH THE "TACOMA."

It matters little to the big tug Lorne whether a ship is trailing astern or not when another steam craft shows colors beside her. In going over to Townsend yesterday with the 1,400-ton bark Cavour from the Royal Roads, she had the Northern Pacific liner Tacoma in company with her pretty much the entire voyage. The two were abreast rounding Point Wilson, and the large trans-Pacific liner reached port only a few miles ahead of the "spunky" Lorne. The tug had made the trip over in 3½ hours and covered the same distance returning in 4 hours, and this, too, in extremely rough weather, the full force of yesterday's gale being in her face the entire way, and she being forced to travel as much under water as over. This morning Captain Langley takes the Prince Robert to Tacoma.

IMPROVED TRANS-PACIFIC SERVICE.

The O. R. & N. trans-Pacific service will be greatly improved this year, and it is probable that the end of a few months will see only the Monmouthshire remaining of the fleet of steamers now on the line. The Chittagong, the pioneer of the line, which is now inward bound, is making her last trip under the O. R. & N. flag, so on her return to the Orient she is to give way to some more modern craft. It is not definitely arranged yet what this vessel will be, but it is likely to be one of the big Shire line—possibly the Flintshire. The Monmouthshire type is what will be sought in chartering the new vessels, as she is considered to have no peer on the Pacific save the Empresses.

THE "SAMARIA" OVERDUE.

The Samaria, from Nanaimo for San Francisco, is behind time, and merchants are wondering, says the Call of the 7th inst. She sailed the same day as the Ewell, and the latter has been in port six days, but her captain reports unusually rough weather during the entire trip. The Ewell, however, is a very fast boat, while the Samaria is slow.

I was on a cycling tour, and arriving at the top of a steep hill I was told by an old woman that the hill was a very dangerous one, and that a few days before a young man had been killed.

On closer inquiry as to the cause of the accident she told me he had "lost something off his macine."

I suggested parts of the machine, viz.: brakes, pedals, lamp.

"No; she didn't think it was any o' that."

Then a bright idea struck me, and I asked her if control was the "something" he had lost.

"Ah," she exclaimed, "that's it; he lost control of his machine."—Life.

RELICS OF A WRECK.

Lumber Afloat Off the West Coast of the Island Indicates Recent Disaster.

The Schooner "Wanderer" Passes the Side of a Large Ship Off Clayoquot.

YET another disaster has apparently been added to the unhappily long list that have given the west coast of this Island the title among mariners of the "boneyards of the North Pacific," and when the steamer Tees returns from the trip upon which she left last evening it is altogether probable that she will have particulars of the latest mishap. The information already to hand indicates, unfortunately, all too surely, that a wreck has occurred, and some one of the lumber fleet receiving cargo recently in this province or at Port Blakely has been the victim.

Captain George E. Delano, of the American pilot schooner M. M. Merrill, was the first to obtain information of the supposed mishap, while cruising off Clayoquot Sound a few days ago. His fears that something had gone amiss during the late March storms were first aroused by the pilot boat passing through large quantities of new lumber which had apparently been but a few days in the water. Then the sealing schooner Mary Taylor—with 271 skins—was fallen in with and the information received from her skipper that he too had not only seen the lumber but had sailed by the floating side of a large vessel—at too great distance, however, to determine its identity. Other wreckage was fallen in with in the same locality, in such quantity as to plainly indicate that a lumber vessel of large class had come to grief.

There were several such leaving British Columbia during late March—the Kincora, the Dudhope, the Alexander, the Blairlogie, the Speke and the Verbena—and friends of those on board each of them will be naturally anxious indeed in regard to them until their safety is assured. The Speke and the Verbena will be well remembered here as the two vessels that put back from sea to have leaking ports properly repaired; the Dudhope also spent some time in Esquimalt harbor before taking her cargo at the Chemainus mills.

THE "TACOMA" ARRIVES.

Uninjured by the fire reported to have occurred aboard the ship at Kobe, the Northern Pacific liner Tacoma, Captain T. A. Whistler, tied up to the ocean dock at 7:30 Friday evening with not a Chinese face on deck to betoken the land from whence she came. The ship had made the quarantine station about 3 o'clock and had there left the Asiatic passengers to be put through the Dominion reception ceremonies, there being of the number 42 Chinese and 70 Japanese for Victoria, and 95 Chinese and 76 Japanese for Tacoma. After landing over 100 tons of Victoria freight the ship returned to quarantine at midnight, took aboard those going to the City of Destiny and proceeded to the Sound, leaving the others to come in on the Sadie this morning. The Tacoma brought as saloon passengers Mr. L. Brandes, Mrs. Midhurst, and Mr. Halsey, for Victoria; Mrs. Greene and family, missionaries, who are on their way home to North Carolina; O. A. Scaholm; Capt. R. Crawford, ex-master of the ship, who is taking a pleasure trip; and Geo. and Miss Wilson, Ontario people who have been visiting Japan. The Tacoma's passage, beginning at Yokohama on the 22nd of last month, was uneventful, and she brought as mail 31 packages for Victoria, Tacoma and Europe. In her cabin is a very fine painting of the ship in a snow storm in February last that was drawn by Capt. Whistler. On that voyage the incidents which happened furnish data for "The Ocean Review," a breezy and ably edited paper that is "published" aboard, but printed at Yokohama. The paper contains many illustrations, principally of the vessel in that memorable snow storm, and a vast amount of good reading matter. The first number, which is just to hand, gives its editorial staff as follows: Managing editor, C. W. Derby; ship editor, T. A. Whistler, R.N.R.; foreign news editor, J. L. Mayers; all sorts editor, Dr. F. A. Keller; poetical editor, W. C. Gemmill; political editor, G. W. Platt; religious editor, E. S. Medhurst; sporting editor, E. G. Levis; sick list reporter, Dr. R. T. Freeman; society reporter, Mrs. B. Clifford; table talk reporter, Robert McLellan; secretary and treasurer, R. G. McDonald. The Tacoma's officers are the first in the field of publishers afloat on the Pacific.

NOTICE.

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