

Tuesday, March 27, 1866.

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BIG BEND IN SAN FRANCISCO.

By the arrival yesterday of the Del Norte we find that the excitement in California about Big Bend increases as the spring advances. From present indications, according to some of the passengers who arrived yesterday, the California exodus to Big Bend will reach, the ensuing season, at least ten thousand men, half of whom are expected to sail by Portland, and risk the long and expensive line of travel rather than make their journey through British territory.

The Del Norte, owing to her high fares, did not bring up as many passengers as were anticipated, a circumstance which the country has no reason to regret, for it is too early by at least a fortnight for any general rush of miners. The Oregon steamers are, however, travelling at very low rates, and consequently taking very large numbers of passengers.

INDIAN BATTLE IN SURPRISE VALLEY.—The following despatch, dated from Fort Churchill, March 12th, has just been received: Gen. R. C. Drum, A. A. G.—Major S. P. Smith, 2d Cavalry, California Volunteers, reports the result of a successful expedition from Smoke Creek Station, Nevada, to the relief of the settlers in Surprise Valley, California. A successful engagement with the Indians occurred on the 15th ult. 115 of the enemy were killed and 10 captured. A large amount of subsistence was also captured and destroyed; 60 horses belonging to citizens of the valley were recovered.

AUSTRALIA.—News from Australia is to December 16. Parliament had been dissolved.

Our Canada Letter.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

LONDON, C.W., Feb 5th, 1866.

Your correspondent begs to present his compliments to the numerous readers of the Colonist, and hopes that in the series of letters following they may derive both pleasure and profit. Of one thing let them rest assured: nothing will be perverted or distorted. It will be the aim of your correspondent to present things as they are, without bias. And first let me speak of the

GENERAL PROSPECTS OF CANADA. The last harvest was one of the best that Canada has been favored with for many years. Prices have been good for all kinds of grain, dairy produce, live stock, etc., with ever increasing demand from American buyers. The consequence of this plethora of money has been very evident. The stores are busy; old mortgages have been wiped off; and the grip of that old tyrant, "hard times," has been sensibly relaxed. New enterprises are being established, and old ones reinvigorated. Flax is now being grown pretty extensively, and several large mills are in the cotton mill. At Dundas we have a vineyard, producing annually a large quantity of first class wine. We have heard much of the "ice-bound" regions of Canada from people who pay us only flying visits, that some folks actually wonder how we exist.—The real truth is, our climate (I allude now to Canada West) is fine and salubrious, and there are few productions of the earth that we cannot grow in the open air.

I don't know whether or not you have the oil fever on the Pacific side of the continent, but no acute observer could be long in Canada without discovering symptoms of the seaginous malady. Petroleum was first discovered in Eniskillen, in the extreme west of the province, some six years ago. Since then it has worked its way, and is now sought in a hundred different parts of Canada. Around this city of London (which contains 15,000 people) there are several wells, several good "strikes" have been made, and by my next letter I hope to tell you of a few flowing wells. In the Lower Province, or Canada East, they have discovered a gold mine, but of its richness I will not speak until I have more definite information. On the Ottawa river, at Arnprior, a very handsome species of marble is quarried. Further east we have beds of slate. All we want is capital to develop our resources.

THE RECIPROCITY TREATY. Your readers are probably all aware that a commercial treaty between the United States and the British Provinces, for the reciprocal interchange of various products and manufactures, has existed for the past ten years. To show the importance of the trade, I need only state that during a few years the commerce between them has quadrupled itself—in other words has increased from \$17,000,000 to \$68,000,000. As the U. S. Secretary of the Treasury remarks in his report, "this trade outranks in importance that of any other State, leaving out Great Britain." This reciprocity treaty will soon terminate, and Commissioners are now at Washington seeking its renewal. As you are probably aware by this time, the Hon. George Brown has resigned his position in the Cabinet as President of the Council. This Reciprocity Treaty was the rock on which he skidded. The Government, or coalition formed for the purpose of carrying Confederation, was composed of Conservatives or Tories, and three Reformers or Radicals, just as you choose to term them. Evidently the Cabinet favored a system of reciprocal legislation, in order to secure a renewal of the treaty, the "glorious minority of one," in the person of Mr. Brown, contended for Reciprocity by treaty through England. He foresaw that if it were left to the legislative tinkering of the respective Houses, we would never have anything definite or fixed in our commercial relations. Under these circumstances, Mr. Brown chose to resign his seat as a member of the Cabinet in preference to sharing the responsibility of his colleague's acts. The country generally sustains him. The popular voice says, "If we get Reciprocity by Treaty we can do without it. Since the war, of course, everything is taxed enormously, and our manufacturers can undersell the "Yank's" in their own market. Smuggling is therefore brisk, and the U. S. Revenue officers are kept busily employed in watching their long lines of frontier. The proposition is that we should impose duties equivalent to the American excise on all articles of Provincial production passing into the States, to prevent smuggling! The truth is, we see plainly that an attempt is being made to coerce us into annexation by a hostile commercial policy, and hence Canadians keep a stiff upper lip. They love their British privileges too dearly to sell them for a mess of pottage.

A COOL PROPOSITION BY THE NEW YORK "MINERS." By the organ of the Administration, I learn that Secretary McCulloch considers the present a fitting occasion to bring to a friendly settlement "the claims of the United States against Great Britain for her violation of her obligations as a neutral power during the war," and what do you think he suggests? The cession to the United States of British Columbia and Vancouver Island! He coolly says that "these distant colonies are of little use to England, and would be valuable to the States." He has apparently left out of his calculations that "these colonies will enter into the links of that confederated chain of British North American Empire to extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

I had an interesting budget of news to tell you about confederation and annexation but I must leave it till my next letter, closing with a few remarks on the Fenians. The Fenian Brotherhood was originally instituted for money-making purposes, and thousands of dollars of money have been collected from Irish servant girls and stable boys throughout the States. But the leaders of the movement have been so taunted for their inactivity and cowardice, that it is not unlikely they may be forced into a plundering expedition somewhere on the frontier to keep up appearances. Of course they can accomplish little when opposed to British

might and American neutrality. Let them come on; they will find out the stuff Canadians are made of. The regular military force is stationed at convenient centres, ready to move if necessary at a moment's notice. The Volunteers are in a thorough state of efficiency and discipline, and also on the qui vive. At various points on the frontier, between Canada and the States, along the St. Clair and St. Lawrence rivers, companies of volunteers are stationed. Should the thieves and cut-throats who compose the bulk of the Brotherhood compliment us by a view of their predatory raids, we promise them a fitting and memorable reception.

RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. A despatch from Paris, of January 29th, says:—"The official Yellow Book, containing the diplomatic correspondence of the French Government with Foreign Powers, was laid on the table at the Corps Legislatif to-day.—The despatches exchanged between France and the United States on the subject of Mexico are in conformity with the declarations made in the Emperor's speech at the opening of the session, and in the expose of the condition of the Empire."

A despatch from M. Drouyn de Lhuys to the Marquis de Montholon, dated January 9th, replying to a communication from Mr. Seward, dated December 16th, after announcing that this reply had been submitted to the Emperor, expresses the conviction that "the divergent views between the two Cabinets is the result of an erroneous appreciation of the intentions of France." M. Drouyn de Lhuys proceeds to state that France seeks the realization of no ambitious ideas, and says:—"Now that there is a regular government in Mexico, the legitimate object of our expedition will be attained. We are endeavoring, while satisfying our interests and our dignity, to make arrangements which will enable us to consider the mission of our army in Mexico terminated."

Another despatch of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, dated January 25th, 1866, to the French Minister at Washington, relates a conversation of the former with Mr. Bigelow, that occasion M. Drouyn de Lhuys declined all official controversy upon the measures taken by the Emperor Maximilian, stating that he could only receive Mr. Bigelow's communications on that subject as simple information. This reservation established, the French Minister observed in the course of conversation that the measures pointed out were of a purely administrative order, and did not appear to him to constitute any of those exceptional derogations that might perhaps sometimes justify a government in intervening in the interior affairs of a neighboring State. He could not admit that the Federal Government, not wishing to recognize as legitimate the de facto government of Maximilian, and considering it illusion to address itself to Juarez, had any ground to apply to France in order to escape from this embarrassment, and request explanation from her relative to acts emanating from the sovereign authority of a foreign government. M. Drouyn de Lhuys continues:—"We return to the principle of non-intervention, and from the moment we accept as our rule of conduct our interest and honor require us to demand its equal application by all. Relying upon the equitable spirit of the Washington Cabinet, we expect from it the assurance that the American people will conform to the law of non-intervention, which they invoke by maintaining a strict neutrality with regard to Mexico. When you shall have informed me of the resolution of the American Government in this matter, I shall be in a position to acquaint you with the result of our negotiations with the Emperor Maximilian for the return of our troops."

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

The following are the most important subjects treated of:—

The negotiations which have been long pending in Japan, and which have been conducted with great ability by my Minister in that country, in conjunction with the representatives of my allies in Japan, have been brought to a conclusion which merits my entire approbation. The existing treaties have been ratified by the Mikado. It has been stipulated that the tariff shall be revised in a manner favorable to commerce, and that the indemnity due under the convention of October, 1864, shall be punctually discharged.

I have concluded a treaty of commerce with the Emperor of Austria, which I trust will open to that empire the blessings of extended commerce, and be productive of important benefits to both countries.

The deplorable events which have occurred in the Island of Jamaica have induced me to provide at once for an impartial inquiry, and for the due maintenance of authority during that inquiry, by appointing a distinguished military officer as Governor and Commander of the Forces. I have given him the assistance of two able and learned commissioners, who will aid him in examining into the origin, nature and circumstances of the recent outbreak, and the measures adopted in the course of its suppression. The Legislature of Jamaica has proposed that the present political constitution of the island should be replaced by a new form of government. A bill upon this subject will be submitted for your consideration. Papers on these occurrences will be laid before you. Papers on the present state of New Zealand will be laid before you. I have given directions for the return to this country of the greater portion of my regular forces employed in that Colony.

I watch with interest the proceedings which are still in progress in British North America with a view to a closer union among the provinces, and I continue to attach great importance to that object. A conspiracy, adverse alike to authority, property and religion, and disapproved and condemned alike by all who are interested

in their maintenance, without distinction of creed or class, has unhappily appeared in Ireland. The constitutional power of the ordinary tribunal has been exerted for its repression, and the authority of the law has been firmly and impartially vindicated.

FEARFUL SHIPWRECK.

LOSS OF AN ENGLISH STEAMER WITH TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY LIVES.

A correspondent writing from London says:—"We have had most fearful weather the last week, and the number of shipwrecks has been unprecedented. Conspicuous amongst others has been the loss of the splendid screw steamer London belonging to Messrs Wigram here. This vessel was bound from London to Melbourne, with 270 passengers, and a cargo roughly estimated at £300,000. In getting in to the Bay of Biscay she encountered fearful weather, and one tremendous sea washed the coverings to the bunkers and engine room off, and in a minute the engineers found themselves up to their waists in water, and the fires put out. In a short time fourteen feet of water in the hold, the ship settling down rapidly by the stern, so the captain ordered the remaining boats to be lowered, and manned the port and life boats, two cutters having been previously washed overboard. Fearful to relate, when only one boat, containing seventeen seamen and three passengers, had got clear of the wreck, she went down with every soul on board. The passengers were nearly all wealthy people returning home after a visit to the old country. I have not had time to go over the list of those lost but I notice Mr. De Pass, of the firm of De Pass & Sons, is amongst them. He was going to represent the house in Melbourne. One lady offered a thousand guineas to be taken into the boat but everyone knew their fate, and might, not right, was the order of the day."

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

[BY OVERLAND TELEGRAPH FROM GALLÉ.]

MELBOURNE, Dec. 26. Parliament was dissolved on the 12th inst. Intense excitement has been caused in South Australia by the outbreak of war between Spain and Chili. All sales of copper have been stopped.

Advices from New Zealand state that the rebels on the east coast had been defeated, and surrendered at Napier on the 18th instant.

MEXICO.

Doubts are entertained as to the ability of the Mexican Government to meet the next dividend on its large foreign debts. All its funds in Europe are exhausted, and the stringency of the money market renders it impossible to float a fresh loan of borrow money from the concessionaires of the projected Imperial Bank of Mexico. The expenditure of the Mexican empire for 1865 has been upwards of £9,000,000, and its total revenue about £4,500,000 sterling. The deficit for 1865 is thus £4,500,000; in 1864 it was £6,000,000. Nine millions sterling are due to France for war expenses, so that £19,500,000 are required to square accounts up to the close of last year.

INTERESTING SPORTING NEWS.—Roberts, the great English billiard player, is here, and our crack professionals are all on the qui vive to cross cues with him. Since he polished off "Jonathan, the Brighton Marker," some nineteen or twenty years ago, Mr. Roberts has been considered the best player in the world at the English three ball game, in which the "losing hazards," that in the French and American games count against the player who makes them, count in favor of the striker. Possibly "Brother Jonathan" may prove a tougher customer than Jonathan of Brighton. No doubt a match will be arranged between Mr. Roberts and one or other of our first class cue men. In the meantime Mr. Dion of Canada, is challenging "all the world and the rest of mankind" to an encounter at either the English, French, or American game, for \$1,000 or \$2,000 a side. Hammill, our greatest cue-man, with the exception of Ward, of Cornwall Landing, who is, perhaps, his equal, has made a match with James Kelly, the champion rover of England, and goes to England in April to try conclusions with his famous antagonist, Jem Macce is in training for a fight with Joe Goss for the English championship, and John Woods, of Boston, who some time ago challenged "any man in America" to a bout at fisticuffs for \$2,000, has found a party ready to meet his views in W. E. Davis, the California man-powder.—N. Y. Sunday Times.

MR. G. V. BROOKE.—The Belfast News Letter says:—"Our readers will be rejoiced to learn that there is reason to believe that this distinguished tragedian is not amongst the number of those who perished in the steamer London. Relatives of Mr. Brooke, who reside in the neighborhood of Belfast, state that he was too late in applying for berths in the ill-fated steamer, and at once started for Australia by the overland route."

TO BE DISSOLVED.—It is understood that the Legislative Council of the sister colony will be dissolved this week.

News from Big Bend.

SCARCITY OF FOOD AT THE MINES.

ADVICE TO MINERS.—

TOO EARLY YET!!

The following letter from our special correspondent is of especial interest just now, and we trust both miner and merchant will profit by the timely warnings given and not allow the reputation of the country to suffer by the rashness of the one or the want of energy in the other:

LITTON, March 19, 1866.

We left Yale on Tuesday, 13th, reaching this on the 16th instant. The snow is melting fast from the road, though the latter is badly cut up. Parties of men are at work repairing it, and in a week or so it will be in as good condition as could be expected. On the way we met two wagons and a pack train going to Yale for freight for the Hudson Bay Company. We are waiting here for the Indians to come in from Yale with the food; some of them have been nearly six days on the road. After it does arrive here I am afraid we shall find some difficulty in getting it on further. The weather here is delightful, warm sunny days and clear frosty nights. The town is to be supplied with water this summer by means of wooden pipes laid underground; the supply of water is brought by hand from a creek about half a mile off. Mr. L. Hautier received a letter from French Creek dated March 6th, which states that everything was frozen up there then, no work going on but that the country was considered good from what prospecting had been done. A half interest in the Discovery Company had been sold for \$2000 cash, the seller being obliged to part with it as he had no grub and could not work the claim. The snow on the creek was about four feet deep. Provisions were very scarce—Flour \$1 per lb; Bacon \$1.50 per lb, and other things in proportion. From a person who arrived here on Saturday and who left French Creek since the date of the letter referred to, I learn that provisions were getting scarcer and scarcer, and no prospect of a supply either this way or by the Columbia. At Kamloops there is hardly enough for the men working on the steambot, and parties who have reached there on their way to Big Bend without supplies are badly off. He also states that flour was selling when he left the creek for \$1.50 per lb; bacon, \$2 per lb; beans, \$1.75 per lb. The lakes were both frozen over, as was also the Columbia. There were about thirty men on the creek, and about fifty between there and Kamloops, a large proportion of the latter having neither money nor provisions; there is no work for them anywhere on the route, nor will there be on the creek for two months to come; so how they will live, or how they expect to live in the meantime, is a mystery I leave you to solve. No supplies of any account can be got in either way for at least a month yet, and even then, say that from Savanna's Ferry to the creek I take it for a month hence, just see what a quantity of supplies it will take to maintain that number of men, at alone getting any stock on hand. Why 500 men will eat of flour alone, in a month, 25,000 pounds. I must repeat, even more emphatically, what I said in my former letter in relation to the imprudence of parties coming without supplies. Every day convinces me more and more that it is the height of folly for men to start at present without ample provisions—and even then they should have in addition at least double the amount of cash stated in the published reports as being required. The crowd I am with consists of about sixteen persons, two of whom (representing two different companies) have claims, and were on the creek last fall. All of our party, including the two above mentioned, have supplies for about two months. When men who have had their partners on the creek all winter, and could have procured supplies better certainly than new comers, will not trust to the amount that may be there or that can be got in immediately, is it not a strong argument in favor of "looking before you leap?" Several parties who have come as far as this place with provisions, will not go any further at present, preferring to remain here until the season opens. Urge the merchants to send up large supplies as soon as possible, for on that will depend the success of the mines this summer. If men are obliged to leave because they cannot get provisions, it will put the country back two years. Mr. Romano's pack train left yesterday, carrying the saws and other necessary materials for the sawmill on French Creek. Mr. Grant, who you will remember suffered so terribly in Montana last year, and who came to Victoria to get cured, was here a few days ago, but his feet had again become bad, and he was afraid he would be obliged to return.

CABLE READY.—The submarine cable of the Western Union Telegraph Co. (Russian Overland), intended for connecting Vancouver Island with the main land, the Straits of Foca, has been taken out of the hold of the Clara Bell and stowed in the hold of the barque Helois, for the trip north took nine days for the stowed stores in the Clara Bell, but the Company's pilots showed it in the Helois in three days—four miles in length, and weighs sixty tons.—Alta.

HIGH FARES.—The effect of the temporary withdrawal of opposition is visible in the fares, per Del Norte from San Francisco, having been raised to \$40 and we hear that the same fares will be charged on the down trip. Passengers assert many miners intended to take advantage of the cheap fares to Portland and would have proceeded to Big Bend via the Columbia.

NEWSPAPER IN BIG BEND.—Mr. C. Wallace, recently of the Cariboo Express, arrived yesterday by the Del Norte with necessary type and material to start newspaper enterprise in the Big Bend. We like to see enterprising energy rewarded, and though the undertaking seems somewhat premature, we hope it may succeed.

VICTORIANS RETURNED.—Among the passengers by the Del Norte were the names of the following Victoria Messrs. C. W. Wallace, Robert Barr, S. Reinhardt, J. H. Turner, R. M. Hutchins, Geo. Wallace, W. F. Herre, M. W. S. Martin, V. M. Foucault, A. Rose and others.

TRADE IN SAN FRANCISCO.—We are formed by passengers who arrived yesterday per Del Norte that business in the Bay is extremely dull. Most of the Victoria who have proceeded there in the hope of bettering their condition have met with appointment and purpose returning again.

ARRIVAL OF THE DEL NORTE.—The ship Del Norte, Capt. H. J. Johnston, arrived yesterday afternoon from San Francisco with 117 passengers, 33 of whom are enumerated under the proper head.

NAVAL DESPATCHES.—Important despatches were received yesterday by the senior officer on the station, Captain Turnour, of H. M. S. Cleo, from Admiral Denman. The contents we did not learn, but it is expected that Cleo will be ordered away.

FROM NANAIMO.—The steamer Sir J. Douglas arrived yesterday from Nanaimo way ports with 10 passengers. She encountered very rough weather on the passage.

ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS.—The Del Norte did not bring the English newspaper. The only newspapers received have been Express.

THE NEXT STEAMER we learn will be the California, which will leave San Francisco on Saturday.

FOR THE SOUND.—The steamer Elizabeth will leave for Olympia and way this morning at 5 o'clock.

FOR NANAIMO.—The steamer Emily will leave this morning for Nanaimo.

BENEFIT OF THE MARSH FAMILY.—A consideration of services generously rendered Mr. R. G. Marsh and his family, on able and other occasions, a complimentary benefit has been tendered to him, jointly Miss Jenny Arnot, by the amateurs of the funds of the Royal Hospital, some \$500, it will be remembered, by the Marsh troupe, and where Marsh has visited he has been equally generous, so that now, in the absence of a professional engager himself and family it is considered a legitimate claim on the public. The date of performance and further particulars will appear hereafter. In the while we understand that the benefit, with the aid of the entire talent of the city, to present one of the attractive performances that have yet been tendered to the public.

SALE OF THE STEAMER "KILAUWA."—A vessel, belonging to Messrs. Janion & Co. of Honolulu, which stranded at Kailua in January last, was sold at auction, Sovereign, as she lay with her spare machinery. She was carried by about a thousand feet over the reef, and remained in the sand near the deep inside the reef. The bidding commenced at \$2,000, and went briskly up to \$3,000, which was considered about her value by most persons. She was finally knocked down to L. Torbert for \$3,100 cash.

A MODEST PROPOSAL.—Cession of COLONIES TO AMERICA.—Our readers somewhat astonished and amused perusal of the statement contained in Canadian correspondence, of the proposal on the part of Secretary McCulloch to an amicable settlement of the Alaskan claims, by the cession of these colonies to the United States. The "calculating" Secretary considers that "these distant colonies of little use to England and would be a burden to the States." What next? as the frigate's tail dropped off!

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