

The Seat of Government.
The people of Vancouver Island cannot but feel highly gratified at the frank reply of Governor Seymour to the address presented to him on the subject of the removal of the public offices to the mainland, and at the assurance furnished by His Excellency that the fears expressed by the deputation were groundless. His Excellency promises, almost in as many words, that his policy shall be one that will conduce to the happiness, security and prosperity of the people, the advancement of every interest affecting the welfare and growth of the Colony and the increase of popular representation in the Council,—which expression we take to mean that questions of weighty import will be left to the uncontrolled action of the Legislative Council, and that the wishes of the people—as expressed through their representatives—will receive that respect and attention which is their due. If such be the intention of the reply, a few weeks only can elapse ere our most prominent grievances will be removed and the Colony restored to a position of comparative progress. One of the first and most important subjects that will engage the attention of the Council is the location of the Capital of the United Colony. New Westminster—a most unsuitable location for the seat of Government while the mainland was a Colony by itself—has become still more unsuitable since the consummation of Union. Nature never intended the place for a commercial entrepot; and climatic influences, combined with a wretched site and its remoteness from the centres of industry, place it beyond the hope of successful competition with any other town on the mainland when the question comes to a vote of the Council or of the people. We are aware that it has been urged that an Imperial Act located the capital permanently at New Westminster; but this statement is palpably incorrect. The Act merely says that the place formerly known as Queensborough shall be known and designated as New Westminster; and, in order that there may be no misconception as to the place meant, it is alluded to as the "Capital of British Columbia." But there is nothing said about permanently placing the capital at New Westminster, or anywhere else. In addition to its other drawbacks, New Westminster possesses not the first element of permanency. Its very existence hangs by a thread, as it were. It is in the power of the Hudson Bay Company, now that Union has been effected, to run their boats from Victoria to Yale without stopping to ask "how do ye do?" of the people at the Capital. How long would the "city" survive after the cold shoulder had been thus turned towards it, even if it remained the seat of Government? Unquestionably, the proper place for the Capital of the Colony is somewhere in the interior, as near the centre of traffic to and from the mines as circumstances will permit. Yale, Lytton, Clinton, Lillooet—and even Quenelmonth—offer inducements for the establishment of the Capital which cannot and will not be overlooked by either Government or people when the proper time arrives to fix upon its permanent resting place. But we have yet to meet with the first intelligent person from either of the towns named who does not acknowledge that until the population has materially increased—until proper roads have been made from several points on the coast whereby the interior may be reached at all seasons of the year without danger to life or limb—and until the Colony is in a state of prosperity that will enable it to erect new and substantial buildings for the accommodation of its officials—the time will not have arrived to establish the seat of Government in the interior. Under a wise system of Government, such as we are promised by Governor Seymour, a few years only can elapse before the Colony will be in the enjoyment of these real advantages; but

until such prosperity shall dawn upon us, but one opinion is expressed as to the proper place for the temporary location of the seat of Government. Outside of the limits of New Westminster, Victoria is the unanimous choice of the people of the mainland. And no wonder. It is the point where the principal business of the Colony is transacted. It represents two-thirds of all the wealth of the country. The money of its merchants has been freely spent in building roads through the interior, in furnishing facilities for the carriage of supplies to the most distant quarters of the mainland. Besides, there is life, and bustle, and energy visible here. The merchant or miner who leaves the upper country on a tour of business or pleasure, instead of finding a place more dismal and dreary than the one he has just left, finds well-kept hotels, handsome dwellings, macadamized streets and roads; he is brought within the humanizing influence of the "church-going bell," and the social amenities of life, which are denied him elsewhere. He has, in short, every blessing, comfort and luxury that can be procured in any city on the coast. And when he wishes to move north, south, east or west, neither fields of ice, nor trackless snowdrifts, nor seas of mud, interpose obstacles in his path. Such are a few of the inducements that Victoria can offer to-day for the temporary establishment of the Seat of Government in her midst, and these inducements, we feel sure, will not be ignored when the question of the Capital shall come before the Council for their decision. In a few days the Council will be at work, and it is the duty of the people in all parts of the Colony to at once hold meetings and to memorialize the Government on the subject. In Cariboo, we are persuaded that not fifty miners will be found who will not cordially endorse all that we have said on this head; and at every town and ranch on the mainland the feeling is unanimous in favor of the change of the Capital. Even at New Westminster, there are many men who, willing to sink their own little local prejudices and interests for the advancement and well-being of the whole country, would gladly sign a memorial praying for the temporary location of the Capital at Victoria. Economy is demanded on all sides. The financial condition of the Colony is not such as will permit of the expenditure of the monies necessary for the erection of new Government buildings. Here, at Victoria, we have them ready-built to our hand. Shall we occupy and turn them to advantage, or shall we abandon them for the bats and owls to hold high carnival within their walls, and expend \$150,000 in the erection of other quarters at New Westminster? It is for the people themselves to answer.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE

Friday Dec. 28
NEW RIFLE.—Colonel Berdan, who commanded a regiment of sharpshooters during the war, has invented a new breech-loading rifle, in which the mechanism for loading and firing is more simple than that of any other gun, and is not liable to foul or get out of order. It is comprised in a single piece which can be detached from the barrel of the gun by a single movement of the hand, whenever there is necessity for cleaning it. Only three motions of the hand are required to load and fire, and the breech locks itself so effectually that with the most rapid firing no escape of gas is perceptible. The United States government has ordered these improvements to be adopted in altering muzzle to breech-loaders for our own army, and the agents of France, Austria, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and several other foreign governments, have countermanded previous orders for guns of other patterns, and have ordered this one instead.—*Am. Paper.*
FATAL ACCIDENT TO MR. LOWE, INVENTOR OF THE SCREW PROPELLER.—One of those melancholy and fatal accidents now so common in London, occurred in the Blackfriars Road, by which James Lowe, the inventor of the screw propeller, lost his life. The unfortunate deceased was on his way home and was standing on the kerb of the footway preparatory to crossing the street, when the horses of a heavy laden wagon, coming at a rapid pace in a direction opposite to the one he was looking, caught him by the arm, swinging him into the roadway under the wheels of the wagon, which passed over his chest, causing instantaneous death.—*English paper.*

Masonic Ball.
In all countries and places the Masonic fraternity are proverbial for the excellence of their entertainments. No sooner is the approach of a Masonic ball whispered than every miss in her teens and every spinster of "an uncertain age," as Artemus Ward would express it, is seized with an irresistible longing to participate in the festive enjoyment. The consequence is that the Masons usually have more occasion to trouble themselves about who shall not, than who shall be their guests. Last night the members of Victoria and Vancouver Lodges celebrated the anniversary of their patron saint by a grand ball in St. Nicholas Hall, a spacious room on the ground floor of the St. Nicholas Hotel, formerly used as a billiard saloon. This magnificent room probably the largest and best adapted for the purpose in the city, was most beautifully and tastefully decorated under the able supervision of Bro. R. Lewis. At the upper end of the hall hung the Royal Arms, and at the other end the American coat-of-arms. The walls were adorned with the flags of all nations blended in peaceful harmony, and over the fireplace were suspended the traditional red-hot gridiron and poker of the Masonic Order. The convenient arrangement of the cloak and supper rooms left the hall exclusively to the use of the dancers; while matrons, chaperons, and those of "an uncertain age," who did not join the busy throng, were seated on a raised platform extending all round the room, which was the means of protecting them from the sudden assaults frequently committed by rash and impulsive couples losing their equilibrium; and also of relieving them from the uncomfortable process of acting as windmills for the rotary crinolines. At eight o'clock the gay worshippers at the shrine of the festival Goddess began to arrive, and soon after the quadrille band, consisting of Messrs. Haynes, Rhind, Bachel, Wilson and Booth, played the first dance, the room being then tolerably well filled. By ten o'clock there could not have been fewer than 300 persons present, and the scene became most animated and enlivening. After enjoying the giddy whirl for over three hours, supper was announced in the St. Nicholas Restaurant, and full justice was done to the many excellent things here provided. This is to many the most seductive part of a ball, and certain it is that Bacchus can claim more votaries than the laurel-crowned Muse. On returning to the hall the dancers seemed inspired with fresh spirit, and went into the enjoyment with renewed zest. It was not until some nameless hour that the national anthem gave the final warning to depart. In concluding our notice of this highly successful and pleasant gathering, it is but due to the reception committee and stewards to say that they fulfilled their respective duties with the utmost courtesy and bonhomie. The music was excellent, and the general arrangements reflected the highest credit on all parties concerned.

MASONIC PRESENTATION.—Yesterday, after the installation of the officers elect, Past Master N. I. Neustadt was presented with a handsome Masonic jewel in elegant chased gold, the handiwork of Mr. Watson, of Yates street. The ornament, which represents some of the insignia of the craft, is in the form of a buckle and medal, at the back of the latter being the following inscription: Presented to Bro. N. I. Neustadt, by the members of Vancouver Lodge, No. 421 F. and A. M., Victoria, V. I., December 27th, 1866.

CHRISTMAS IN THE FLEET.—Our gallant tars, we understand, were not behind the civilians in their mode of spending Christmas day, and had a "rye merrie tyme" on board their respective ships, which were gaily ornamented with evergreens, transparencies and devices.

H. M. S. SPARROWHAWK left Esquimalt yesterday at 8 a. m. and went round to Cadboro Bay, where she embarked the Governor and Mrs. Seymour, and proceeded to New Westminster, where His Excellency will remain until the 5th or 6th of January.

LEECH RIVER DITCH.—Work continues on the Leech River ditch, notwithstanding the inclement state of the weather. The lumber for a great portion of the flume is already sawed, and the men were to commence putting it together yesterday.

THE FIDELITY sailed yesterday for Portland with a small freight and 50 passengers. She will return with a full cargo for this port, and may be expected in about seven days.

LANDED.—The submarine cable brought by the brig Ann, from Mauritius, has all been landed in good order, and warehoused in Selleck's store, at Esquimalt.

THE CREW of the Transport have been taken in charge by the U. S. Consul and their wants supplied. They will be sent to San Francisco on the next mail boat.

A GUBERNATORIAL BALL will be given on New Year's day, at New Westminster.

Messrs. T. N. Hibben & Co. have already received neat office calendars for 1867.

Snow fell on Wednesday at North Saanich.

The Meteors the Result of Prophecy.
New York, Nov. 13, 1866.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE WORLD.—Although speculation, scientific and non-scientific, has been a life of late concerning this meteoric display which is certain to take place between the hours of 12 p. m. to-night and 4 a. m. to-morrow, divested of all the theoretical hypothesis, if looked at in its true light, is not one that should excite our curiosity alone. It has a very serious import; one in fact, which should be regarded by all men, now living, and who have been mercifully spared from sudden deaths and calamities that lead to a bad end, as a heavenly admonition that this old world of ours has grown its full growth, and must, like all things human, have an ending. That the meteoric shower, so called, is the simple result of a certain planetary region, there can be no doubt, but one must look beyond the simple abstract conclusions of savants to find not solely the origin but the absolutely certain consequences that are to shortly follow this great event of the hour. I need not go the Bible to show you how the many prophecies concerning the end of the world prove that the "clashing of spheres" is not far distant, but I will call your attention to one prophecy that is to be heeded. In the year 806, a great Roman savant named Lactantius in the most minute manner described, in a treatise called *De Mundi Collapsu*, the various meteoric displays that were to take place in years future to his time. For each display described he gave a calculated date, and up to the year 1833, these prophecies of Lactantius have all come to pass. The last display that was to be had, according to him, had been waged over almost the entire surface of the earth; and when one great empire would rise in its might and swallow up many surrounding nations; when from one end of the globe men could converse of the disaster that befell them to those who dwell in the other. Can that great empire not be Prussia, and the means of distant intelligence the cable? At that time, says the writer, there will be great commotion in the heavens, "for that will be 1000 years from the present period, when men who scorn to believe will be made to suffer for their unbelief in heavenly admonitions. The commotions may last for several days, not exceeding five unseason by mortal eyes, and these all will be chaos." I need say no more, sir, who knows that you or I, or any man living, may not be involved in the general crash at the end of the "several days, not exceeding five." If all Lactantius's prophecies have been fulfilled what hinders the last one to be equally as well fulfilled? We may not pray that heaven may avert a fixed event, but we may supplicate for mercy and be ready for the dread hour when it cometh.

Yours, sincerely,
REV. JOHN H. BURDET.

A SAD STORY.—A Paris correspondent of the Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch announces the death in that city of the venerable and unhappy Monsieur M., whose sad history he thus briefly recites: He was at one time at the head of a large industrial establishment. His reticence was of the severe Roman type, and yet, as some times occurs, his son was immoral and unprincipled in the extreme. At the time I am speaking his wife and daughter were dead, and the unworthy son, then 18 years of age, alone remained to inherit the father's immense wealth. As I have said Monsieur M. was severe in the extreme, and in order to put an end to his son's dissipation, refused to grant him more than the most meagre support.

One evening M.—received at his house a friend, to whom he paid a large sum. His son was present, and the three dined together. At 10 o'clock the visitor retired, and, although he had to traverse the wood of Boulogne to reach his own house, started alone on foot. He confided also in his pistol, which he always carried at night. In the most solitary part of the road his steps were arrested by a man with blackened face, who presented a pistol to his head and demanded in the old fashioned way, the money or the life of the victim. The latter at first resolved to part with neither without a struggle, but a gleam of recognition suddenly flashed upon him. His resolution was quickly made. Without a word he gave the robber his money and, after waiting until the latter disappeared in the woods, pursued his way.

The next morning, at sunrise, he returned to the house of Monsieur M.—and related to him the event of the preceding night. "The voice of the robber," his figure and manner, notwithstanding his disguise, make me certain that it was your son!" "My son!" replied the father, with a sickening pang. "Bad as he is, he surely has not fallen so low. But come; we will assure ourselves beyond doubt." And accompanied by his visitor, he softly entered the chamber of his child. The father, with trembling hand, drew the curtain and permitted the sun to fall upon the sleeping face. His boy's clothes were muddy and torn; a towel lay upon the floor, stained with the black that the guilty youth had washed from his visage; while half concealed beneath the pillow, was seen the stolen purse. Seizing the pistol that rested upon the table, the wretched father, before his friend could divine his purpose, discharged its contents at the head of his boy.

Monsieur M.—delivered himself immediately into the hands of justice, and was on trial condemned to life imprisonment. After serving ten years of his sentence he was pardoned and returned to Paris, where until his death he lived in complete isolation from the world.

THE CONTRADICTIONARY COUPLE.—"I do believe," he said, taking his spoon out of his glass and tossing it on the table, "that of all the obstinate, positive, wrong-headed creatures that ever were born, you are the most so, Charlotte."

"Certainly, certainly—have it your own way, pray. You see how much I contradict you," rejoins the lady.

"Of course, you didn't contradict me at dinner, oh, no, not you," says the gentleman.

"Yes, I did," says the lady.

"Oh, you did," cries the gentleman; "you admit that!"

"If you call that contradiction, I do," the lady answers; "and I say again, Edward, that when you are wrong I will contradict you; I am not your slave."

"Not my slave!" repeats the gentleman, bitterly; "and you still mean to say that in this old world of ours has grown its full growth, and must, like all things human, have an ending. That the meteoric shower, so called, is the simple result of a certain planetary region, there can be no doubt, but one must look beyond the simple abstract conclusions of savants to find not solely the origin but the absolutely certain consequences that are to shortly follow this great event of the hour. I need not go the Bible to show you how the many prophecies concerning the end of the world prove that the 'clashing of spheres' is not far distant, but I will call your attention to one prophecy that is to be heeded. In the year 806, a great Roman savant named Lactantius in the most minute manner described, in a treatise called *De Mundi Collapsu*, the various meteoric displays that were to take place in years future to his time. For each display described he gave a calculated date, and up to the year 1833, these prophecies of Lactantius have all come to pass. The last display that was to be had, according to him, had been waged over almost the entire surface of the earth; and when one great empire would rise in its might and swallow up many surrounding nations; when from one end of the globe men could converse of the disaster that befell them to those who dwell in the other. Can that great empire not be Prussia, and the means of distant intelligence the cable? At that time, says the writer, there will be great commotion in the heavens, 'for that will be 1000 years from the present period, when men who scorn to believe will be made to suffer for their unbelief in heavenly admonitions. The commotions may last for several days, not exceeding five unseason by mortal eyes, and these all will be chaos.' I need say no more, sir, who knows that you or I, or any man living, may not be involved in the general crash at the end of the 'several days, not exceeding five.' If all Lactantius's prophecies have been fulfilled what hinders the last one to be equally as well fulfilled? We may not pray that heaven may avert a fixed event, but we may supplicate for mercy and be ready for the dread hour when it cometh."

"Morgan, you mean," interrupted the gentleman.

"Now, by all that is aggravating and impossible to bear," cries the gentleman, clenching his hands, and looking upward in agony, "he is going to insist upon it that Morgan is Jenkins!"

"Do you take me to be a perfect fool?" exclaims the lady. "Do you suppose I don't know one from the other? Do you suppose that I don't know that the man with the blue coat was Mr. Jenkins?"

"Jenkins in a blue coat?" cries the gentleman, with a groan; "Jenkins in a blue coat! A man who would suffer death rather than wear anything but brown."

"Do you dare to charge me with telling an untruth?" demands the lady, bursting into tears.

"I charge you, ma'am," retorts the gentleman, starting up, "with being a contradiction, a monster of aggravation, a—a—Jenkins in a blue coat! What have I done that should be doomed to bear such perpetual torments?"

COST OF HUNTING IN ENGLAND.—An English correspondent says: It is said that the cost of feeding the dogs in Ireland would support all the poor in comfort; but then they would not have the comfort of having the dogs. In Yorkshire there are ten packs of fox hounds of fifty couples each, and five or six for other purposes, fed on horseflesh and oatmeal. A thousand sportsmen keep four horses each for hunters and employ two thousand horses, with an immense expenditure. The yearly cost of dogs and horses in all England employed in field sports, is something difficult to estimate, but enormous. I do not quarrel with the manly sport—the noble pastime; only when I read of the way Englishmen, women and children are housed and fed—or unhoused and starved—cannot help thinking that less time and money spent on dogs and horses would be a decency, and might be humanity.

The News.

After another long reseraph sends us a small but interesting news item from new world. Barely three passed away since the made to fire the hearts of the American continent. cation of exciting reports in Ireland and the dawn of struggle for independence patches are said to have effect in New York unc the news of the great vic rebellion. Irishmen belie told to believe, that they eye of "startling and terr that excitement had "alarming height," that "and village in Ireland had military and gunboats," committees, who were "earnest," had "shaped the a fierce and bloody struggle to meet this formidable British Government had dedered two regiments of nat a detachment of marines, a boat to the scene of distur pointed out the shallowne and dishonesty of the wh the time, it being too palp was nothing more nor l rise on the part of Chie Stephens, and some of followers, to create an and extort money from beguiled countrymen. Fo sequently, the furore in I represented to be incre more troops and ships w have been sent across t The wires have been s couple of weeks, and in beautiful green fields of being deluged with the b nian arms and ammunition into the hands of the auth that the "Civil force" is p by the leading journal i sufficient to quell the dre ration. The great natio of several millions of peopl to crush the galling yoke rant, and plant a gloriou on the soil—suppressed by said Irish constabulary! the aspirations of pseudo p martyrs, the "best laid mico and men," will, as b hard tells us, "gang aft ag The Empress Charlotte, s spouse of Maximilian of M vate telegram received in states, is no more. The fai mission to France in behalf band's tottering Empire, unsuccessful efforts to the Pope, so preyed unhappy woman's mind physical energies rapidly s and this good and virtuous p now passed into the spirit l lotta was the only daughter Leopold II. of Belgium, to the present King and th Flanders. Her father was n to Louis Philippe's daug 1832, and the late Empress therefore have attained her This sad event will throw of Belgium and Vienna and of Orleans into mourning.

A declaration from the King that he desires to sustain independence of the Pope and respect his pontifical territory passing of a bill by the Prussia of Deputies incorporating S Holstein with the Kingdom stia; and a fresh tale of woe Staffordshire mining district, the sum of the European int From California we hear of floods that threaten to of the great fertile valley of t mento. A similar disaster in January, 1862, when the Sacramento was under water days, and the whole valley r a great sea stretching in ev tion as far as the eye cou Hundreds of farms were des covered with deposits of s depth of from ten to tw Many lives were lost at