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THE GOLD DISCOVERIES.

The news which we give in another column in reference to the Sooke mines is startling in its character; and the excitement which has taken hold of the community since the arrival of the Alexandra last evening, exceeds, if anything, the commotion which existed in 1858. The finding of a nugget worth seventy-three dollars on Leech river is reasonable enough cause to make the inhabitants unreasonable; and we are, therefore, quite prepared to see a mining mania take hold of every one from the town crier to the member of Parliament. Seventy-three dollars to be knocked out with the blow of a pick, is interesting; and when we supplement this with large prospects of coarse gold, from half a dollar to a dollar to the pan, is it any wonder that there should be excitement—active, ambitious, restless excitement? "Why, sir," says the energetic colored man who released the nugget from its close confinement, "You should have seen the miners when the discovery was announced—they thought there was no gold before; because there was no dirt—or at least not more on the whole creek than a wheelbarrow could conveniently carry away; but lor' bless you, sir, dirt aint gold; and when we scored the "slate" with our picks, and wrote in such golden letters, didn't they change their tune. There were big boulders in the creek, and the miners looked at these boulders and shook their heads at these boulders as if they were mountains that couldn't be removed; but when the prospects were obtained you would have reckoned the boulders rolled *some*, and that every one had turned into a Samson." Such is the pithy description of the excitement on Leech River. Every man who was on Sooke rushed immediately to the forks, and during the greater part of Tuesday the Gold Commissioner was a worse "bothered" man than a Poor Law Guardian in the midst of an Irish famine.

If one nugget had been discovered, and nothing more, there might still be reasonable grounds for doubting the paying capacity of Leech river; but when we find in the same claim, the subsequent prospects realizing from fifteen to sixteen dollars of coarse, nuggety gold, during the hour or so the other partners were gone to take out their licenses; and when we learn that from the next claim, from two to three ounces were washed out in as many hours, by the tedious process of panning we are satified that good paying diggings have been discovered, and we are not prepared to emulate the unbelieving disciple of Scriptural celebrity, and refuse to give credence to the news because we have not witnessed the process with our own eyes, nor manipulated the rock with our own hands. Leech river is a substantial golden reality, and if its wash-dirt is not to be found in large quantities, we suppose the miners will have no objection to getting the gold in much less time out of the slaty rock. There is plenty of rock, if there is not abundance of gravel, and the miner can safely venture to break it up at a depth of even two feet. The river, or we should rather say, in mining parlance, creek—for it is both shallow and narrow—can be easily flumed, and the bed-rock taken up with little difficulty. That the diggings, so far as the bed of the creek is concerned, must necessarily be of limited duration, no one will be disposed to doubt, but the fact that good prospects can be obtained from benches, many feet above water-level, leads us to hope that mining operations will be carried on in the locality for years to come. We are merely on the threshold of gold discoveries. When the enterprising miner has ascended to the source of Leech river, and penetrated its forks and tributaries—and when the same indefatigable adventurer has prospected the head waters of San Juan and other streams still further distant, we shall, we feel convinced, have disclosures to publish that will startle the inhabitants of the Pacific coast. In this connection we may mention that one of the lucky finders of the nugget had some time ago discovered diggings on a tributary of the Alberni river that would pay five cents to the pan—a fact which shows unmistakably that our gold mines bid fair to spread themselves, through time, over the length and breadth of the Island.

SOOKE EXCURSION.—About 100 persons availed themselves of the opportunity of proceeding to Sooke yesterday by the Alexandra, some merely to visit the locality, and others to seek their fortunes on the Leech river diggings. The latter, 55 in number, consisted chiefly of old experienced miners, landed at Thompson's ranch, immediately the steamer arrived, shouldered their packs, and started for the diggings. The trip down was made in two hours and twenty minutes, leaving the wharf here at 9:40, a.m., and arriving at Sooke at twelve, noon. We believe the excursionists thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

SPOKEN.—The Norwegian bark Kong Oscar from Liverpool to this port was spoken June 30th, lat. 22° 44' N., long. 125 W.

FIVE YEARS OF AN ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Our readers must not accuse us of indulging in the strain of early romance when we say that—once upon a time there was a young man who lived in London, whose name was Cary. Like many other young men, Mr. Cary was ambitious, and being "a favorite pupil of Sir Hugh McAlmont Cairns," etc., etc., it was natural to expect that his aspirations should stretch towards legal greatness. Accordingly, when a "legal adviser of the Crown" was wanted for one of Her Majesty's distant possessions, the "favorite pupil" was, through his own laudable exertions, installed in the dignified office. Many a less ambitious man than Mr. Cary would have seen in this elevation the opening of perhaps a brilliant career, and would have used his natural gifts to his own and the country's advancement. Mr. Cary, however, underrated his new vocation, and overrated himself. He landed in the Colony, and with all the characteristic modesty of Cæsar of old, he concluded that to come, and to see, was to conquer. He found the country in a state of transition from the primitive habits of Indian and semi-barbarism, to those of an active and vigorous civilization. There was an opportunity to distinguish himself. In this chaotic turmoil, Blackstone would be necessarily in great demand, and he, the lucky man, was the only person who had got a proper supply; if we except those whose liberal provision of dark rock in their land purchases, might be considered as giving them a *fair* proportion, if we can use the expression, of *black stone*. The recently arrived population was a bustling, money-making class, who only required to be left alone to afford plenty of work to the law courts; and the Governor, although possessing more than average general ability, was a mere novice in the forms and routine of constitutional administration. Everything favored the boy-Attorney-General. If he gave indications of cleverness, his youth would have converted them into genius; if he made blunders his juvenility would have palliated the mistakes. Never had a young man a fairer future. "The wide, the unbounded prospect lay before him," and it would be only the grossest error or misconduct on his part if "shadows, clouds, and darkness should ever rest upon it." Two roads lay open to him—one the straight macadamized highway that led to honor and emolument; the other the crooked, miry pathway that brought the traveller to ruin and to shame; in a moment of infatuation or fatuity he chose the latter. With limited experience of the world—with a total ignorance of colonial life—he wrapped himself up in a few antiquated English dogmas, and scouted the more expansive views of the experienced colonists. Instead of being the protector of the property and dignity of the Crown, he speculated in the one and dragged the other, through the immundicity of his own ignoble pursuits. The Executive, through his advice, or at least with his co-operation, became lost to every sense of propriety, and made the name of British subject an object of scorn and ridicule on the Pacific coast. The Court of law became a bear garden, and the Legislature an insulting sham. Everything that could thwart public opinion—that could endanger public interests—that could excite public indignation—was done; and it matters little to us whether the Attorney General in these transactions was the motive power or the instrument. Says Queen Katherine, of Wolsey—"he was a man of an unbounded conceit; one that by suggestion ty'd all the kingdom; simony was fair play; his own opinion was his law; I'the presence he would say untruths, and be ever double both in his words and meaning; he was never, but where he meant to ruin, pitiful; his promises were, as he then was, mighty; but his performance, as he is now, nothing."

Mr. Cary has run his race on Vancouver Island, and we do not wish to be severe on a fallen man, even if he has been a public enemy; but we must be just before we can afford to pity. It is our duty to insist on the suspension of the Attorney-General, and it is the Governor's duty to protect the dignity of the office, the credit of the Government, and the interest of the people, by carrying out that suspension. We need not allude to recent events, nor to those long past; for Mr. Cary's acts at any time these five years, would have brought upon him, in any enlightened, civilized Government, an ignominious expulsion from office. His British Columbia speculations and his professional peccadilloes in no other British colony would have been allowed one single moment; but in this favored region there is some special immunity which protects the official—no matter how grave the offence. His Excellency has fallen into one serious blunder already by taking the advice of the Attorney General. If he wishes to retain his popularity and save himself from future trouble, he will take the present opportunity of getting rid of that gentleman. Mr. Cary has been the colony's evil genius from the commencement;—the Judas of the disciples—the Jonah of the ship; and no honest, respectable, or intelligent Government can hope to be prosperous with so dangerous an element in its midst.

QUICK RUN.—The steamer John L. Stephens arrived at San Francisco on the 18th July, having made the run down from this port in three days.

THE NEWS.

The Eastern intelligence brought yesterday by the Oregon, is three days later than that given to our readers a few days ago. In our former news we left the Confederates returning from their pursuit of Averill, Crook, and Hunter, and Martinsburg, which had been captured by the Southern troops, was again occupied by the Federals. Since then, however, a second raid has taken place—this time the Confederates having crossed over into Pennsylvania and destroyed Chambersburg, a town of 5000 of a population, and situated about fiteen miles north of the boundary line. Upwards of a million of dollars worth of property was given to the flames. From the inefficient manner in which the North has conducted its Shenandoah operations, the whole of the frontier towns along Maryland and Pennsylvania have been left to the mercy of an invading force: and although in no part could the Southern troops hope to make any more than a temporary lodgment, still they are in a position to inflict serious damage, and keep the inhabitants of the border cities, as well as the Cabinet at Washington, in a state of perpetual alarm. However Lee may be exposing weakness in other quarters by keeping so large a force in the northern part of the Shenandoah, he is serving the Southern cause most effectually by giving employment to Hunter and Averill in defending northern towns, instead of destroying Southern railways. The blunder of the military authorities in Washington has been keeping the borders in so defenceless a condition, and the valley so ill provided with troops. There is still another advantage to Lee, and that is, while the Federal troops are looking after the frontier towns the Confederates are reaping harvests literally as well as figuratively, and sending the grain of the Shenandoah to the scantily provisioned armies at Richmond and Petersburg.

From Grant we have at length some stirring intelligence. Another "flank movement" has been made which brings the Federals a few miles nearer Richmond from the South. Malvern Hill has been occupied by the Northern troops, and a more advanced base has been secured on the James river. This is the only direction, if we except the west, in which Richmond can be successfully assailed. An engagement had taken place at Deep Bottom about ten miles from Richmond in which the Confederates were forced to retire. One of the gunboats assisted the land forces of the Federals very materially. By this late movement of Grant, which is said to have taken Lee by surprise—a statement that is evidently incorrect, from the fact that Lee had forwarded troops to the point before Grant's movement was completed—the Federals have obtained a position that will give them facilities of massing troops against Richmond or Petersburg as exigencies may arise, and at the shortest notice. The last Petersburg operation deserved more success than attended the undertaking; for the Federal plans were carried out with a most profound secrecy and scientific exactness. For several weeks the Northern engineers had been mining the key of the first line of the Petersburg defences. On the evening of the 29th ult. at 4 o'clock, a cloud of dust seemed rising from the Confederate intrenchments, immediately followed by a general upheaving of the earthworks, and the work was accomplished. The fort was blown up, and with it a whole regiment. Then came the thundering of one hundred and tweuty guns on the Confederate position, and, when confusion must have reigned supreme in the Southern intrenchments, the Federal troops rushed to the assault. The line was carried and a large number of prisoners taken. But the Northern forces were evidently laboring under a delusion about the inner defences of Petersburg; for this was not, as expected, the only line of fortifications untaken. So soon as the Federals had entered the intrenchments they found that there was still a further line, and they were obliged, after keeping the position some hours, to relinquish it. The tremendous cannonading, however, from a hundred and twenty guns at correct range, must have dealt out desperate destruction to the defenders of the city.

From Georgia we have intelligence that shows how untrustworthy are the sources of news from Sherman's army. We have had, according to the despatches, Atlanta taken half a dozen times; yet we find by yesterday's news that Sherman is still making arrangements to invest the city. That the city must speedily fall from its inadequate defences, must be expected; but this crying "wolf" all the time, will make us doubt the fact even when it does take place. Rousseau's successful cavalry raids through Georgia and Alabama, unfold the fact that all the troops these States could muster must have been sent to Johnson's army. The new Confederate commander Hood, seems to be less cautious than his predecessor; he has already made several vigorous assaults on Sherman, with very heavy loss to the Southern troops. It may tend to keep up the spirit of his troops, by assuming the offensive and breaking the monotony of a continued retreat; but the game is a risky one with superior numbers, and must end disastrously. A defensive policy alone can retard the progress of Sherman, and even that retardation unless Lee gives up Virginia and comes to Hood's assistance, can only be of a temporary nature.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

LONDON, June 18, 1864.

INSTABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The race of the Palmerston Government seems to be well nigh run. Last night they had a narrow escape of being defeated, after a debate upon the Ashantee war, which was opened by Sir J. Hay, who complained that the whole affair had been carried on without the sanction or even knowledge of Parliament; that the arrangements made for the comfort and supply of the troops were infamous, and that death had raged amongst both officers and men out of all proportion of the usual rate of mortality, simply on account of the hardships to which they had been subjected. As a matter of course, the conduct of the Government towards Denmark was dragged into the debate, and there was some hard hitting on both sides, which caused the Premier to lose his temper—not an unusual occurrence now-a-days. Up to 8 o'clock last evening the Government counted upon a majority of 40 at least. It will be seen that on a House composed of 464 members a majority of 7 was all that could be mustered. The affair is taken to be the beginning of the end. For the last ten days rumor has prevailed in all the clubs that the ministry would be attacked by the opposition, not on the Ashantee matter alone, but on other grounds, which would be tantamount to an endeavor to elicit a vote of want of confidence. At present, however, the leaders of the opposition do not desire to push things so far to extremities. They are striving to hold the younger members on their side in check, since it would be most inconvenient for them to come into power just at the crisis of the Denmark danger; but, even should they succeed in postponing the fight, and its result, the internal differences of the Cabinet may bring about the very object that is aimed at. The partisans of the Government, on all hands, admit that it cannot stand much longer. Their hopes is to tide over the present session, so as to remain in place till next February. But there is such a multiplicity of unpleasant business on their hands, and the incapacity of the principal members of the Cabinet to deal with and settle it, is so patent, that the crisis may come at any moment, when the position of the conservatives will be far better for the stability of a new ministry, than if the opposition had put out the present holders of office by an adverse vote. I should not be at all surprised if I have to inform you of this event in my next, when, in all probability, I may also have to say that Sir John Pakington will be the successor of Mr. Cardwell, a change which I should think, not only the residents in Vancouver, but in all the other colonial dependencies, would hail with general satisfaction.

THE CONFERENCE.

The Conference still "drags its slow length along." The plenipotentiaries meet to-day, but I shall scarcely be able to obtain any information that may be relied upon as to their decision, should any decision be arrived at. Austria and Prussia are said to be disposed "to draw in their horns," but they have not ceased to bluster and bully because of their wishing at present to ascertain what "the mysterious man" on the other side of the channel is intending. If Prussia insists upon the annexation of the Danish territory she has overrun, France will claim the Rhine provinces as sure as fate, and this does not suit the book of either of the two greater or a few also of the lesser German powers. Take one thing, however, for certain, there will be no European war this year. The sinews of war are not forthcoming, and whilst we hold the purse strings and France is enriched by the interchange of commerce between herself and Great Britain she will not cut off her nose to spite her face. Till, however, Earl Russell is out of the boat Louis Napoleon will not return to his former friendly relations with England. This I can tell you upon unquestionable authority, which I had the opportunity of meeting with only a few days ago in Paris. Let Lord Derby come back to office, said my informant, "and in less than four and twenty hours we shall be once again in perfect accord with your country. With Lord Palmerston and Russell *jamais jamais!*"

RECRUITING FOR THE FEDERALS.

There has been a great stir on the river Thames within the last few days. A suspicious looking craft made its appearance off Gravesend a night or two ago, but in the morning she was off, no one knew whither. When, however, the muster roll of the Royal Artillery and one or two other Regiments were called at Woolwich the number of desertions was said to exceed a hundred. Not one of these levanters has been so much as heard of since. It is generally believed that they are well across the Atlantic by this time to serve as food for powder. One fellow robbed an officer whose servant he was of £200 and some valuable jewelry before starting, and of his whereabouts there are no tidings. Where the Yankees get the money from to pay the large bounties they offer in open defiance of all Government, police, or other authority in our sea board town, no one knows. Nevertheless bounties are handed over and men are gone before you can even wink an eye. The plan of operations in this direction is well laid and cleverly carried out.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH VANCOUVER.

I was talking the other night with an engineer of high standing upon this subject, when he told me that if I waited patiently for a a few weeks I should have something to communicate which would afford great satisfaction to your colony. The proposition to carry out the Overland route, he told me, had been attracting more attention than had yet been given to it. Some "strong men" in the city were putting their heads together how best to give the scheme a push that would bring it an increase of really substantial supporters. "It is a mere question of time," he said, and must ere long be one of the greatest accomplished facts of the day. I do not know what you on your side are doing in the matter, but, if you put yourselves *en rapport* with good men and true here, the thing may I think, be said to be as good as done. Then there will be grand opportunities for Vancouver of which your people will not fail to make the most. If a Conservative Government should but come into office, a determination to aid colonial progress will certainly be amongst the most prominent features of its administration.

CAPTAIN SEMMES AND THE ALABAMA.

The Confederate "pirate," as the Yankees designate Captain Semmes, whom they cannot catch, has just put out by means of the *Times*, a manifesto against the conduct pursued by this country towards the Southerners. That he should feel strongly is not to be wondered at, seeing that the Northerners have had "the pull" in their favor, by the ability of our traders to supply them with whatever "munitions of war" they are prepared to buy; but when he condemns our neutrality as being all on one side, he goes a trifle too far. Moreover he overlooks the fact that the blockade of the Southern ports is the chief hindrance to the South operating with us upon the same terms that the Federals can obtain. That English sympathy is partially with the South, is not enough for the gallant captain. That we should go the "entire animal" with those who think with him would alone satisfy him. This we are not prepared to do, and therefore, however much we may regret Captain Semmes' indignation, we are content to leave matters as they are, and bear all, or even more than he has written.

THE QUEEN.

Her Majesty has returned from Balmoral and is now resident at Windsor, even in more exclusive retirement than before she went north. She has been only once to London since her arrival at the Castle, to visit the Duke of Newcastle, who is dying by inches, and to call upon Dean Stanley at Westminster Abbey, to whom she has always shown much consideration. The Very Reverend the Dean is one of those modern divines who is accused of heresy. The visit of the Queen has, therefore, caused not a little surprise and talk amongst those religious coteries into which broad views and liberal notions obtain no admission.

NEW ZEALAND.

The last news from this distant colony is of an unpleasant nature. Not only is the war not ended, but, in an engagement with the natives one of our regiments has had the worst of it; so that the insurgents not only escaped, but have gone further up country to another and a stronger position, out of which they will have to be driven, most probably, with the loss of the lives of many of our brave and gallant countrymen. However much the loss of valuable lives is to be regretted there is no alternative but to complete the work of subjugation; and to effect this Mr. Cardwell has just proposed to Parliament that a loan of £1,000,000 shall be guaranteed to the colony, out of which £500,000 already owing to the colonists—a sort of robbing Peter to pay Paul—is to be paid back at once, whilst a substantial local contribution is to be made to meet the expenses of the troops, and cordial co operation is to be given to the Governor to assist him in carrying out the policy of the Home Government towards subduing the natives. The circumstances of the case seem to justify this course. No half measures will succeed, and there can be no safety in New Zealand until the natives are conquered. For this there must be money raised, and an Imperial guarantee can only enable the authorities to make safe and satisfactory terms.

PARIS HORSE RACE.

All France has been in ecstacies at the result of the race, which was approaching when I last wrote you. Neither Blair-Athol nor Fille d'air won; an outsider—but a French outsider, and hence the jubilation—yclept Verthmout having carried away the £4,000 prize. So elated has the French press been at this unexpected result that one of the principal journals positively asserts that it is equivalent to Waterloo! If the French are satisfied on this head, there is not much probability of our differing with them, especially on this the anniversary of that day.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

It may interest not a few of your readers to learn that the amiable Princess of Wales is again *enceinte*. Notwithstanding her interesting condition she yet goes out into society and undergoes an immense amount of fatigue in visiting the nobility and taking part in the gaieties of the London season, which has been one of the most brilliant on record for many years past. The infant Prince is reported to be a strong and healthy child.

GOLD FROM SOOKE.—Some of the partners in the Wide Awake Co., yesterday exhibited to us some magnificent coarse gold, weighing two ounces seven dwts., washed out of their claim on Leech river; several of the nuggets were about the size of pumpkin seeds. This was the result of about four hours' washing. One hundred dollars have been offered and refused for the $73 nugget taken from the Industry claim.