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THE BRITISH COLONIST

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AGENTS: John G. ...
W. T. ...
F. ...

THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND.

It is always instructive to watch the progress of a great nation. We see in the aggregate prosperity the result of individual success, and in the individual progress the guarantee that wisdom has guided the industry of the population into that channel which is most acceptable to nature. There is what is usually termed "luck" in national as in individual life; but when we see steady progress in the career of either an individual or a nation, we can come to but one conclusion, that the best gifts of nature are not hidden like the talent of the slothful servant but employed in the most profitable manner. The converse of the proposition is equally true. If we see a country rather retrograding than advancing, we may be certain its inhabitants have made some grand blunder. With confidence may we predict that they are inexperienced or unenlightened, and that the laws of nature are set at defiance. We shall not at present make the latter an application to our own condition but endeavor to show the vast strides which the mother country is making in material prosperity.

The returns for the financial year of 1864-65, have just been issued, and their result is truly wonderful. The revenue has reached the enormous figure of £70,313,436, nearly a million in excess of Mr. Gladstone's estimate, and, when we take into consideration the two millions and a-half of remissions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nearly three millions of an increase over the unusually large revenue of last year. If anything can prove the vitality of a nation, it is the increasing capacity to bear taxation. England has gone on steadily for a number of years adding to her revenue, without any additional imposts, from a million to a million and a quarter every twelve months. This was looked upon as the normal progress of the country; but the last year ending March 31st, has eclipsed all former years, and makes it really the *annus memorabilis*. "In spite of," says the *Times*, "a reduction amounting to more than £1,300,000 last year, the Customs for the year ending yesterday amount to £28,572,000, against £23,232,000 for the year before. The excise, which is a still better test of the general well being of the people, has risen from £18,207,000 to £19,558,000, and thus by itself puts an increased sum of £1,351,000 into the national purse. Stamps are buoyant; taxes also show an increase. The property tax yields wonderfully, and it is a sign of the advancing wealth of the country that whereas the estimate used to be a million sterling for every penny of the tax, a six-penny tax now produces £7,958,000. When it is remembered that the whole mass of the laboring classes, the artisans, and even the very small tradesmen are free from this impost, and that it only affects a comparatively small section of the community, the sum of nearly eight millions produced by a tax of sixpence in the pound is certainly an astonishing result. Another and still more gratifying proof of the progress of the country, is afforded by the returns of the Post Office, which has risen in a single year from £2,810,000, to £4,100,000. The total result of the year is that there is a decrease of £660,000 on the Customs, caused by the diminution in the sugar duties; an increase of £1,351,000 on the excise; a decrease of £1,126,000 from the lowering of the property tax, an increase of £290,000 on the post office through the rapid growth of the national prosperity and enlightenment.

There is something in all this astonishing for what is generally termed an "old" country. The vast progress of the United States is what must in the very nature of things be expected. An immense territory with unlimited arable land calling upon the abled poverty of the old World to develop its latent wealth—what other condition could we look for than rapid advancement? The case of England is, however, widely different. With a small territory and overcrowded by a struggling population, many of whom live from hand to mouth, or eat the bread of charity, her position might easily be presumed to be precarious in the extreme. Yet we find as great a vitality in her commercial and financial condition and as great an elasticity in her capacity to bear national burthens as can be found in the great American Republic. With this increased prosperity of the country it is gratifying to find that the condition of the poorer classes is not entirely overlooked. The staid charities of the past with all their degrading influences are becoming gradually displaced by economic and more humane establishments. The disgraceful condition of the poorer classes, in what is known in England as the parishes, has been taken in hand by the House of Commons. Mr. Villiers introduced a bill to make the settled poor chargeable to the union instead of the parish, the result of which will be to make the land owners pay more attention to the condition of those who are necessitated to work for them. "The landed proprietor in England," says the *Spectator*, "is as much bound to house his laborers well as a railway company is to carry them safely; he enjoys a monopoly and if he wants to retain it must perform the duties. He has no more right to force the charge of his own workmen upon his neighbors than he has to force them to pay his wages." Other measures have been taken to relieve the poor in the metropolis. The system which was adopted last year in London of establishing houses of refuge for the houseless, and which afforded shelter for thousands of wretches every night, is to be made more special in its character. Under last year's management it was found that professional mendicants took advantage of the scheme, and got gratuitous supper, bed, and breakfast, to in many instances the deprivation of the more needy; in the new measure this evil is to be if possible removed. As another means of elevating the poorer classes, Mr. Gladstone has brought forward a scheme for Government insurances and annuities, by which the working man can have his life insured by Government for any sum between £20 and £100, or obtain a life annuity. "A man who marries at 25, and will invest half a crown a week with Mr. Gladstone will at sixty have a life annuity of £40 a year, and at death £52 bequeathable to anybody he likes—will in fact be with his family pretty fairly beyond want." Such praiseworthy efforts on the part of English statesmen to mitigate if they cannot remove the great evils of poverty in one class, and improvidence in another, cannot but meet with general approbation. The only misfortune is that they have come so late in the day.

COLONIAL BISHOPS.—The *London Spectator* of March 25th gives a summary of the judgment of the Privy Council, drawn up by Lord Kingsdown, on Bishop Colenso's case, as follows: "The decision is to the effect that neither the patent of the metropolitan Bishop of Capetown nor the patent of the Bishop of Natal could convey any legal jurisdiction, because both colonies had received representative institutions at the time of the grant of these patents, and the mere prerogative of the Crown would not extend to establish any new ecclesiastical court in colonies so situated. In a Crown colony proper the Queen's patent might effect this, but not in one where that prerogative has already been given away or limited by free colonial institutions. The judgment absolutely puts an end to the dream of some ecclesiastical parties that the Queen is head of the Church in a different sense from that in which she is head of the State, and that to recognize the Queen's authority is not to recognize the authority of Parliament over the Church. It affirms in the strongest way that her ecclesiastical authority and her secular authority are alike limited by the Legislature. The Bishops of Capetown and Natal are therefore the "baseless fabrics of a vision." Dr. Colenso is bishop in the abstract, and Dr. Gray is a metropolitan in the abstract, but no clergyman in the diocese of either is in any way subject to their authority. If a clergyman lives a disgraceful life, or even sacrifices to idols, no one can punish him but the societies who pay his income—by withdrawing it. If the two episcopal abstractions resigned together their ineffectual patents, they would only throw off a titular authority which it is scarcely manly to attempt to keep.

BANK AGENCY IN PORTLAND.—The bank of British Columbia is about to establish a branch in the city of Portland, under the management of Mr. Russell, so well and favorably known in connection with the bank in this city, as well as in the branches at Cariboo and San Francisco. Mr. Russell leaves for his new position on Thursday next via Olympia.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The steamer *Enterprise* arrived from New Westminster on Saturday evening, with a few passengers and a small letter express.

CARIBOO.

Mr. Russell, of the Bank of British Columbia, who left Williams' Creek on the 18th instant, gives us the following information:—The undermentioned claims were working and taking out pay at date of his leaving the creek: Raby, Cameron, Dead Broke, Forest Rose, New York, Never Sweat, Australia, Hi-or-Miss. The Ericsson, Caledonia, and Bald Head were washing when Mr. Russell left. Three claims in Stout's Gulch were also at work. There were about 1800 men on the creek, who were all at work, there being no idle men at the mines. Flour was being procured with the utmost vigor, several parties having left the city by both land and water, for the spot; so far, however, they have been totally unsuccessful. The steaming Sir James Douglas left here with a number of gentlemen on Saturday morning at 3:30 a.m., and arrived at Sooke at 6 a.m. The party, consisting of Messrs. DeCosmos, A. T. Elliott, R. Ewing, Battle, Fotheringham, J. Irvine, Geo. Mason, Courtney, W. Brown, Jas. Langley, the Thains, W. A. Harries, Wm. Green, F. W. Whymper, Ashe, Dougal, Rothwell, Gibbon, A. D. Bell, Fardon, Hibben, Arch. Dod, Forgie, Furness and others, was at once formed into sections, and scoured the country all day in every direction, but found no traces of the missing man. The Muir party, led by old Mr. Cowan, were also out all day with like result. Every trail, whether foot, cattle, or logging, was followed up and carefully scrutinized, and several dogs were kept hunting round all the time; the party worked indefatigably, but were rather disheartened at their total lack of success. They are still determined to persevere however, intending to spend the whole of Sunday in close search of the bush surrounding the trail. The headquarters of the party are at the Sawmill, where they were to sleep. Several of the party returned on Saturday night by the steaming *Enterprise* which came up for more men, and provisions, and returned yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, taking down Mrs. Carswell and a number of volunteers. A meeting was held at Eberhard's Hotel on Saturday night, and a party of 12 good men was organized under the guidance of Mr. Patis, and started out by land this morning. They would go in one of Mr. Williams' stages as far as possible, and then strike for Leech river and follow down the trail.

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Later Eastern News

The *Columbian* of Friday publishes the following additional particulars of the capture of Jeff Davis:

New York, May 21.—The *Herald's* account of the capture of Jeff. Davis says: "When the guard went to his tent they were met by Mrs. Davis in *deshabille* with 'Please gentlemen, don't disturb the privacy of ladies before I have time to dress.' 'All right, madam,' replied the corporal, 'we will wait till you have on your duds.' Presently there appeared at the tent door an old lady with a bucket on her arm, escorted by Mrs. Davis in person, who in a pleading tone said, 'please let my mother go to the spring for some water to wash.' 'It strikes me your mother wears very large boots,' said the guard, as he poked the old lady's dress with his sabre and discovered a pair of No. 13 walking shoes and white stockings." "I am not a woman," said the old lady, "I am a man."

After the capture Col. Fritchard started with his prisoners for Macon. The party were all sullen, and Davis remarked if he had not been surprised he would not have surrendered without a fight. While on the road they received President Johnson's proclamation offering a hundred thousand dollars reward for Davis. He read it and trembled; his hand dropped to his side, and with a groan he dropped the paper. [Here the line broke down south of Sehome.]

CHINA. SHANGHAI, February 23.—The Mahometan rebels have gained some material success. They have captured Tunchang and Loyang. The Chinese garrison at Hungchow has mutinied. There is no news of importance from Japan.

NEW ZEALAND. A telegram has been received which says that a fire took place at Dunedin on the 24th January, when twelve shops, including the premises of the Bank of Otago (limited) were burned. The books and cash of the bank were, however, saved, and business was continued as usual. The bank premises were fully insured.

THE RUSSIAN PESTILENCE. BERLIN, April 7.—Authentic intelligence states that three very similar maladies exist at St. Petersburg. The first is manifested by spasmodic affection of the brain and spinal cord, and the second is typhus, gradually developed into *febris recurrens*. Quite recently a third of the Siberian plague has broken out also. Of this 70 per cent. die within a few hours. A stout strong disposition to vomit, which cannot be satisfied, a swelling of the belly, pestilential diarrhoea, and a dark color of the skin, are its unmistakable symptoms. It is the black death. St. Petersburg papers deny the existence of the plague in the capital, but the Government of the province shows that the present stage, if greatly resembles the plague in many cases, indeed, it is difficult to distinguish plague from *febris recurrens*, at least at a time when typhoid fever epidemics are abroad. The disease is apparently on the increase in Poland, also, and eastern Prussia, an epidemic has broken out. It is manifested by a severe inflammation of the membranes of the brain and spine. It is infectious, and as fatal as the worst form of cholera. A letter from Dr. Althaus attributes the prevalence of epidemic at St. Petersburg to the extremely imperfect sanitary conditions of that city, and the habits of the lower classes.

PARIS, April 8.—The *Moniteur* says the government has instituted inquiries into the sanitary condition of St. Petersburg, and has received telegrams, dated the 3rd and 6th, according to which the state of the city was deplorable.

STEAMER FOR THE KOOTENAY ROUTE.—We understand that Captain Mouatt, of the *Enterprise*, will proceed up country this week to superintend the construction of the new steamer on Kamloops and Shuswap lakes, in preparation for the expected travel over that route in the fall by the returning miners from Kootenay. It is fortunate for the country that the enterprise of the Hudson Bay Company in this matter will in some measure atone for the tardiness of the British Columbia Government. Had a road even of the most primitive kind been pushed through this spring, the greater part of the travel, which has been enriching Portland and the Columbia River towns, would have been diverted into our own channels. Even as it is, while the route via Portland is up to the present date completely blocked by snow, the route via the Shuswap has been quite practicable for some time. There can be no doubt that the natural outlet for the Kootenay district is by way of Fraser River, and it only requires a judicious expenditure in opening up wagon roads to turn the whole of the traffic through our own territories.

A GOOD RESOLUTION.—President Lincoln recently said to an intimate friend pretty nearly in these words:—"I have made up my mind to make very few changes in the offices in my disposal for my second term. The fact is, I think I will not remove a single man except for good and sufficient cause. It creates a great deal of dissatisfaction and grumbling to make changes. To remove a man is very easy, but when I go to fill his place there are 20 applicants, and of these I must make 19 enemies."

A WAR OFFICE RETURN has been issued, showing that on the 1st of April, 1865, there were 141 battalions of infantry of the British army (exclusive of foot guards and colonial corps) at home, in the colonies, or in India. At home there were 42 battalions, in the colonies 46 (five of which are under orders to return home from New Zealand), and 53 in India.

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