

The Weekly Colonist.

Tuesday, April 4, 1865

A COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION

In our issue of yesterday we alluded briefly to the remarkable revolution which has taken place in social and commercial interests in India. The subject is one in all its bearings well worthy public attention. It shows to what extent the interests of one nation depend on those of another, and how the equilibrium of commerce being displaced in the southern portion of the United States affects even the distant plains and valleys of Hindoostan. There is something curious and interesting in not only the ramifications and eccentricities of trade, but in the causes of the decay and resuscitation of commercial and industrial greatness. Who would have thought, for instance, that the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 would have made poor Roychoud a millionaire in 1864, or that Beauregard's bombardment of Fort Sumter would have converted the poverty-stricken ryots of India into riotous-living nabobs? Yet such has really been the case. The disruption of the cotton industry in the Southern States has thrown the monopoly of the trade into the hands of the people of Hindoostan. In 1860 the export of cotton from America was five million bales, or about 2,000,000,000 lbs., valued at upwards of \$191,000,000, or about fifteen and a-half cents a pound. In 1864 it had decreased to 65,000,000 lbs. The cultivation of the cotton-plant in India has, however, been increasing in a geometrical ratio every year since the American civil war, until its exports the present year are estimated at one million and a-half bales, or, reckoning the East Indian bale at 365 lbs., \$37,500,000 lbs. This, it is true, is but little over one-fourth the unusually large amount of cotton which was exported from America in 1860 prior to the breaking out of hostilities, but its value is fully equal to the five millions bales of that period. Such an immense inducement to the cotton cultivator will speedily bring the amount produced up to the American standard.

However immediate may be the termination of the present civil war, one thing appears very evident—cotton growing on the North American continent will never assume its former proportions or importance. It will take several years, under the most favorable circumstances, to bring this industry back into its normal channels, and when that time arrives it will be found that other countries can produce as good and as cheap cotton and in as large quantities as the Southern States. At present the most enterprising countries that are laboring to supply the Manchester mills are India, Egypt, China and Japan; but there are besides, Brazil, Turkey, the West Indies, and Peru. The anticipated crop from all these places the present year is about 3,000,000 bales. Next year it will fall probably little short of five millions—an amount, large as it may appear, that will be quickly absorbed if peace be restored in the interim between North and South; for independent of the increased demand consequent on the fall of price, which will ensue from a cessation of hostilities, there is at present in very part of the world a great scarcity of manufactured cotton goods.

The revolution which this displacement of a great industry is going to work in England can scarcely be over-estimated. In times past Great Britain was dependent for the employment of her masses on the Southern States; every war-cloud in the West made her look with alarm on the condition of that manufacturing interest which gave food directly and indirectly to three or four millions of the population, and which added wealth almost beyond computation to the nation. Now let war come or go, she has a great stand-by in her Eastern possessions. She has a country teeming with millions of a cheap labor population, and with an untold acreage of fertility—a country which only requires British enterprise and British capital to become a never-ceasing mine of wealth to itself and its possessors. This cradle of civilization will once more assume her old characteristic; the riches of "the Indies" will be something more than traditional, and that vast population which is now plunged in superstition and idolatry will, through the powerful agency of a rapidly increasing commerce, be brought more speedily under the benign influence of Christianity. As every country, however, like every house, has got its skeleton, so India is furnished with an institution that overhangs its prosperity like a Damocletian sword—she is, in fact, hopelessly in debt. Not in debt in the European meaning of the term—as a State to individuals—but individually in debt to the Parsee usurer. Every small property-holder almost is attempting to clear off hereditary claims against his estate, but in vain—he is retained in hopeless bondage by his exacting and avaricious creditor, and goes down to the grave leaving his children this legacy of woe. Amid all the rejoicing, therefore of the new order of things, there is this heavy load on the poor occupier of the soil; and it is a matter of reproach that the Government has not dealt with the evil long ere this. In one locality, it is true, relief was afforded in the shape of the abolition of all

legal processes for recovering money due, and it is said that prosperity immediately followed, but here the moral courage of the Government stopped. There is always danger of serious internal disturbance so long as this hereditary debt curse is allowed to continue. The evil is thus pitifully described by an English journal: "By and bye Jacques Bonhomme dies, and his son has to take up his debt—the land being security—and contract a new one besides; and so the ball rolls on, till the seething mass of hatred receives some accidental spark, the terrible cry of *Guerre aux riches* rises in some village, and debts, money lender, money lender's family and money lender's wealth in half an hour are all destroyed together. One of the mildest and happiest of Indian tribes in 1855 suddenly seized its forest halibuts, declared war to the rich, and chopped up every money dealer and sheriff's officer it could find." Such are the difficulties which present themselves in the present state of excitement. In other countries the poor in becoming suddenly possessed of wealth might still deem it necessary to practise economy and relieve themselves of debt; but the Hindoo, if he has become wealthy, has also become extravagant, and his recent exaltation will only in all likelihood force him more speedily into an open rupture with that class which appear to him as mortal enemies—the money lending Parsees.

OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENCE.

LONDON, January 28, 1865.

THE QUEEN.

Alas! all the prognostications of those who profess to be well informed, and who have the privilege of obtaining the latest and most accurate intelligence, are falsified as to the Queen's opening of Parliament. That the imperative and urgent duty of her doing so was pressed upon her by Lord Palmerston is generally believed, no less than that Her Majesty at first gave indications of a disposition to accede to the wishes of her confidential advisers and her subjects. But scarcely had the belief gained ground that she would "put in an appearance" on the 7th February, than "a change came over the spirit of her dream." Some passing whim seized her that she could not go down to Westminster with propriety, and thus the opportunity of winning back the waning popularity of her people is irretrievably lost. Urgent as the entreaty was that she would forego her determination it only made her more obstinate, and thus the country will be furnished with another lesson from her own hands that "absence does not make the heart grow fonder;" and that those who are neglected may learn to forget to care for the one who neglects them. Obstinate, however, as the Queen is about remaining in retirement, she is active enough on many subjects as to which it would be wiser for her to be quiet. She seems, indeed, to have caught the Russell mania of "indiscreet letter writing" of late, for no sooner does she see a subject discussed in the public prints, than she writes at once, either with her own hand, or through her amanuensis, Sir C. B. Phipps, to require information, and to insist upon a remedy being applied, whether it be needed or no. A few weeks ago a poor woman died of starvation in one of the many crowded out-of-the-way houses in which the poor lodge. Northwith, Sir C. B. Phipps was instructed to write to the Poor Law Board, that "at one hour the poor were dealt with in such a manner as to render the workhouse less objectionable to them;" and, in a great manner indeed, imputing the death of the woman to the neglect of the poor-law authorities! Of course investigation was immediately set on foot, when it turned out that the woman had been a most eccentric person; that she never would permit any one to enter her room; that the baker was only permitted to leave the bread she bought of him at her door; and that so far from being destitute, she was known to earn from 12s. to 15s. per week by charging. When this information was obtained the President of the Poor Law Board went down to Windsor, and explained the matter, but it was a long time before his persuasion could avail anything with Her Majesty, that his statements were to be relied on. No sooner, however, had that "little affair" blown over the public here not having to this moment been made acquainted with it, though I can vouch for its truth—than another letter, is dissatisfied upon another subject—the recent railway accidents. Just one month has transpired since that letter was sent, but it only found its way into the papers yesterday. It has been discussed on all hands with strong feelings of disapprobation. The letter is so unique that I give it you, just as it was made public yesterday:

"At the half-yearly meeting of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, held at Manchester on Wednesday, the Chairman (Mr. Watkin, M.P.) said that Her Majesty the Queen had written to some of the railway directors in London, as follows: 'Sir Charles Phipps has received the command of Her Majesty the Queen, to call the attention of the directors of the railway to the increasing number of accidents which have lately occurred upon different lines of railroad, and to express her Majesty's warmest hope that the directors of the railway will carefully consider every means of guarding against these misfortunes, which are not at all the necessary accompaniments of railway travelling. It is not for her own safety that the Queen has wished to provide in this calling the attention of the company to the late disasters, but it is on account of her family, of those travelling upon her service, and of her people generally, that she expresses the hope that the same security may be ensured for all as is so carefully provided for herself. The Queen hopes that it is unnecessary for her to recall to the recollection of the railway directors the heavy responsibility which they have assumed since they have succeeded in securing the monopoly of the means of travelling of almost the entire population of the country. Osborne, Dec. 27th, 1864.'

The second portion of the above has raised

a large amount of ridicule, since "the public" is mentioned last, and "self-preservation" is shown to be "the first law of nature" in the Queen's mind, although she excludes herself from any apprehension of danger. The latter portion is also considered to be gratuitous, and scarcely worthy of so high a personage. Indeed, the whole concoction is looked upon as an interference contrary to the entire system of constitutional government, and one which never would have been adopted had the Prince Consort been spared to prevent her Majesty from doing many silly things.

THE PRINCESS LOUISE.

"Another severe sorrow, I fear, is in store for the Queen. The Princess Louise is very seriously ill, so much so indeed as to cause great uneasiness to the Royal Family. She is said to be suffering from neuralgia, but there is greater apprehension of consumption. She has grown very rapidly, and is tall for her age, and as thin as a whipping-post. She is also listless and averse to study or to pleasure, and is disinclined to make any exertion. She is also in a highly nervous state of mind, which her preparation for confirmation by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which took place in the Isle of Wight on the 21st instant, did not tend to allay. Notwithstanding the strict requirements the Queen always insists upon in preparation for this rite, the Princess went through the ceremony better than was anticipated. If neuralgia be alone her ailment, it was probably accounted for by the Queen never permitting any of the rooms of her royal residences, even in the coldest weather, to be raised above a temperature of 65 degrees. The Princess Royal was often heard to say 'only let me get married, and see whether I don't then have a good warm fire!'

PARLIAMENT.

Ministers, as I hear, are anticipating a short but quiet session—that is, of course, relatively quiet, inasmuch as the busy genius of Mr. Disraeli will be sure to stir the political waters of strife if he can get a chance of doing mischief. The Estimates are promised early, and some law reforms will probably be mentioned in the forthcoming speech. The railway question will certainly be ventilated, and a court of final appeal in matters ecclesiastical will probably be gone in for; but not as a government measure. As to Reform, it is now said to be determined that it shall not furnish the subject of a paragraph in the so-called Royal message. Much as that vexed question has been impeded within and without the Cabinet, it is now gone out that it is the last thing to be thought of by reasonable men in the final session of a dying Parliament. I know that some of the foremost Liberal statesmen regret that they could not settle the Reform question four years ago, and I also know that the leaders of the Liberal party wished to pass it, but they were prevented doing so by that dislike and indifference which were begotten by the speeches of Mr. Bright, who did more than any man to kill the Bill of 1860. Liberals of the school of Messrs. Baines and Forster will, no doubt, bring in their annual? but it is out of the question to suppose that any Reform Bill can be passed this year. The session will be one of electioneering process, and if some few useful measures pass it is as much, perhaps more than can be expected. It is anticipated that the address will be moved in the Commons by Sir Hedworth Williamson, M.P. for Durham, a connection of the Earl of Zetland, the G.M. of Free Masons, and a thorough going Whig, and seconded by the Hon. Harbottle Tracy. Who of the young Peers recently elevated to that House are to do the same duty is not yet made known.

THE POET LAUREATE. I dare say Alfred Tennyson is quite as popular with yourselves as he is in the old country at home, though why he should be so, I cannot for the life of me tell, since it may be from stupidity, or ignorance, or anything else you please. I never could find anything grand in his poetic fire, to admire except a few lines of a translation he made a short time ago from Homer in which he certainly beat Lord Derby hollow. Well, all at once, I forgot to add that the aforesaid Alfred Tennyson had been dubbed a baronet. It now turns out, however, that he has not become Sir Alfred, the story having been officially contradicted. It is probable however that he was offered this dignity. You would be astonished at the keenness with which the propriety of the aforesaid promotion has been canvassed in society. A very large number of his admirers gave out that they were seriously shocked at the bare idea. For my own part I can see no reason why a Poet Laureate if he can afford the expense such honors would thrust upon him, should not be transformed into a baronet, since baronets there be by shoals. Mr. Macaulay was raised to the Peerage quite as much for his literary as for his political services. No body objected to that creation. Mr. Tennyson's poetry may not perhaps be as good in its way as Mr. Macaulay's prose; it may even, Mr. Tennyson prefers to remain without a title, whose business is that except his own?

Sharp-eyed people are predicting an early fall in the price of cotton, and upon what appears good reasons. For instance, the quantity now in stock (January 21st) exceeds that in stock at the same time last year by 360,000 bales—i.e., nearly as much again. The yearly increase in the supply has gone on at a high rate, and it may fairly be presumed will go on. But if the rate of supply be only kept up, there will be above a million bales available for the consumption of 1865. This would be quite sufficient, perhaps more than sufficient for the demand, but the supply will most probably be largely in excess. In that case prices must come down. The fact is we have learned at last to do without America, and the sooner we turn our eyes from that quarter altogether as an extensive source of supply the more healthy will the trade become.

LONDON WEATHER. We have recently had most extraordinary weather. With the beginning of the year the frost gave way, and it became as mild as spring; but on Saturday last, the 21st inst., a fog arose, which put all London and forty miles to the north of it, *hors d'combat*. It was so dreadfully dense a fall of smoke all day, and especially in the evening, that it was literally "a darkness that might be felt." What made it worse was the setting in of frost with it. Many people met with

troublesome adventures. A friend of mine was two hours and a half getting from Hamstead to Regent's Park in a carriage and pair. Two young ladies, who had ventured out to a concert, missed their carriage and were wandering about the street in evening costume, when a really *preux chevalier*, unknown to both, found them a hansom—your Vancouver ladies will doubtless say, "he did the hand(some), ahem!"—and in the most gallant manner took them home; while a sapient gentleman asserts, "bon honor," that in trying to steer from Pall Mall to Buckingham Palace, he positively lost his way and found himself turning round a tree in the Mall under the idea he had reached the Wellington Statue at Hyde Park corner. I give you herewith an amusing "cutting," which contains not the least exaggeration, I assure you.

FRANCE.

The contest between Louis Napoleon and the Papacy progresses. It has been said he ought not to have interfered, to give the bishops an opportunity of shouting defiance and taking up the role of martyrs. But he dared not do otherwise. The Pope attacked the State. The State is sacred in the eyes of Frenchmen, and deep would have been the feeling had the onslaught of "The Old Man of the Mountain" gone on unchecked. Even Spain has taken ground against the Papal documents. It is probably only in Austria that they will officially and freely circulate. Even there they are a source of bitter embarrassment to the Government, which lies helplessly in the fetters of a most shameful Concordat. How the strife will end no one can foresee; but that it is raging deeply in society all over Europe is plain. All the Liberal Roman Catholics are alarmed, and in Ireland especially they feel as if they had been ruthlessly knocked down. Every nation in Europe has been made to see that its domestic peace, and all it holds dear, can be assailed and disturbed by a foreign power, claiming obedience in temporal as well as spiritual things. The aggressive character of the Papacy has rarely been so closely brought home to every people.

PRUSSIA.

The next strife bids fair to arise in Germany. There M. Von Bismark is playing for the stake of Empire, his object being plainly the annexation of the conquered Duchies to Prussia, and as much more to Germany as he can get. The King's speech, the Minister's despatches to the Minor States, the necessities of Austria, all show that the internal position of Prussia favors this bold venture, for the King is practically independent of the Chambers. M. Von Bismark has intoxicated the people with military glory (I) and the army to a man is with him. If the Chambers—as they will—reject the Budget they will be sent home and the King will govern without them. The Prussians like their Constitution very much; but they like empire in Germany much more. The result is that Bismark will have free play. It is a question whether France will interfere, as she would like to do; for the Germans hate the French even more than they hate the English, which is saying a great deal, and they would force their Governments to put forth their utmost strength against French intervention in German quarrels. Bismark has, therefore, only to reckon with Austria and the Minor Powers. Victory in the internal question, which he has substantially secured by the Danish war, thus gives him a fair field on the larger scene of German politics. It will be very interesting to watch the development of his audacity and craft, which may result in giving Prussia rule over half Germany. Liberty there, as we understand it here, seems to be indefinitely deferred in favor of Empire. The most striking thing is that this exploit will be the work of democracy, skillfully used by Kings and aristocrats.

RATE OF DISCOUNT.

The Directors of the Bank of England, on Thursday reduced the rate of discount from 5½ to 5 per cent. Consols—closing prices, 89½@. Money—Acct. Feb. 2—89½@.

INCOME TAX.—Owing to the absence of the hon. member for Metchin, the motion for the imposition of an income tax was deferred till Thursday. Apropos of income tax, a laughable story is told as having occurred in the early days of Fort Victoria: In 1846, shortly after the income tax was imposed, amid so much excitement in England, H.M. S. America, Capt. Hon. John Gordon, arrived in the Straits of Fuca. Lieut. Peel, since famous for his exploits during the Indian mutiny, who was then an officer on board the America, observing some Indians in their canoes near the ship called out to them, on which the savages replied in Chinook, shaking their heads at the same time, *Wake cum-tax*. The ludicrous resemblance of the sound to income tax at once struck Peel, who turning to his companions said, "By Jove, even these savages are afraid of the income tax," a remark which created shoals of laughter throughout the ship.

LEACH RIVER MAN.—It is notified in the Government Gazette that mails will be made up at the Victoria Post Office for Leach River every Tuesday and Friday morning, at 8.45 a.m., and at Leach River (Kennedy Flat), for Victoria, every Thursday and Sunday morning, at 9 a.m.

BRAZIL.—Advices from Col. Webb, U.S. Minister at Rio de Janeiro published in the N.Y. Times of the 11th ult. say that the Government of Brazil has issued a decree excluding the pirate Shenandoah from the ports of that Empire. At the date of these advices Mr. Seward's answer to the case of the Florida had not been received at Rio.

MR. SIMS REEVES, the celebrated tenor, has lately been disabled from duty by a singular accident. While taking off his double eye glass the spring broke, and the sharp points entered one of his eyeballs, causing severe inflammation. (The injury is not considered serious.)

THEATRICAL.—Mr. Fechter, the celebrated tragedian, is playing "Robert Macaire" with immense success in London.

CITY COUNCIL.

Monday Evening, March 27, 1865. The Council met last evening at 7.30. Present—His Worship the Mayor, and Councillors McDonald, Fell, Munro, Smith, and Jeffery.

COMMUNICATIONS.—The following communications were received, and ordered to be placed on file: From Thomas Trounce, assenting to the resolution of the Council in regard to the temporary rental of the Council chamber.

From Alfred Bowden and Wm. Lorimer, applying for the situation of city inspector. From the Colonial Treasurer, acknowledging receipt of copy of City Assessment Roll, showing list of defaulters in detail and in the aggregate.

CONDITION OF THE STREETS.

Mr. McDonald said he wished to draw the attention of the Council to the condition of the streets. Warm weather was approaching, and if something were not speedily done some serious epidemic might arise among the inhabitants. He desired to say nothing about the bills now in the House of Assembly. A short bill had passed the Upper House, and a very long one the Lower, which would take some time before it could pass through the Upper—longer than it was desirable the Council should wait. He would, however, ask his Worship to meet the Council, and wait upon His Excellency in reference to the employment of the chain-gang. He thought the inhabitants would willingly tax themselves to have the streets cleaned. Five dollars from each resident would do the work effectually.

The Mayor coincided in the necessity of prompt action in this matter, and thought that \$1 from each, with the aid of the chain-gang, would accomplish the work.

Mr. Fell perfectly agreed with the remarks of Mr. McDonald. The long Bill before the House would be a long time trailing its length along, and he regretted the short one had not been passed, as it would have long since placed the Council in working order. He had an objection to the chain-gang being engaged in such work as it afforded facility for escape, and he thought if the Council took some steps to levy a voluntary rate it could be easily obtained before warm weather came and produced sickness.

Mr. McDonald observed that the chain-gang had been employed on a former occasion without risk of escape.

The Mayor said the services of the chain-gang had been readily granted on application to Mr. Pemberton, then Chief Commissioner of Police, and there was no attempt at escape that he was aware of.

Mr. Smith approved of the services of the chain-gang being engaged if possible.

Mr. Fell thought that if a small rate were levied it could be easily collected, and if a few thousand dollars were raised it would be a great Godsend to many men amongst us who would be glad to get employment, and it was certainly more desirable to do this than to employ the chain-gang.

The Mayor said the Council had all the necessary implements for the purpose in their possession.

Mr. McDonald thought the Assessor might go round to residents on Johnson, Yates, and Government streets and obtain voluntary contributions, and other citizens might be also asked to contribute. Mr. Munro suggested that the mud be scooped up in heaps indiscriminately at the corners of the streets and that the residents be left to pay for its removal.

Mr. Fell suggested a rate of \$1.50 on all wet rentals of \$10 per month and an additional half dollar for each additional \$10 rental, and a rate of \$10 per month and an additional half dollar for each additional \$10 rental, and a rate of \$10 per month and an additional half dollar for each additional \$10 rental.

On motion of Mr. McDonald it was agreed that Mr. Leigh be requested to solicit a voluntary rate from all occupiers and proprietors of houses and land within the following limits, to be applied towards clearing the sewers and streets, viz: Government street from James Bay to Johnson street, Yates, from Wharf to Douglas street, Johnson, from Wharf to Douglas street, Wharf, from Port to Johnson street, Port, from Government to Douglas street.

Mr. Fell suggested that if the fund raised permitted the holes in the street be repaired.

The Mayor highly approved. The streets in some places were in shocking repair.

NUISANCES.

Mr. Fell drew attention to the state of the sidewalks, which had dangerous holes in them in various parts of the city.

The Mayor said the sidewalk ordinance was a very good one, and if the proper parties were brought before him he would certainly fine them.

Mr. Fell also drew attention to the nuisances created by Chinese washmen, particularly in the neighborhood of Store street.

The Mayor said he was surprised no one had ever complained to him of this nuisance.

Mr. Munro also called attention to the state of the sidewalk on Johnson street at Blue Bunter's Brewery. Vehicles passing over had cut the sidewalk and left dangerous holes.

A lady was passing the other day with an infant in her arms, and fell through a hole in the sidewalk.

Council adjourned to Monday evening next at seven o'clock.

Telegraphic communication was completed between England and India on January 17th, and on the same day Lieut. Col. Patrick Stewart, director general of the undertaking, died in Constantinople. The Spectator says: "The achievement was not worth the price. There never was perhaps in the British service a man more efficient or more popular than the officer who superintended the telegraph, at 25, was a Lieut. Colonel at 30, and died at 32, leaving a memory that makes every Anglo-Indian wince at his fate."

The Senate of the Confederate States lately passed a vote of thanks to Mr. Lancaster, owner of the yacht Deerhound, for rescuing Capt. Semmes of the Alabama.

Mr. Leitch Ritchie, editor of Chamber's Journal, and well known as a clever, genial author, is dead.

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