

The Weekly British Colonist.

Tuesday, March 27, 1866.

AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

The news received by the Anderson yesterday is not so late as our previous telegrams, but we are placed in possession of some important items of intelligence that were not in the former despatches. The New York Legislature, which has been as a general rule democratic in its tendencies, and which still contains, with all its republican concessions, a large democratic element, has sustained the action of Congress in reference to the admission of the Southern Senators. Under ordinary circumstances this resolve would not be of much importance one way or other, but at the present time, when the President and Congress are at cross-purposes, it is very significant of the tone of public opinion in the greatest State of the American Union, and may be taken as a good indication of the antagonistic feeling which is gradually accumulating against the President's policy of reconstruction. The Republican Convention of Pennsylvania has also spoken out strongly on the present political crisis. According to the telegram, its "platform" has met with the general support of the republican party in both Pennsylvania and New York, and is in direct antagonism with the Johnson administration. All this shows clearly enough a storm ahead; but it shows also that Congress, with its certainty of the support of the New England States, only wanted the endorsement of New York and Pennsylvania to place itself in a secure position in any political contest with the President.

The most important announcement to us in the news which we publish this morning is the defeat in the House of Representatives of the bill regulating the trade with the British Provinces. The particulars of this bill are not given, but from the tenor of the few remarks which appear in the telegram as having been made in the debate, we are led to infer that the measure was a kind of form of reciprocity—or, in other words, a bill embracing free trade with Canada in various raw productions. The argument of the Pennsylvania protectionist, Kelly, that the proposition might be termed a bill to destroy the fisheries, salt manufactories, and lumber trade of the United States and to prevent the working of any bituminous coal leads east of the Alleghany Mountains, would imply that it aimed at granting special privileges to the Provinces on certain articles of export; and the observations of Brooks, from New York, would lead us to form the same opinion; for this gentleman argued in favor of the bill and of partial or complete reciprocity, on the ground that the smuggling along the frontier would be beyond the capacity of the country to prevent. Morrill, of the prohibitory tariff celebrity, was obliged to condemn the opposition to the bill. Although he himself was in favor of abolishing the reciprocity treaty, he considered that unless some such measure as the one in question passed, horses, sheep and cattle would be smuggled from Canada into the United States. The arguments of the friends of the measure were, however, to no purpose, for the bill was defeated by 68 to 63.

This ends, therefore, all hope of any reciprocal measure the present session. St. Patrick's Day terminated the Reciprocity Treaty; and we shall, therefore, hear in a very short time of the effects of the abrogation on both Canada and the United States. That these effects will be serious on many interests in the two countries there can be no doubt, and it is with no small anxiety statesmen on each side of the line will watch the result. In the meantime, our prospects of having reciprocity with the neighboring Territory and States are rather dim, unless indeed, when union shall have been consummated, the united Legislature shall take speedy means, conciliatory or retaliatory, to induce the Pacific members of the American Republic to demand with us the establishment of reciprocal relations.

THE BLACKFOOT MINES.—A miner who left British Columbia last March, and spent the summer in Montana Territory, and who arrived a few days ago in Victoria, fully confirms the unfavorable accounts about the Blackfoot and other mines in that region. He states that the letter published in the Colonist last week in reference to those diggings is perfectly correct and truthful in every particular. There are only three paying gulches in the whole country, and of these the McClellan is the only one yielding anything big. The country is filled with discharged Southern soldiers, and the worst kind of "border ruffians," and if a man does get a good claim he must be a bold one to hold it. Our informant says he has been in every gulch in Montana, and after an experience of 12 years steady mining on this coast, he declares Montana to be the meanest country he has yet struck. He now intends trying Big Bend.—Evening Post.

THE APACHE WAR.—A letter from the Pimo villages, written on the 31st January, contains the intelligence that Col. Wright recently had a fight with the Apache Indians, in which twenty backs were killed, and several squaws and children captured. Col. Wright sustained no loss. Most of the Indians escaped, through the inability of the soldiers to pursue. They were destitute of shoes, but have since been supplied, and Col. Wright will soon start on an expedition toward the Canada river.—Oregonian.

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND.

A correspondent of the Toronto Globe, writing under date of Victoria, V.I., Oct. 14, 1865, gives the following account of the present condition of British Columbia:

"Your paper is not without readers at this western 'Land's End' of British America; and to those of us who consider ourselves settled here, it gives pleasure to note that you watch our affairs with interest, and gather into your columns a great deal of information concerning us. It is also eminently gratifying, at least to all here who own a colonial origin, to find that in negotiations about confederation, which have been occupying the attention of our eastern statesmen, our infant colonies of the Pacific have not been overlooked. I find in these facts reason to presume that some letters on our affairs here, which shall truly represent our misfortunes, mistakes and wants, will prove acceptable to your columns. We realize fully that these colonies must be knit to yours by the most enduring bonds. The real power and majesty of the future empire of British America consists in its possessing a sea coast on both the Adriatic and Pacific oceans, and transit across the continent. Give me, then, I pray you, an opportunity of laying before your readers the true merits of these colonies, for knowledge of us will create friendship.

"Both British Columbia and Vancouver Island are at present in a very depressed condition. It is only the simple truth that the population of both colonies have been decreasing ever since 1862; that the real estate of our cities is greatly depreciated; that at least one-fourth of the houses of Victoria are tenanted; that the yield of gold is less than formerly; that our imports are less, and even so, are still too large; and that our merchants have over-traded, and are now tottering on the brink of ruin, and unless some new gold excitement speedily breaks out, over they will go. This is a tolerably gloomy array of facts; but if I become your correspondent I promise you facts as they are, and will neither smoke nor varnish anything. The above is the naked truth as to our present condition. But as I am certain the causes of this distress do not lie in any deficiency of natural wealth, but mainly in circumstances incidental to our immaturity as communities, I beg to sketch as briefly as possible some of the reasons of our present trouble.

"1. I am nearly half persuaded that it is a mistake to view us as a gold-bearing country. Whenever men get gold into their hands it is next to impossible to get in any thing else. Hence, of the thousands who came from Canada in 1862, probably not one in one hundred has been willing, whether fortunate or unfortunate, to examine with candor the various other occupations this country offers. It would have been impossible for us to have received from any other country so valuable an immigration as that which came to us from Canada in 1862, had they not been spoiled by their vain expectations. They would have gold or nothing. If they could not dig up 5,000 dollars or 10,000 dollars a year, the country became to them in every sense a humbug; and if they got, as a good many did get, five, or ten, or fifty thousand dollars, they left the country at once, taking with them what they had got, and leaving us so much poorer.

"2. The fact of the very unequal distribution of the gold of Cariboo has been a very serious injury to us. Of the millions of dollars yielded annually by that famous district, probably two-thirds have been carried away by the lucky ones to the States or Canada, never to return, leaving, perhaps, not one-third of the gold product towards sustaining the regular population and business of the country. If, instead of one man getting \$20,000 or \$50,000, and forthwith leaving the country, 20 or 50 men had got \$1,000 each, it is plain that the colony in every way would be better off.

"3. A third cause of our present distress is found in the fact that the most of those who brought capital with the intention of settling permanently, instead of turning their attention to productive avocations, invested in real estate, anticipating Australian and Californian results. They are woefully disappointed; a train of evils followed. The high prices these persons paid for real estate encouraged the most extravagant speculation. And while everything was being bought and sold, at the same time almost everything was being mortgaged at from 18 to 24 per cent interest; and when instalments became due and money had to be raised, it commanded still more exorbitant rates, to the extreme detriment of all other business.

"4. Another cause of our trouble, closely akin to the last mentioned, is found in the conduct of our banks. We have a branch of British North America, and the 'Bank of British Columbia,' an English banking company, with one and a-quarter million dollars of capital, the latter established here in 1862, and both doing a large business since that date. I believe there is not another colony under the British Crown where the bank rate is over 8 per cent; yet our banks have, till about three months ago, been charging 18, 21 and 24 per cent. per annum respectively for discounting 30, 60 and 90 day bills—and in the event of a renewal even for 30 days they charged 24 per cent. About the 1st of July last the rates were reduced to 15, 18, and 21 per cent. for 30, 60 and 90 day discounts; but 24 per cent. is retained as the rate for a renewal. The mere statement of the fact is enough to show that these institutions are eating the very vitals out of our commercial community, and it is only necessary for the present depression to last a little longer, and both customers and securities will be alike worthless. But while I do not hesitate to denounce these greedy institutions in strong language, justice compels me to admit that the truly spirited manager of the Bank of British Columbia resident here, D. M. Laug, Esq., appreciates the great mistake, I believe it is mainly owing to him that we have had one reduction already; and if his advice be followed we may look for a further abatement soon, but I do not anticipate that our banks of themselves will consent to a sufficiently radical reduction.

"An exceedingly costly Government in proportion to our population. With less than 10,000 white people in either colony, we are paying \$15,000 a year to each Governor. The civil and judicial establishments of the two colonies cost 160,000, and our united annual expenditure amounts to about \$1,000,000.

These causes sufficiently account for the trouble we are in. Our productive immigrants have been gold-seekers only. Our gold product has been gathered most unequally—a few men getting the larger portion and carrying it away—so that it has done us but very partial good. Those who brought capital invested it in unproductive real estate, instead of farms, mills, tanneries, factories, coal mines, &c. Our rates of interest, even were we a productive community, have been leading us on to ruin; and our costly Government grapples our struggling community like a boa-constrictor. Other causes have assisted to which I may advert in future letters; but the foregoing are the chief. I shall now show that in the present depression there is no ground for discouragement as to the future of these colonies. Our present troubles are accidental, not inherent. Nothing is more certain than that they will yet become bright particular stars among the colonies of Great Britain, if colonies they remain. I shall probably startle some of your readers when I say that I do not know any colony of Britain so well endowed with natural wealth and advantages as these colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island taken together; but I very believe I shall be able to prove it. I have seen a great deal of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada, and I hesitate not to say that we are more variously and better endowed than any or either of them. I admit that in some particulars some of these colonies may have the advantage, but not one of them in the aggregate.

"We have fisheries that will probably become as important as those of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Our waters abound with salmon beyond anything to be found in the world besides—so that in this respect we surpass Canada and New Brunswick. We have vast beds of coal as accessible at numerous different points as those of Sydney, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Canada, have none of them to the present opened a coal mine. Our coasts abound with timber, which must become very speedily a source of immense wealth and profitable employment both for shipping and building and as lumber. Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, make but little lumber; in fact, with the exception of one or two districts in the latter colony, they are all, to some extent, importers of lumber. The deep inlets or fjords which stretch inland 50 and 100 miles from the ocean will afford extraordinary advantages for the prosecution of the lumber trade, enabling the lumbermen to find within easy reach of water communication thousands of miles of magnificent forest. 'Here,' indeed, 'is the forest primeval;' our spars, either for size or quality, surpass the spars of the whole world. They have been tested in the dockyards of England and France, and found superior to the celebrated spars of Norway and Baltic. They have already become an important export of the colony to Europe. We have iron, copper, lead and salt springs, which some of our colonies have and some have not. We have silver and gold-fields that will employ tens of thousands, when men are satisfied to earn three dollars to five dollars per diem, besides proof of the richest gold-field, for a limited one, that has yet been discovered on the North American continent. There can be no doubt that more of such rich deposits will yet be found. Neither Upper Canada nor Prince Edward Island, nor New Brunswick, nor Newfoundland have discovered any such endowment. As an agricultural country it stands behind Upper Canada in the quantity of its farming lands, proportioned to its area, but not in the quality. Taking, for example, the farming lands around Victoria, Saanich, Cowichan, or Comox, V.I.—the delta of the Fraser river, or the benches of the Fraser, near Lillooet, which, however, require irrigation, and I have never seen finer crops in any country. As a pastoral country, I believe it surpasses every other province of British North America. When I state, what is notorious, that thousands of pack mules and cattle are wintered on the Okanagan, the Thomson, the Bonaparte and the Fraser, and the creeks emptying into them, and have been every winter since 1857, generally without a pound of fodder having been provided, I think I give evidence at once of the superiority of this country, as a pastoral country, over any of the eastern provinces. I do not wish to be understood, however, as advising that provision for wintering stock is not necessary here. I reiterate all that trusting to Providence that originates in laziness or recklessness; but I do say that many winters here, especially in the southern part of the country, are so mild that but little or no feeding is required; and that to provide fodder for two or three months would be ample for the severest winters. The bottom lands of the Fraser are covered with blue joint and pea vine. The upland prairies are chiefly covered with bunch grass, probably one of the most nutritious grasses known, though it does not yield abundantly. I appeal to any returned Canadian, if he ever ate finer beef than that fattened in British Columbia. The prices of cattle are good. An ordinary cow is worth fifty dollars, good cows from seventy to one hundred dollars; and beef, at the stalls, 20 to 25 cents; working cattle are worth on an average two hundred dollars per yoke.—The natural grasses we have here are not, I think, favorable for the production of milk or butter, and we are too young, and too few farmers have taken hold of the business in earnest to see what can be done; but I have no doubt, we will have excellent dairy districts as soon as we get the cultivated grasses. I have been here now nearly four years, and I have never known a pound of butter made here sold for less than 62½c. 75c. being the usual price in the upper country. Milk is sold in Victoria at 12½c. per quart, and in winter at 15c. Besides the foregoing sources of wealth, we are eminently rich in furs, and produce many minor articles of commerce, hides, horns, codfish oil, cranberries, etc. So that I hesitate not to say, in view of our agricultural and pastoral capabilities, our coal, iron and copper mines and gold fields, our fisheries, our lumber and ship building, our furs and other natural wealth, that we are as well provided with the means of giving men the wealth of this world as any province of British North America—my own sincere conviction being that not one of them can equal us.

The deaths in San Francisco during the week ending March 10th, numbered 50.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

LATER FROM BIG BEND AND KOOTENAY.

The steamer Enterprise arrived yesterday from New Westminster with a few passengers among whom was Mr. Nelson direct from Kootenay, who furnished the Columbian with the following interesting intelligence from that section and the Big Bend mines:—

Mr. Joseph Hetherington, of Mr. Orr's party, and who it will be remembered went to McCulloch's Creek last fall, was at Lytton last week, and left in considerable haste for French Creek. He said nothing, but it was presumed that his business to Lytton was to record important new discoveries. He reports the weather rough on the Columbia river but fine all the way down. He left French Creek on the 6th and Seymour on the 9th.

Business was looking brisk at Seymour, and many persons were driving over the ice. A party of twenty miners left to cross over to the diggings. They took their supplies with them on toboggans. A good deal of prospecting had been done on the creeks, and the ground had not frozen owing to the depth of snow. Eighteen men wintered on French Creek and 32 at Seymour.

The ice on Shuswap lake was giving way very fast and the weather along the Bonaparte was very mild. Mr. Hetherington brought out a packet of letters, one of which was from Mr. Orr to a gentleman in this city. The letter was written at Wilson's landing, on the Columbia river, and although it contains no mining news of importance, it alludes with confidence to the prospects of the Big Bend mines during the approaching season. All accounts agree that it is too early to go in yet.

The roads through the canyons above Yale had been rendered quite passable by warm rains which had prevailed for several days, and Barnard's stage coaches were to start out from Yale yesterday instead of from Boston Bar, as advertised.

Uriah Nelson & Co. dispatched a pack-train from Yale last Saturday for Kamloops lake, loaded with provisions for Big Bend, and on Monday next they will send out another train for the same place. We understand that other Yale merchants are also sending forward goods.

Mr. Nelson, discoverer of the creek bearing his name in Cariboo, arrived on Monday from Kootenay, where he has been for the last twelve months. He left Wild Horse Creek on the 14th February, and has kindly supplied us with the following items:

"The weather was very cold on Wild Horse Creek, although there was but little snow.—About 100 white men and 20 Chinamen are wintering on the creek. The supply of provisions is abundant; flour 40 cents, bacon 70 cents, sugar 70 cents, and other articles in proportion. The miners had laid in a winter's supply of fresh meat, which they preserved by freezing. Considerable prospecting had been done during the winter, and although owing to the intense cold, the bed rock had not been reached, the utmost confidence was felt. Several tunnels had been run into the hill, one a distance of four hundred feet.

It is expected that Chinese laborers will be chiefly employed on Wild Horse Creek next season, as the white population will be drawn off to Big Bend.

Captain White's boat, the "Forty-nine," is receiving a hurricane deck, and is otherwise being prepared for the spring. Considerable doubt is felt as to the practicability of running her up the river any distance.

Big Bend continues to attract much attention about Colville and Kootenay, and it is expected that there will be a large immigration from the Blackfoot country, where provisions are reported very scarce, and many of the miners are in a destitute condition.

The following is a copy of the diary of the working of a claim on French Creek, being the product of two men's labor—John Gallagher and John Claxton:

Table with 2 columns: Date and Amount. Shows daily earnings from October 5 to 31, totaling \$8,091.75.

Total.....\$8,091.75

A SLANDERER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH COLONIST, SIR—I want to draw the attention of the public to a slander inserted in your morning contemporary, the Chronicle. Were it not that the character and malevolent intentions of this sheet are already signified by its abuse and misrepresentation, not only of public but of private character, I would write something lengthy in vindication of my honor and my reputation, which have been abusively impugned by the Chronicle's patty scribbler, who wants to make the public imbibe some of the poison of his own evil mind, by announcing merely on the old woman's assertion of some one who told him that the object of my speech was to render palatable Fenianism to those who were previously unable to swallow it. I need not tell the public that such an object was alien to my intentions. I shall merely remark that the public well know that the slander is peculiarly characteristic of him of the Chronicle, and I shall leave him in the eyes of the noble and charitable citizens of Victoria stamped with the infamy which he deserves. "MASURE, B.A."

IRONCLAD LOST.—The Peruvian steam frigate Amestonia, 40 guns, ironclad, was recently run ashore and became a total wreck.

MONTANA NEWS.

The Montana Post of February 10th furnishes the following new items:

A LEAD MINE. J. S. Rockfellow handed us, on Wednesday last, a bar of very fine lead, run out of the ore from a mine of that meta in Rattlesnake district. This new addition to our mineral resources may be wanted for missiles in Indian or other warfare; but it is very desirable and useful in the "piping times of peace." Under the new regimes of Lyon and Fuller, lead is absolutely necessary, in large quantities, as an amalgamator, instead of quicksilver, to which it is much superior, mainly, it is probable, on account of the high temperature at which it must be used in order to maintain its fluidity; but it is also valuable on account of its being comparatively innocuous in handling and working.

TWO MEN CAUGHT BY A CAVE-IN. On Monday last, two men named Tom Edwards and Sam Sweeney, who were drifting on the Rogers and Sweeney discovery claim, in the gulch now owned by Parker, Moore & Co., at the foot of Wallace street, were suddenly surprised by a cave, caused by carelessness in timbering, which permitted the falling in of the roof. In spite of every effort on the part of the miners to release them, the tediousness of the operation was such that they were not reached till near daybreak on Tuesday. When found, the men were not injured though faint and weak, being protected by the timbers from the falling earth around them.

ON THE WAR PATH. General Meagher arrived in town, from Virginia City, on Saturday last. He has issued a call for five hundred volunteers, to go against the Blackfoot Indians at Fort Benton.

THE STINKINGWATER COUNTRY. A correspondent of the Post writes from Stinkingwater valley, February 5th, as follows:

As this is an agricultural locality, and we are blessed at present, with fine weather, all is stir and bustle in preparing for the coming farming season. All are busily engaged in fencing and other necessary preparations for extensive cropping. From the yield of last year we are sure that this valley cannot be exceeded, in fertility, by any other portion of the Territory, nor excelled as far regards fine crops. I know of one instance where fifty pounds of barley was sown last year, which yielded fifty bushels of clean, well filled grains. Wheat and oats yield remarkably well. I flatter myself that next fall will find me taking my own grist to the mill—as Cowan & Co. contemplate building a large flouring mill this spring, some three miles below Loraine, at what is known as the "Big Spring." One of the company has gone East to procure the necessary machinery.

We have, at present, two flourishing schools in the valley—one at Mill Creek and one at or near Loraine's. Here, also is a large store and hotel, kept by Mr. Loraine. Our blacksmiths are no less busy than the farmers. Mr. P. White, who is carrying on business at Loraine's, is working day and night in getting up a lot of fine steel plows for the coming season.

A RATHER SHAKY GLASS HOUSE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH COLONIST: SIR—Observing in your morning contemporary of the last few issues assertions that some of the members of the Assembly have not paid their taxes; whether such statement is true or false I cannot say; but there is something rather refreshing in the impudence of the Chronicle, when I find that its proprietors were hauled up before the Police Court only yesterday for being defaulters in the payment of their Trades' License. Verily we have fallen upon nice times when the censor is the greatest culprit—when the parties who are clamoring against reducing taxation have to be forced into a police court before they will pay their dues, and when the advocates of the wealth and political morality of the country show such unmistakable signs of "hard-up-ness," and such censurable inclination to evade the laws of the country.

A LOOKER-ON. VICTORIA, March 20th, 1866.

THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH CABLE.—Birmingham is again to have the credit of manufacturing the wire for the new Atlantic cable, and Mr. James Horsfall has commenced the work. Throughout the series of mishaps which occurred in laying the cable in August last no fault has ever been found with Mr. Horsfall's homogeneous wire; and the new cable will be the same as the last in size, material, and quality. We believe that the conducting copper wire will also be made by Birmingham manufacturers, and the hempen covering of the cable will again be made by Messrs. J. and E. Wright of Garrison Lane. The manufacture of the cable will be undertaken by the Telegraph Cable Construction Company. The company intended to pick up the cable already partly laid, and complete it; and their engineers entertain no doubt whatever of being able to do so; and the new cable is intended for a second line of telegraph, the directors feeling convinced that one medium of communication between England and America will be altogether insufficient for the commercial requirements of the two continents. Both cables will be completed early next summer.

THEATRICAL.—Mrs. Fanny Morgan Phelps had a crowded benefit at the Willamette Theatre on Saturday week.

Road to Health and Long Life.

LOWAY'S PILLS. Purifies the Blood. The most appropriate medicine for ailments, there may be some difficulty in being found to purify, regulate, and give quality to the blood. These Pills effect these three qualifications in any degree. They enable the stomach to digest ordinary food, increase the secretory power of the liver, cleanse and purify the blood, and throw into the circulatory system the most pure elements for sustaining an equilibrium. Weakness and Debility. Persons suffer from debility without causes why they are feeble. In many cases the aggressor. Holloway's Pills have been famed for regulating a disordered stomach, and restoring its healthy digestive powers. A never-failing remedy in all cases of debility, from any cause, has been found to be weak.