

The Weekly British Colonist.

Tuesday, May 8, 1866.

THE COLONY AND THE TERRITORY.

With all the similarity of origin the Englishman and the American, or rather the citizen of the United States, present under certain conditions very striking antitheses. The one man in a newly-formed colony and the other in a newly-formed territory are as widely different in their characteristics as two persons can well be. With the Englishman everything must be done by routine; change (we are not speaking metaphorically) is generally as much detested by him as it is by the Chinese. The first and last necessity is order. Look after life and property, and let the material prosperity of the country take care of itself, is his great political philosophy. Look at the material prosperity of the country and life and property will take care of themselves in the language of the American. This gives us the key to the non-progressive, but well-conducted British colony, and the healthy, vigorous, but disorderly American territory. In the colony's infancy we have generally the people at loggerheads with the Government; the former disposed to grumble at mismanagement, but slow to take remedial measures, the latter arrogant, self-willed and inexperienced. First attempts, therefore, at colonization are generally a failure. The Government, in most cases, guided by the weak and flickering light of a past century, is a blundering Government. Incapable of appreciating the march of events—of seeing the necessity for liberal laws—it wraps itself up in its antique mantle and gazes helplessly at the depopulation of the country. It cannot or will not see that men who are accustomed to the hardships and discomforts of pioneer life will not flitter away their time in a perpetual warfare with the restrictions which Government places in their way. Much easier and much more profitable it is to them to leave the country to its sickly fate, than to war with men who have got all the faculty of the wilfully blind. Hence we find the British colony, no matter how glowing its prospects, laboring and struggling for years under the strangling operation of its rulers.

Very different is it with the American territory. There so soon as population commences to pour in the whole strength and vigor of the people are strained to develop the country's resources. There is but little restriction, and every man rushes with an energy unknown in other countries to the accomplishment of his task. As, however, the automatic character of the English colony, while denuding it of force and vitality, preserves, or tends to preserve, at the same time the public peace and general order; so the almost unrestrained license of the newly-peopled territory, while giving full vent to the enterprise and vigor of the inhabitants, destroys to a great extent security in life and property. In the gold countries around us we have ample proof of this fact. In the territory of Idaho every stage arrival has been until recently bringing intelligence of highway robbery and murder. Indeed, it would seem that crime was the normal condition of the territory, and not skulking crime afraid to show its face at noonday but bold and audacious crime setting at defiance the very courts erected for its suppression. There was an organized system of marauding that made it in the first place almost impossible to catch the guilty party, and in the second place if caught made it equally difficult to convict him. A reign of terror existed that caused the judge to tremble on the bench and the jurymen to shake with fear in the box; for the life of the one was just as likely to pay the penalty as the life of the other, if any of the sacred gang of murderers had received at the hands of the law his just deserts. The last of these outrages was committed on an important witness named Raymond who testified in court against some of the band, and was struck down in consequence in cold blood by a ruffian named Clark. The murderer was arrested; but no one doubted that he would, as others had done before him, escape the full penalty of the law. Indeed one of the known leaders of the gang, a man named Opdyke, before the body of the murdered man had been removed, stepped boldly forward and said—"That affair grew out of the lawsuit yesterday and there will be many more like it." No one dared arrest Opdyke and he rode off. The public mind was, however, wrought up to that excitement which in an American community means something more than words. A Vigilance Committee was formed and the guard-house in which Clark was confined was broken open in the middle of the night, the guards knocked down and pinioned and Clark taken away. The next morning the citizens were awe-struck at seeing Clark's body hanging at the end of three poles a little distance from the town. When Opdyke heard of the circumstance he threatened several of the citizens with summary vengeance; but he calculated without his host, for as he was riding along on one of his murderous missions he himself was taken prisoner by the vigilantes at a place called Syrup Creek, and after a little ceremony, strung up to a tree. One of his confederates, a man

named Dixon, was also caught a few miles further down the creek and served in the same manner. On the bodies of each of the men was suspended a card narrating the crime or crimes for which he suffered. Once commenced the vigilantes made short work of rascality in Idaho, and to-day we find in the Idaho Statesman the following testimony to their efficiency: "As to the terror that has reigned for the last two years, it has come to an end. Good citizens and peaceable men walk through the streets and go about their business in comparative safety. The grand jury that is now in session, when their labors are done, may disperse without danger of being assassinated for the discharge of their duty. There is no alarm in the community and no terror for any one except those who prey upon society and their fellow men. Such is the exact condition of affairs to-day." Such is the ordinary history of the infancy of every mining country in the United States. The law set at defiance for a time by scoundrels of all classes the very courts polluted; but swift and summary retribution following, the channels to justice made clear and unimpeded, and society placed on a foundation of absolute safety through the exertions of the populace themselves. It is seldom citizens can with safety ignore the ordinary course of legal tribunals and take the law into their own hands, but we have ample proof by San Francisco, Boise City and other places in the contiguous American territory of citizens rising in their stern majesty, removing effete or corrupt justice, and like a thunder-storm clearing the atmosphere of surcharged impurities, and then, when the task has been performed, allowing the law to resume its functions, unrestricted by evil influence or iniquitous terrors. There is a moral grandeur about this habit of self-reliance that fits a people for any emergency, but our American neighbors would do well, while they avoid our silly blunders in vainly endeavoring to settle up a country, to acquire some of our better characteristics in maintaining the law. If both people would indeed learn from each other's faults—if the English colonist would only discover that he is too patient under ruinous mismanagement, and the American find out that he is too patient under diabolical crime—the contiguity of the one community to the other would be productive of benefits that could scarcely be overrated. Both communities, as it is, come right enough in the end. The colonies gradually shake off the incubus of irresponsible Government and govern themselves, and the American territories gradually get clear of ruffianism, but the very best period in both cases is allowed to slip without any attempt being made to eradicate the pressing evils.

THE NEWS.

The most important telegraphic news which we publish to-day is the defeat of the Pacific Railroad bill in the House of Representatives. From the large majority which killed the measure we have little hope of its success the next session. The scheme was one which, if carried out in a bona fide manner, would have benefited these colonies more than one can well calculate. It was to push a railway through by the Northern route, running in many cases close to the British Possessions and terminating on the Pacific side in the neighborhood of Puget Sound. The United States Government was asked to guarantee an interest of six per cent under certain regulations on the money invested. It would appear that the fate of the bill was to some extent decided by the fact that a number of the names put down as directors of the Company were put down fraudulently or at least without any proper authority. Gen. Grant figured prominently in the list, as well as several of the members of Congress, but none of the gentlemen knew anything about the circumstance. Coupled with this rather disreputable attempt to give prestige to the measure there was however another fact sufficient in itself to have overthrown the scheme, and that was the local jealousies of the various States. It is to this cause chiefly that the project has been from time to time postponed, and from present circumstances, there would appear but little probability of there being any material change in the programme. It is indeed possible that the first railway across the continent will yet be constructed on British territory. The recent discoveries at Big Bend, the mining operations carried on at the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains on the Saskatchewan, and the prospect of an immediate federation of the North American colonies, all afford a hope that the day is close at hand when some practical effort will be made to connect the two oceans by a band more substantial in its material than the slender wire which at present stretches across the continent. The Reconstruction Committee, which has been so long engaged, is at length about to present its report to Congress. The report contemplates two additional amendments to the Constitution: the first carries out the principle contained in the Civil Rights Bill, guaranteeing equal protection to all, irrespective of color, and the second, while admitting that every State should be represented, bases that representation in those States where the franchise is denied the colored population on the num-

ber who exercise the suffrage. The latter amendment is similar, with but one exception to the proposition of President Johnson, but that exception is an important one. The President's scheme applied to all the States, and without alluding to any particular class debarred from voting, confined the basis of representation to the number of those who were in the enjoyment of the franchise. This it will be seen would have caused a redistribution of the representation in nearly all the States. Some, even among the Eastern States, would have lost, while others would have gained. The women and children who now go to swell the representation would be ignored; so that it might possibly happen that one State with an aggregate population larger than another—with more women and children and males under age,—would possess fewer representatives. The one benefit, however, that would accrue from the President's proposition would be that of uniformity. The scheme proposed by the Reconstruction Committee, as well as the telegraph will allow us to make out, aims at nothing more nor less than coercing the Southern States into granting the suffrage to the freedmen. According to the plan put forward only those States that denied the suffrage to the colored population would come under the redistribution, and come under it they would to a very great disadvantage. While the other States would have the benefit of the women and children in the general count up, the Southern States, or those making political distinctions among any class of their adult male population, would be left entirely in the background, denuded, in fact, of more than half their original number of representatives. If the telegraph be correct in this matter, the Reconstruction Committee would seem to be actuated by the most radical sentiments of the Radical party.

FIREMEN'S MAY DAY PARADE.

Notwithstanding the attractions of Big Bend and Cariboo, which have already visibly thinned our population, the annual parade of the Fire Department yesterday was one of the most successful we have witnessed in point of numbers. A strong westerly wind prevailed throughout the day, rendering the streets very dusty, but the weather was otherwise fine. At noon the Deluge, Tiger and Hook and Ladder Companies having observed their customary etiquette by waiting upon one another, assembled in Government street with their engines, apparatus and banners, where they drew up in line and saluted Chief Engineer J. S. Drummond (Deluge Engine Co.), who with Assistant Engineer Burnes (Tiger Engine Co.) and the Foremen of the Companies passed down the line. The procession then formed and marched across James Bay bridge to Government buildings in the following order—

- RIFLE CORPS BAND, Fifteen strong, under Bandmaster Haynes, including two members of the Hook and Ladder Company. BOARD OF DELEGATES, Eleven in number; Sam. Kelly, President. Five from the Tiger, four from the Deluge, and two from the Hook and Ladder Companies. DELUGE ENGINE CO., NO. 2, Forty-one in number. Foreman, Thomas Morris; 1st Assistant do., Thomas Guiger; 2d Assistant, James Cummings; with engine, hose cart, apparatus, banners, etc.—Standard-bearer, James Fell. TIGER ENGINE CO., NO. 1, Forty-seven in number. Foreman, John C. Keenan; 1st Assistant, Charles Brooks; 2d Assistant, Gus. Keyser; with engine, hose cart, apparatus, banners, etc. Standard-bearer, M. Levi, the flag being surmounted by a handsome wreath of flowers, presented by Mrs. Burnes, wife of the Assistant Engineer.

UNION HOOK AND LADDER CO., NO. 1, Thirty-eight in number. Foreman, Thomas Douglas; 1st Assistant, Murray Thain; 2d Assistant, F. W. Cave; with their truck and apparatus, preceded by the pioneers of the Company. Standard-bearer, Mr. Anthony. A few volunteer firemen helped to swell the ranks of each company. On arriving at the Government buildings the companies were drawn up in inspection order, and His Excellency Governor Kennedy, C.B., attended by the Hon. Colonial Secretary, W. A. G. Young, Esq., and Private Secretary, H. Wakeford, Esq., on the invitation of the Chief Engineer went through the ranks and inspected the men and the apparatus. The band in the mean time performed appropriate music. At the conclusion of the inspection, His Excellency addressed the Firemen. He said he was glad to meet the Fire Department for another year—the third since his arrival in the colony. It was not saying too much, he thought, when he remarked that their appearance was fully equal to what it had been on any previous occasion, and, judging from appearances, their number was still increasing. It must be a source of gratification to all to know that they were so well guarded and their lives and property so well cared for. To him it was especially gratifying to see so many intelligent and active citizens associated together for so worthy a purpose. It was most creditable to them and he hoped the people duly appreciated it. It was an old and wise maxim that "prevention was better than cure." There had been but few fires and none of any real importance since he had come among them, but it was due in a great measure to there being such an efficient brigade ready at a moment's warning to extinguish fires. He had always learned and believed that the greatest alacrity had been ever displayed by the brigade, but he hoped yet to see them even on a better and sounder footing. They had accomplished

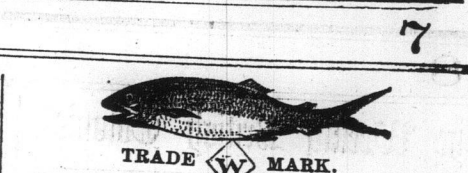
much with the means at their command, but more could even yet be done. He recollected witnessing a destructive fire that in spite of the united efforts of fire brigades and regiments of the line had raged for five days. Such a thing might occur here, though the community rested in comparative peace, feeling assured that a fire could not make headway with such a body of men. Some of the Insurance Companies, His Excellency remarked, had acted towards the fire department with considerable liberality, while others had contributed nothing. He was of opinion that they should all be compelled by an act of the Legislature to support the department. (Hear, hear.) It was not A. B. C. who were alone concerned but every body and all who benefited by it should in equity and in equality aid in maintaining the department. If those parties studied their own interests they would adopt the suggestion. The fire department of Victoria would do credit to any place and he hoped they would go on and prosper in harmony and good will. It was evident that they were following the right road when they could all agree so well together and manage their own affairs without dissension. (Applause.) His Excellency then proposed and led off three cheers for the firemen which was heartily responded to by the assembled crowd. Chief Engineer Drummond called upon the firemen to give three cheers which the "boys" did with a hearty will. Three cheers were then proposed by His Excellency for "our Gracious Sovereign the Queen" which was lustily taken up by all present, the band playing part of the National Anthem. The department then reformed in the order of procession and marched to the Council Chamber where His Worship the Mayor and the city fathers and civic functionaries were invited to inspect the engines. This done Mayor Franklin said: He was proud to have the honor for the first time in his official position of addressing the fire department. He regarded them as his best friends and the most useful society in the city. When a number of respectable gentlemen many of whom were drawn from their business pursuits, risked their own lives to save the lives and property of others, they were entitled to a full measure of gratitude, and he earnestly hoped to see the department prosper and go on increasing. He congratulated them too on their officers [hear] who would not slumber [laughter], and although some might occasionally arrive late it was gratifying to know that they might remain at home and allow a fire to be put out by skilful officers under them, as was the case the other morning. He (the Mayor) was not a fireman, nor was he cut out for one [laughter], but he had been told that that was a most remarkable instance of the skill of the department, who would bear favorable comparison with any others. In some places it was not considered an honor to be a fireman, but here it was both a pride and an honor to be admitted to the department, who conducted their affairs without the slightest animosity or bitter feelings and were an honor to the town. He felt glad that the Legislature proposed granting certain powers to the Corporation with reference to the department, believing that it would prove beneficial both to the city and to the firemen. (Hear, hear.) The Corporation would have better opportunities of judging of their requirements by more frequent communication with their officers than the Government could acquire by only viewing them on gala days. (Hear.) He was aware that they required new hose and that one of the engines was out of order; he hoped to have it in his power to assist them materially and to witness their prosperity. (Applause.) Three hearty cheers were given for His Worship at the request of the Chief Engineer, the band striking up "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow," and three for the department at the request of the Mayor. The firemen were then invited by Mayor Franklin to partake of some refreshments, after which the Companies were escorted home and the members of the band were invited by the Chief to the Colonial Hotel where they were regaled with champagne. Flags were hoisted all over the town and the day was generally observed as a holiday.

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