The Colonist.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 1898.

CONCENTRATED STUPIDITY.

We find in the Spokesman-Review an account of a large Montreal party that has started with a pack train from that city to the Yukon. The party, after paying duty on their horses and supplies and travelling a few hundred miles, will reach Ashcroft, where they will find that they could have bought their horses and supplies more cheaply, escaped the duty and saved a long journey. The leader says he expects to reach Ashcroft in two weeks. Time must be of little value to him and his friends, if they can afford to waste that two weeks on their long northern journey. The Spokane paper says that other parties are preparing to go north and that merchants dealing in Klondike supplies report trade as very brisk. The supply of pack saddles and apparboes has been exhausted and fresh supplies have been ordered by wire.

We have not a word to say against the enterprising Spokane merchants who have secured this trade, but nevertheless feel it right to characterize the conduct of the people who are making that city their starting point as concentrated stupidity. We are not so much surprised that persons from United States points should be misled into going to Spokane for a starting point, because it is the last United States city on the way North by an all-land route; but that a Montreal party should leave Canada, go out of their way to a United States city and spend two weeks additional time in travelling with their pack train besides, paying duty on every pound of their outfit passes our comprehension, as we think it will the comprehension of every person in British Columbia.

If people from Eastern Canada or the United States wish to go to the Yukon by the all-land route, the proper course for them to take is to go to Ashcroft and buy their horses and outfits there. We believe they can get everything they need in that town. They can certainly get all staples there and all the horses they want.

We find the following in a letter from Hazelton: "People coming with the hope of securing mineral claims will find what they are after without going as far as the upper Yukon, especially if they look towards Omineca." There is no doubt that a brilliant future awaits Omineca.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

There is no blacker page in history than that which records the horrors of the French Revolution. It occurred at a time when there was great agitation in the minds of men everywhere. History suggests that cycles occur in the development of human ideas, and that accompanying these are scenes of violence. At such times mankind seems to be in travail. The birth of new thoughts is accompanied by the most intense suffering and anguish. Men and women come to the front who seem to be the very incarnation of the vices and virtues of the hour. Deeds of wickedness and of sublime heroism are done, which at other times would seem impossible and the story of which makes us feel as though we were reading of beings radically different to ourselves. The French revolution was the outcome of the same movement which led to the American revolution, an uprising of the many against the few. Fortunately for America, the movement there was controlled by the sober Puritanism of New England and the conservative Episcopalianism of the more southern colonies. The fathers of the American republic never lost faith in their religion. In France it was different. Religion was dethroned. Liberty meant license in its worst form. "Down with God" was the cry of the populace. The revolutionists seemed maddened. Not Nero nor Caligula were more infamously cruel than Marat and Robespierre. Indeed the latter were the worse because the former were the product of an age when cruelty was common and class distinctions rigorously drawn. The latter cursed a time and a country, in which refined instincts had made great progress and the principles of Christianity were at least formally recognized.

Across this dreadful scene passes the figure of Marie Anne Charlotte Corday d'Armans, better known as Charlotte Corday. This young girl, for she was only twenty-five when the guillotine ended her life, was very far from being the desperate creature that used to be depicted in the histories. She was not a fiend, like the petroleuses of the Commune. She was a woman, nobly born, delicately reared and highly educated, beautiful in feature, gracedul in form. Nor was she an enemy to the principles of freedom which, though terribly perverted, were the inspiration of the revolutionary movement. On the contrary, she was a believer in the teachings of Voltaire and firmly devoted to the cause of popular liberty. She saw in the revolution a step that would place humanity upon a higher plane. That she was right in principle, we must concede. No one disputes that the American revolution was a good thing for the Anglo-Saxon race or that it was an excellent thing for the cause of popular government and popular rights even in the Mother Country. If France had been led along similar lines to those followed in America, or if popular passion had been held in check by such strong common sense as controlled England in the time when Cromwell led the revolutionary party, there would have been no Reign of Terror. Charlotte Corday was a woman of a noble type, a believer in freedom, yet an enemy of cruelty and a hater of everything vile. She was as true a figure of the better life of the France of her day as Jean Darc was of the better life of the France of several centuries earlier.

There is perhaps no more touching incident in the records of nations than that of this high-born and richly endowed maiden, feeling her heart torn by the tales which came from Paris of foul deeds of wrong and wanton bloodshed, leaving her country home and journeying to the capital, with no other thought than to do what one woman could to end the dreadful story. She must have known in advance what her own fate would be. To escape the vengeance of the Terrorists she must have known was impossible. Yet no fear of the result deterred her. By the exercise of a courage and ingenuity, which equally command our admiration, she found herself beside the man whom she believed responsible for the crimes done in the name of her beloved country, and whose death she thought would stay the tide of blood. She struck her dagger to his heart. A few days later the guillotine ended her career.

In view of what occurred after Marat's death, it is probable that the girl sacrificed herself in vain, and perhaps it cannot be said that she was a woman who did much to alter the current of events. Yet her act, taken in connection with her character, merits a place for her among representative women. She represents the better genius of the French revolution, the ideal which the teachings of the "philosophes" inculcated, for we must remember that the movement which led to the meeting of the States General in 1789 was the outcome of an active period in literature. France had been taught the doctrine of liberty, fraternity and equality by men, who labored with the pen and whose ideas, if they could have been crystallized in social reforms, would have elevated the nation and made it strong and glorious. But these writers were like men who carelessly set fire to a prairie. They kindled a conflagration, when they only meant to warm the hearts of the people to a realization of their natural rights. We can hardly in these prosaic days appreciate fully the character of Charlotte Corday. She stands out as a conspicuous figure against the awful background of the revolution. She saw in Marat a man who was ruthlessly sacrificing the cause she had at heart and destroying the country she loved by shedding the blood of its best citizens. To stay his course she counted the loss of her own life as nothing. France has never yet done this heroine the honor which is her due.

Ald. Hall has a notice on the board for Monday night's city council, asking for $500 for band concerts in the park. We think the money ought to be given. The concerts are very enjoyable, and those on Sunday afternoon are really promotive of good works, because they serve to give young people an innocent place of resort.

On Tuesday night an adjourned meeting will be held in the City Hall to take preliminary steps towards the Queen's Birthday celebration. The citizens ought to attend in large numbers.

Owing to an accident in the mechanical department the Colonist is unable to present its readers with a supplement today.

THE STIKINE IN WINTER.

The definite announcement that the Mackenzie-Mann party has reached Glenora disposes of all doubts as to the availability of the Stikine for the purposes of winter trade. There would have been no difficulty at any time after the middle of January, if this had been an ordinary winter, in making and keeping open a road up the ice; but the season was everything else but ordinary and the weather was fatal to the plans of those who calculated upon the existence of normal conditions. But that is a matter of history now and what we have to think about at present are the lessons taught by the past winter's experience. These may be summarized in the statement, already put forward in these columns that next winter, if steps are taken in the first part of the season to break a road from the interior to the Coast, there will not be the least difficulty in maintaining traffic from Wrangel to Glenora nearly all the year round. A part of November, probably all of December and a part of April may be "close season" so far as travel on the Stikine either by water or ice is concerned, but for the rest of the year it will be possible to keep up regular communication, and even during the months mentioned means can be discovered of getting the mails through. While this does not at all do away with the necessity of building a railway from the British Columbia coast to Lake Teslin, it will be a consideration of great importance for the next two or three years, or until such a railway is built. It means that Glenora as a railway terminus will be a point of great value and that the Stikine for nine months of the year will be the leading highway of travel to the Yukon.

THE REDISTRIBUTION BILL.

No one expected the News-Advertiser to like what is known as the redistribution bill; but there was some cause to suppose that it would give its reasons for disliking the measure. The case seems to be another of one of the Dr. Fell class, of whom Tom Brown wrote the famous epigram:

I do not like you, Dr. Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell,
But I do not like you, Dr. Fell.

Our Vancouver contemporary says and repeats that it does not like the new bill, but like Tom Brown, it fails to tell the reason for its antipathy. True it states that East Kootenay has been divided simply in order that the government may hold a seat there, that a second seat has been given to Cassiar in order that a resident of Victoria may be provided with a constituency, and that the reason a fourth member is given to Vancouver is to avoid reducing Victoria to three members. True it says the change in the boundary of Yale is very wicked and insists that East Kootenay is very shabbily treated. But these are simply perfunctory statements. They are only what an opposition paper would feel bound under any circumstances to say of a government measure. Indeed the News-Advertiser admits that one or two provisions of the bill "at first sight regard the measure as "well-intended" We think that the public will agree with this opinion and, not only so, but will regard the measure as "well-intentioned" even after looking at it a second time. To the Vancouver paper the bill seems to be "without any redeeming feature whatever," but that is because it reads into the measure things which it does not contain.

The News-Advertiser says that the Colonist practically admitted the reason why Vancouver is given four representatives to be a desire to avoid reducing Victoria's representation to three. The Colonist never had any such proposition in mind as the reduction of the representation of Victoria, and consequently could have admitted nothing of the kind. It would regard such a reduction as wholly indefensible, even if it were accompanied by a scaling down of the representation of the whole province. Four members are none too many for Victoria. A legislative assembly ought to be something more than a mere committee. The British Columbia legislature is too small numerically. It will, in the Colonist's opinion, be too small even after the four new members have been provided for; but as in the course of a very few years new constituencies will have to be created, it is better to go along with a small house for the present. Thirty-seven members will give a better working house than thirty-three. When the whole of this great province is occupied a house of fifty members will be none too large. We do not think that a city like Victoria should have less than four members, and as Vancouver has nearly as much voting strength it may fairly be given equal representation, especially in view of the other considerations mentioned in the Colonist last Friday.

The annexation of a part of Yale to the Rossland division of Kootenay will seem to most people to be a very judicious arangement. The new district thus created is geographically and industrially a unit and may very properly be treated for representative purposes as such. Doubtless by the expiration of the next house it will have progressed sufficiently to warrant an addition to its representation. We understand that the proposed arrangement suits the people most directly interested.

What really hurts our contemporary is the giving of another representative to Vancouver. It may seem strange that a Vancouver paper should look at such a thing with disfavor, but the peculiar condition of mind in which our contemporary is in regard to matters political would account for even more extraordinary things than that. It was painful enough to have to contemplate the prospect of being unable to get one of the three places at the disposal of the Vancouver electors, but to feel absolutely certain of being unable to get one out of four is enough to sour all the grapes of Eschol. One may appreciate and sympathize with our contemporary; but there is some satisfaction in knowing that what is the News-Advertiser's loss is Vancouver's gain.

OUR NAVIGATION LAWS.

The observations of Mr. Higgins in the house in reference to the Cassiar Central's northern shipments of produce have called forth a letter from a well-known Victoria merchant in which he deals with the regulation prohibiting the carriage of Canadian goods in United States bottoms. We do not print the letter, because a portion of it refers to what must be considered the private affairs of a company, but the principal point made is comprised in the following extract:

I would like to point out that the time is opportune for the issuance of this order (the regulation above mentioned). It will work against the merchants and producers of British Columbia rather than any other people. The merchants of the Sound and San Francisco will thank the department for it. Any one can see by the addresses of the miners that ninety per cent. of those calling at Victoria are from the States and Australia. They are generally booked in the States and know nothing of this regulation till they come here. There have already been instances of miners going back to the States to purchase, rather than pay duties in Canada on Canadian goods. The order is premature. We are not in a position to work under it. When we have weekly or bi-weekly steamers from Victoria and Vancouver to Klondike and connection through Canadian territory, the arrangement will be workable, but as we are now the tendency of the order is to favor the States and to injure, unintentionally, Victoria and Vancouver. I hope the boards of trade of the Coast will petition for the withdrawal of the order until we are in a position to work under it.

The question raised by our correspondent is well worth discussion. It will be remembered that the regulation originally extended to the Yukon as well as to Coast waters and the Stikine, but an exception was subsequently made of the former river. We do not feel like expressing any very decided opinion upon the desirability of petitioning for a suspension of the order just now. Our impression is that it has been so far of no special advantage to Canadian ship owners and it has certainly been an inconvenience to both Americans and Canadians, and we suggest that the Ottawa authorities should correspond with those at Washington and endeavor to secure a suspension of the regulations of both countries so far as they relate to the Northwest Coast. Conditions here are exceptional. It may often be of very great importance for a shipper to get a steamer on a particular day and it would be greatly to his advantage to be able to take any that offered without having to ask whether she was a British or an American bottom. We think a little common sense on the part of both governments might be used with mutual advantage in this matter.

Senator Macdonald brought up the question of Yukon timber limits the other day. He expressed a fear that the regulation allowing one person to take up five claims of five square miles each might be prejudicial to miners, because under it an individual might get a monopoly of the timber in some locality and thus have the miners at a disadvantage. There is something in this, although as yet, owing to the few applications that have been made, the danger is more theoretical than real, but it is very clear that if the regulations are not administered with very great prudence mischief may result. At the same time it is evident that if no permits are granted, no one will feel safe in erecting saw mills and these are among the prime necessities of the Yukon country. As to the area of the limits, in view of the fact that timber suitable for saw logs is very scarce in the Yukon and where it does occur the growth is not at all dense, it can hardly be said that the maximum limit allowed to each licensee is too great. As we look at the matter, the regulations on their face are not objectionable, provided they are carried out with good judgment. We think no permits should be issued under the regulations for land on which the wood is useful only for fuel.

The attitude of the Senate and the House of Representatives at Washington towards each other on the Cuban question is far from edifying. The two houses are at a deadlock temporarily over the recognition of the independence of the island and the present rebel organization as a government. In this it is very clear that the representatives are in the right. The rebels have not even a de facto government. To recognize them would be farcical. The position of the United States would not be in the least strangthened by such action. The grounds upon which the right to interfere is based are that the dictates of humanity require immediate action and that the commerce of the United States is suffering while the government is put to great expense in protecting Spain from interference from filibustering expeditions. These are tenable grounds. To add to them the absurd one that the rebels are entitled to recognition as a government is to weaken a very strong case.

There is a great deal in the point made by the Montreal Herald, that when there is a deadlock between the Senate and the House of Commons, there is no way in which the people can get at the first named body and compel it to register their dictates. While this continues to be the case there will always be hitches in the working of our governmental system. There is no assignable reason why the average senator should be better able to form an opinion as to what is good for the country than the average artizan. Indeed some of the senators live so out of touch with the mass of the people that they are almost the least able of any class to know what public opinion favors.

When the proposed plebiscite is taken on prohibition, what are the people to understand is the issue? We are informed that the decision of the government is that only the naked question: Are you in favor of prohibition? shall be asked. Does this imply that if the answer is in the affirmative, the government will at once prepare a measure prohibiting the manufacture, sale and importation of intoxicating liquors? Thousands of people, who are in favor of prohibition that will actually prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors in the country, will oppose a measure that will only partially accomplish this. When the people are asked to vote they ought to be told what they are voting on.

An item appeared in this paper on Sunday, under the heading "Without a Mate," which does injury to the reputation of the first officer of the British ship Dudhope, which fact the Colonist very much regrets. That gentleman is still attending to his duties on board the vessel. It was the second officer, and not the first, who cut his cable and slipped away without bidding anyone good-bye.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

"Yes," she exclaimed indignantly; "he kissed me by force."

"Oh, well," replied her friend nonchalantly, "it was all your fault."

"All my fault!"

"Certainly. If you hadn't resisted he wouldn't have had to use force."—Chicago Post.

"I often wonder," said Miss Sprocket, "what becomes of the popular songs. They are so soon forgotten."

"They meet with a dreadful fate," replied Mr. Spokes.

"How is that?"

"Everybody murders them."—Detroit Free Press.

"You where present when this moonshiner's wagon was captured, were you not?" asked the commissioner.

"Yesser."

"Were you one of the men who got shot when the firing occurred?"

"Nope, I—er—wuz jest about half shot."—Atlanta Journal.

"Yes, sah; I desiah to enlist, sah. But there is one promise I want to exact from you, sah."

"Well, what is it?"

"I'm a Kentuckian, sah, and I pointedly object to being sent to the Dry Tortugas, sah."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Say, boss," said old Uncle Amos to the rural storekeeper, "have President 'Kinley done gone an' issued orders for all niggers what ain't got no wife ner family to git dey guns an' prance right off to Cuby an' go to fightin'?"

"That's correct, I think."

"An' dey hain't no natchul means o' gettin' outen it?"

"Nong that I can see?"

The old negro went away in a thoughtful mood, and in a few days the storekeeper learned that he had married. When he returned to the store a week later effusive congratulations were offered, but the old darkey only shook his head sorrowfully, and said:

"I sho' did make a pow'ful mistook."

"How's that?"

"W'y you see I married that blue gum Polly Johnsing ter keep outen de war, an' she's done threaten' ter bite me a'retdy. Nossuh, boss, I is pow'ful sorry I didn't jine the soldiers an' go right off to de war, I'd a bin a heap safer."—Atlanta Journal.

She—I wonder why poets repeat words unnecessarily? He—I wasn't aware that they did. She—Well, there's that poem in which the line "Charge, Chester, charge," occurs. Why is the word "charge" repeated? He—Oh, I guess Chester must have been a plumber and the poet was throwing bouquets at him.—Chicago News.

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