

The Weekly British Colonist AND CHRONICLE.

Tuesday, January 8, 1867.

The Old Year and the New. There is something melancholy in bidding adieu to the Old Year. We part with it with feelings akin to taking final leave of a friend who has shared the vicissitudes and trodden the ups-and-downs of life with us. By many the year of grace 1866 can only be recalled with painful recollections. Stout and buoyant hearts have sunk beneath the rude and heavy hand of adversity; once thriving and happy homes have been immolated on the stern shrine of necessity, and unoffending individuals and families are thrown helplessly on the world to resume the battle of life, with few friends to help them, small means to sustain them, and less hope to cheer them. Yet is our case very far from the worst inscribed on the records of the past year. We are merely the sufferers from a reaction common to all new countries—to mining communities in particular—and they who cast their lots in gold countries must make up their minds to regard the venture in the light of a lottery ticket which may win a prize, the odds being against it. We have only drawn more blanks than usual during the past year, and the next may change the luck in our favor. Absorbed in our own immediate troubles, we have entirely overlooked the sore trials and afflictions of others of our kindred. The wallings of thousands of poor creatures rendered hungry, naked, homeless and desolate by the great fires at Portland and Quebec, reached our ears but not our hearts. The deplorable accounts of the famine in India touched no sympathetic chord, awakened no feeling of commiseration. The cruel blast that scattered death and destruction over the inhabitants of Turk's Island afforded a good newspaper paragraph, but made no appeal to our senses. While the dark cloud of adversity oppressed us, the best feelings of our nature became so chilled and paralyzed that no tale of real suffering penetrated our hearts, and we believed ourselves the most hardly dealt with people in the scale of humanity. Taken all in all, the year that has just fled has not been so disastrous to the community as some are wont to maintain. True, it has witnessed the crisis that it took three years to bring about; but the bubble had to burst, and the sooner the shock came the sooner the country might hope to revive. The worst is now over; the weeding and raking process is comparatively at an end, and the dawn of the New Year lets in rays of hope to cheer us on our path. The mining prospects of British Columbia never looked brighter than at the present moment. The population of the now united Colony has been considerably reduced by the collapse in business of all kinds, but while other industries are gradually struggling into life, our gold mines, now in process of development, will be sufficient to sustain the floating population still remaining in the country, and before the lapse of another twelve months, it is reasonable to infer that the projected importation of several quartz mills and the development of recently discovered highly auriferous lodes will be the means of introducing men and money to the country, and causing a considerable stimulus to our mining interests. Under the new Governmental regime, too, with no conflicting suicidal policies to subserve, and the burdens of the people lightened by a wholesome system of retrenchment, we shall soon find it easier to live. It may be a hard struggle with some who have lost their all, but let them not lose heart, and they will yet be rewarded. Faith in the future of the country is unshaken, and if faith in ourselves be equally firm, those who outlive the present storm will yet see plenty and contentment, where there is now but want and murmuring. In anticipation of the "good time coming," we greet our readers, one and all with a "Happy New Year."

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE

Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1867.

A CONFIRMED THIEF—Joe, the Fort Yale Indian, who has walked through several hotels and private dwellings in the dark, without missing, as Mark Twain would say, as many articles as the occupants did in the morning; who has been battered and kicked down stairs for his predatory propensities; who has been tried on suspicion of being implicated in murdering a companion; who has been punished for various offences by the strong arm of the law, and of offended citizens, without producing any effect on his moral character, was charged yesterday in the Police Court with entering the premises of Mr P. M. Backus and stealing some brandy and other articles. Jim was ordered to spend the first four months of the new year in the Queen's service, where through careful regimen and regular out-door exercise his mind will be in better training to ponder over the "ways" of the evil doer.

THE BALL of Union Hook and Ladder Company, last evening, at St. Nicholas Hall, was a highly successful affair, and the dancing was kept up until an early hour this morning. A large number of ladies graced the room. The gentlemen who composed the several committees were unremitting in their attentions to the guests. The music, by Messrs Sandrie, Palmer, Wilson, Bushell and others, was very fine, and the best proof of the excellence of the viands is found in the fact that the tables, which groaned beneath the weight of good things, were entirely relieved of their burden. The hall was beautifully decorated with flags, banners and the various insignia of the Fire Companies.

MAYOR MACDONALD, we hear, will decline the proffered seat in the Council. We hope so. Mr Macdonald stands high in public estimation, and it would be a pity to see him neglect his civic duties and jeopardise his popularity by the acceptance of an office not within the gift of the people. Besides, the Incorporation Act expressly declares that a member of the Legislative Council shall be ineligible for the position of Mayor. It will be said that this clause applies to the Vancouver Island Council, which has now no existence; but the intention of the Act—that no member of any Legislative Council shall occupy the civic chair—is plain, nevertheless.

THE NEW YEAR came in amid the singing of the Presbyterian Church bell, and the firing of guns. Watch service was held at the Wesleyan Chapel, and about 100 persons engaged in prayer and singing until the "witching hour" arrived, when Rev. Mr. Browning wished the assemblage a "Happy New Year," and dismissed it with a blessing. Lokaltums presents his compliments and hopes that his readers may during the next twelvemonth, be favored with the choicest gifts that can be bestowed on man.

ATTEMPTED BURGLARY.—Yesterday morning, the store door of McLean & Co., on Fort street, was found to have been tampered with by burglars, who, during the night, had cut away a part of the door near the lock, with an evident intent of making a hole sufficiently large to insert a hand and draw the bolts. The beams appear to have been disturbed in their operations, as the hole was cut only half-way through the door.

MR PARKER, Engineer of the Fuca Strait Coal Mine, arrived in town last night, and reports that the seam is increasing in width and the coal improving in quality. He brings a few specimen lumps of the coal with him. The late storms were severely felt at Clallam Bay, but did no injury to the property of the Company.

GREENBAUM, late of the firm of Fisk & Greenbaum, doing business at Lillooet, having effected a favorable compromise with his creditors, is charged with having sold off all the property of the firm at ruinous rates and sneaked out of the country with the proceeds. He was last heard from at Whatcom, W.T.

WE ARE pleased to learn that Dr. Tormie, who has been long confined through severe indisposition to his house, is now convalescent and likely to be soon attending to his town duties.

JOE, the unfortunate Mexican, who has been for some time in custody for safe keeping, was considered to be sufficiently recovered yesterday to be liberated.

HOVE DOWN.—The Nicholas Biddle was hove down yesterday at Janion, Green & Rhodes' wharf, at which place the repairs to her bottom will be effected.

UP TO four o'clock yesterday, p.m., the Fideliter had not reached Portland.

IT IS RUMORED that the Legislative Council will meet on the 13th inst.

THE ENTERPRISE will not leave until Friday.

THIS being New Year's Day, no paper will be issued from our office to-morrow.

THE BANKS and Public Offices will be closed to day.

Nobody's Dog.

A LONDON STORY.

He was not in a brigade, which was then the whole of his establishment. Beside the shoeblack sat a dog—a small mongrel—with a glossy black coat, and keen eyes, and a white breast and paws, which rather improved his appearance than otherwise—only it proved him, as we say, a sad mongrel.

One of Dick Wills' regular customers was a young clerk in a banking-house close by, whose name was Everard. They were on very good terms, as indeed Dick Wills was with all his customers, rather by nature than as a business principle. But this more commercial civility with Mr Everard was destined to ripen into a close intimacy one stormy night.

Mr Everard was the last in the bank that evening, and just as the door closed behind him a violent snow-storm came on, and he was fain to take refuge in the grim gateway of the ancient city. Nobody was there before him but the shoeblack, the establishment, the head of the firm eating a halfpenny loaf, and the junior partner, the sharp dog, taking an active interest in the same.

Rough weather, sir, said Dick Wills. Very rough, responded Mr Everard. Is it bad for your business? Well, nothing much either way; it's so cold that some gentlemen won't stand it, and again, it's so dirty that others have their boots cleaned twice a day instead of once—comes to much the same thing.

I fancy you drive a pretty good trade, Wills. Well, sir, a comfortable one. You see in the city it's all done and done with, as one may say, at a regular hour. Now the West-end chaps, sir, they have to hang about all day, and be at the theatre doors and places all the evening, a pushing and driving and calling out. I've tried it, and I know what it is.

Then you don't go from this place to the West-end after business hours. Dick Wills chuckled. No, sir, I've done a fair day's work here, from six to six, and why should I go a killing myself to take other people's bread out of their mouths? No, I have the evening to myself like a lord.

What do you do with yourself? Why, sir, I go to a night school, where I pay for myself, sir; I don't see as I could be honorable for me to go to the ragged school, seeing that I'm not in their brigade.

How is it you are not? Well, I should have gone in, if it had been started when I was a beginner—but it wasn't. I began by myself, and by the time it was set up I was getting on pretty well, and I didn't need no help, so I thought I ought to leave it to those who did.

Do you live far from here? Over in the Borough, sir, all by myself, except 'Bob'; but he's my first-rate company, sir.

The dog wagged his tail at the compliment. So he's 'Bob,' said Mr Everard. And his look, like him or else. Don't they now, sir? said the boy enthusiastically. I'm always a-saying so to him—I think he knows it.

How long have you had him? A good bit—let me see—I was twelve when my granny and I took the fever—she wasn't my granny, though—I belongs to no other, and she died—no wonder! and there I stayed a full year, and luck to it! and then I ran away and went over to the Borough. I took as little from the work—as I could, and left his savings to his father—something like £100 it was. I remember the old gentleman came to me under the gateway—he'd often talked to me there, and 'Bob' and he had a liking for each other—and he said: 'Wills, I am quite down-hearted! I said—You may be sorrowful about your son, sir, but you ought not to be down-hearted. And he returned—Wills, I'm alone in the world, and if I go into business, as I should like, I shall only lose all as I did before. I don't please customers, it's not my way to be pleasing; I shall lose every penny! I answered—I hope not.

He was quiet for a long time, and then he said—Wills, should you like to go into business. I told him it was no question of liking, and then he said, that if he set up in business in a small way, he should like to have me in his shop. He'd soon teach me, and then he needn't see the customers, for he said he was such a disappointed old man, he knew he should offend them; and I was not to think myself his servant (which I shouldn't have minded), but rather his partner, for he kindly said, 'a cheerful face was a good capital!'

So we set up over in the Borough, he and 'Bob,' and I. And we got on and came over here, and when the old gentleman died, he left all to me, and since then I have married, as you see, and the world goes well with me.

And you're quite as happy as in old times? Of course I am, responded Mr Wills heartily: I thought I was as happy as possible then, but still I'm happier now. 'Annie's the best of women (she had just gone into the shop), and I shall be able to give that young gentleman a good education; and look at 'Bob'! Why I pay a tax for 'Bob'—I like to pay that tax for 'Bob'—nobody asked me for it; I went and paid it myself, and I should like to pay it up for all the years I have had him free. Ah! in those days, what a sorry I can't hope to pay for him long, sir, for poor 'Bob's' getting in years.

I asked if you were still contented, said said Wills, earnestly. I'm living comfortably, and saving a little. Why, the great merchant opposite does not get more good out of his heaps of money, 'specially as I've heard say he has not the heart to enjoy it, poor gentleman!

Riches or poverty makes very little difference, Wills; we shall take neither with us from the world, remarked the young clerk, softly.

Wills looked up with earnest eyes, that's true, he responded, gravely. As the parson says on Sunday, we shall take nothing with us but one dress, either the filthy rags of Sin, or a dress made white in the Saviour's blood.

A long silence followed. The snow-storm gradually abated, and Mr Everard prepared to depart. Good night, Wills, he said, kindly. I think you're in the right way for happiness here and hereafter. I wish I could see more of you, but to-morrow morning I leave London for Liverpool. I wish you success, and long life to 'Bob'!

One day last summer, a middle-aged gentleman lingered about the entrance of the noisy whitewashed court. More than fifteen years had passed since Mr Everard conversed with Wills under the grim gateway. The middle-aged gentleman looked askance at the dim passage, the little court, and the great houses opposite.

It's all so much the same, he murmured; the very people in the street look the same—clear there has just been whitewashed; I declare there's a waggon quarrelling with the orange-woman—and there's a shoeblack under the old gate, but it's not Wills.

The middle-aged gentleman (he was no other than young Mr Everard) walked into an adjacent dining room, and asked to see the proprietor. The proprietor had grown an old man since his time, and could not remember his name until Mr Everard recalled it. Then Mr Everard asked him if he knew what had become of Wills.

The proprietor didn't—though he remembered him as a fine, industrious lad, invaluable as a messenger. He thought he'd heard what had become of him, but couldn't recollect.

Mr Everard thanked him and went away. He crossed the City northwards, to Holborn, and went along that thoroughfare towards his residence in Bloomsbury. Quite by accident as it seemed, he took a turning different from that he generally used. It was a narrow, tidy, bustling street, full of small retail shops.

One particular grocer's arrested Mr Everard's attention. The windows were so particularly bright, and the commodities so temptingly arrayed, that he looked up for the owner's name. What should he see, but R. WILLS!

Of course he went in first a little doubtfully, but all uncertainty vanished, when he saw his old acquaintance behind the counter, busily tying up packets of tea. Wills did not need to hear his name twice.

Before Mr Everard knew where he was, he found himself seated by a comfortably spread tea-table, presided over by a pleasing young woman, while a fine three year old boy stood on the hearth rug and carefully criticised him.

Dick is noticing you much, sir, said Wills cheerily, he likes you—great judges are children and dogs, sir. Ah! that reminds me, and he dived into the shop and returned with 'Bob' under his arm.

'Bob' wagged his tail and his master declared that he knew Mr Everard; who, however inclined to the modest opinion that the faithful dog was pleased in his master's pleasure, without any particular reference to himself. Then 'Bob' stretched himself out on the rug and the junior Dick Wills sat down beside him.

Don't you wonder at all this, sir? asked the host proudly. Mr Everard owned that he did.

I'll tell you how it came about, sir. Do you remember the old gentleman who went up and down Golden Lane, selling almonds and raisins?

Mr Everard remembered him. He was a broken-down grocer, sir; a good man, a very superior man, but not a man of business. Well, he had a son who went just after you went away, sir, that son died and left his savings to his father—something like £100 it was. I remember the old gentleman came to me under the gateway—he'd often talked to me there, and 'Bob' and he had a liking for each other—and he said: 'Wills, I am quite down-hearted! I said—You may be sorrowful about your son, sir, but you ought not to be down-hearted. And he returned—Wills, I'm alone in the world, and if I go into business, as I should like, I shall only lose all as I did before. I don't please customers, it's not my way to be pleasing; I shall lose every penny! I answered—I hope not.

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Mr Everard, because I have known some to whom such gain has been real loss; and the best competence has cares which penny escapes.

I know it, said Mr Wills, as he shook hands with his old friend; but still there's a text in the Bible which says, 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow to it.'—Proverbs 10, 22.

The London "Times" on the Alabama Claims.

Following are the main portions of a late article in the London Times, which has been alluded to in our despatches:

We have more than once during the present autumn reminded our readers of the outstanding Alabama claims. If these claims were, as some people think, destitute of all legal or reasonable foundation—still more, if they were preferred out of a mere desire to pick a quarrel with us, it would be waste words upon them. No one, however sincere may be his horror of war, can maintain that an entirely groundless demand ought to be allowed, for the sake of peace, by a Christian nation or that such a concession would have any other effect than to invite the further aggression. The present question, however, wears a very different aspect. It is certain that whatever view may be taken on this side of the Atlantic, an almost universal opinion prevails on the other that the United States have suffered a grievous wrong at our hands, and that we have denied through our Government a legitimate claim for reparation. This in itself constitutes a strong case for consideration, and if necessary, for reconsideration. A nation, like an individual, is not an impartial Judge in its own cause, but this remark applies to ourselves as well as to the other party, and justice compels us to observe that in offering to submit the matter to arbitration the Americans have given the best proof of confidence in the justice of their position. Few lawyers, indeed, looking at the circumstances from a purely legal point of view, will deny that a great deal may be said for the arguments embodied in the despatches of Mr Adams and Mr Seward. A compendious statement of these arguments may be found in the North American Review for the present month, and if they fall short of establishing the liability of Great Britain for damages inflicted by the Alabama and her consorts, they go far to show, what has often been admitted in our own columns, that she represents a 'casus omnis' in international law. It is manifestly contrary to the law of nations that a vessel should be equipped and commissioned by or on behalf of a belligerent in a neutral port, and thence sail forth to prey on the commerce of the other belligerent. It is manifestly permitted by the law of nations for a neutral ship builder to construct a vessel for a neutral power, and to sell it to a belligerent government, provided the vessel is equipped or commissioned within neutral territory, does not issue from a neutral port, and is not a character that she has visited a belligerent country. The peculiarity of the Alabama case was that at no time and in no respect was she a mere article of merchandise, but she was destined by those who purchased her, for the purpose which she ultimately fulfilled. The construction of her hull, the enlistment of her crew, her preparation and embarkation of her cargo—all were part of the same transaction, conducted by the same agents, and she in her whole career, entered a Confederate port. She went nowhere for sale, and for a flagrant breach of our neutrality laws, she had no existence as a Confederate cruiser at all. Upon these facts the American claim an indemnity from us, alleging that the State is responsible for wrongful acts of its subjects, which either more effective laws or more vigorous execution of its present laws might have prevented. Lord Russell denied in substance that anything beyond an honest application of our own municipal statutes can be required of us by a foreign power, and declined to entertain the question, whether, in fact, our Foreign Enlistment Act had been applied in good faith. But no one had raised this question, while another question—whether our Government had acted with sufficient promptitude—was excluded by his 'general doctrine. Here is the weak point of our advertisement, reasoning, and it is right that we should acknowledge it frankly. The principle that international obligations are limited by the provisions of municipal legislation, though apparently sanctioned by the high authority of the late Attorney General, is assuredly not above dispute, and if this principle be surrendered, we can hardly help recognising the conflicting 'equities' of two innocent parties in the Alabama case.

Europe.

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By Electric Telegraph

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