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RICHIBUCTO, N. B., FEB. 6, 1896.

THE BEAR RIVER MURDER.

The murder of Annie Kempton at Bear River, Nova Scotia, is one surrounded with circumstances of peculiar atrocity. A girl of sixteen, of excellent character, known to all in the little village and beloved by all who knew her, is found beaten and hacked to death in her own home. She was alone in the house, and humanly speaking there is no other conclusion to be reached than that she gave her life in defence of her honor. Womanhood finds in this innocent victim one of its noblest martyrs, but what shall be said of the black-hearted fiend who slew her? It shakes one's faith in humanity to learn that an acquaintance, living near at hand, and bound by every consideration of law, of duty and of chivalry to be her protector, was in all probability her murderer. If such is found to be the case then we have one more added to the long list of horrible tragedies, which, even in this humane and charitable age, forbids Christian governments and legislatures to abolish the gallows. If capital punishment is to cease—and it is a very shocking thing to contemplate its continuance—it can only be when such crimes as that of Annie Kempton's murder are no longer committed.

At this writing a strong chain of circumstantial evidence points to one young man as the guilty party. But such indications are not always conclusive and the public will do well to suspend their judgment until the facts are more fully disclosed before a judge and jury. A fair and impartial trial in Canada awaits even the most hardened criminal. It is better even that the guilty should escape than that the innocent should suffer. But it is of great importance that no one guilty of this most horrible crime should meet with a sure and speedy retribution.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

Sir Charles Tupper is a hopeful advocate of what is called preferential trade. He believes that public sentiment in Britain is coming round in favor of giving the colonies a preference over foreign countries in the markets of the mother country, provided the colonies will reciprocate the advantage.

Of course there are some difficulties in the way. It will be necessary to treat all the colonies alike, or with equal favor, and as their products are so widely different the adjustment will be a matter of no small difficulty. It is also to be borne in mind that it is only the self-governing colonies that make their own tariffs. For instance, the tariff for India is not made in that country, for India has no legislature and her tariff is made in England. The various smaller colonies scattered about the globe that are still crown colonies have not been permitted to adopt tariffs for protection. Britain, Canada, Australia, Newfoundland and Cape Colony are therefore the portions of the empire chiefly to be consulted in regard to the proposed arrangement.

The first question naturally arising is will the mother country consent to give a preference to Colonial products in her markets? The lowest amount of favor spoken of is 5 per cent. Britain now receives the products and manufactures with a few exceptions of all countries free of duty. With her consent to impose a duty of 5 per cent. on the lumber, grain, cattle, cheese, cotton, etc., which she now receives from the United States, and continue to allow like products from Canada to come in free of duty. Baltic lumber, too, must be taxed. South American beef, hides and wool, the beet sugar of Germany and France in order to show due favor to Australia, the West Indies and other dependencies exporting like products.

It would seem at the first blush that the British consumer and manufacturer, long used to receiving his lumber, wool, food stuffs and all the raw material for manufactures free of duty, would not readily consent to the arrangement. Nor would the objections be found alone on the British side. Canada has now high duties

on British manufactures, notably in iron and steel, as well as cotton and other textiles. The scheme of preferential trade involves either the lowering of these duties by 5 to 10 per cent., or the increasing of such duties against all foreign countries by that much and leaving the duties on British manufactures as they now are.

It will be seen at a glance that the scheme ordinarily understood to be expressed by the two words "preferential trade," is a vast and comprehensive one, which would quite revolutionize the present trade and fiscal systems of the British empire. It is obvious that it cannot be very quickly brought about as there are so many parties, different legislatures, whose consent would be required, and so many diverse interests to be reconciled. The British people will be reluctant to see their chosen system of free trade with all the world broken in upon. Other nations might view the movement as a proclamation of commercial war, and there are trade treaties between the mother country and various foreign nations that must be abrogated or modified before preferential trade with the colonies could be adopted. Some of these treaties have years yet to run before they can be terminated and this would complicate matters still further.

Such are some of the "lions in the way." But it is the business of statesmanship not to make difficulties but to remove them, when a good object is to be attained. And the object in this case is admittedly good. Preferential trade would tend powerfully to build up and consolidate the empire. The various colonies and dependencies which have been tending to drift apart and perhaps set up for themselves, would be drawn together in closer union than ever before. Already the mother country sells four or five times as much per head of their population to Canada, Australia and Cape Colony as to the United States, France or Germany. So powerfully, even under existing conditions, does trade tend to "follow the flag." With preferential trade for a quarter of a century this contrast would be greatly increased and the empire proportionately benefited.

Preferential trade is manifestly easier of accomplishment than imperial federation, but it will take years to bring it about. Possibly federation may follow the preparatory measure. In the meantime the relations of the colonies and dependencies to the mother country and vice versa forms an eminently proper and healthful subject for discussion among the loyal subjects of the empire the world around.

SIR CHARLES VICTORIOUS.

Sir Charles Tupper has been triumphantly returned for Cape Breton. This was of course expected by Liberal Conservatives and friends of the administration throughout Canada. His splendid abilities, his great services to Canada and to his native province, were sufficient alone to determine the contest in his favor when it was first entered upon.

But many indications show that even in Cape Breton the opposition were not without hopes of winning. Recent by-elections had gone in their favor and the trouble which recently beset the government raised the opposition hopes. Then there was the enormous gain in a party sense which would come to the Liberals from the possible defeat of Sir Charles, if it could be effected. Beyond question his defeat would be a great blow to his prestige and to the strength of the gov't. These and other reasons prompted the opposition leaders to make a most stubborn fight against Sir Charles return. They filled the county with speakers, but these were everywhere met by an equally strong and equally persuasive array on Sir Charles' side. He himself did yeoman's service, in fact he was ubiquitous in the fight. If any were so foolish as to imagine him unequal to the labors and toils of a winter campaign they were doomed to speedy and inglorious disappointment.

Sir Charles at once becomes the leading spirit in Canadian politics and it is safe to say he enters the commons with renewed prestige. The Conservative party will rally around him with the greatest unanimity and admiration, glad of his return to the councils of the county, proud of his splendid talents and not ungrateful that in an hour of darkness and danger his coming has "snatched victory from the jaws of defeat" by turning the fortunes of the by-elections. Cape Breton has atoned in large measure for the reverses of Montreal Centre, Jacques Cartier and Charlevoix and has restored the confidence that was for a brief period shaken.

On all hands it must be admitted that in such times as these Canada with difficult questions to be handled needs her ablest men at the front, and few are so blinded by party prejudice as not to admit the signal talents and ripe experience of Sir Charles Tupper. His advent to parliament will speedily awaken an alert interest in the hitherto rather dull session at Ottawa, and from this time to its close we may count upon proceedings and debates of the most stirring character.

Our latest advices from Cape Breton place Sir Charles Tupper's majority at \$22 with one polling place to hear from. In the election of 1891 the conservative majority in this constituency was 728. This does not look as if the tory government is "tottering to its fall."

THE BEAR RIVER TRAGEDY.

Pretty Annie Kempton Meets Death Struggling for Her Chastity.

[Annapolis Spectator.]

The famous Tebo murder in this county in 1879, and the well known brutal massacre of Mrs. Robbins by her husband, twenty years ago, are in no wise greater signs what a barbarian can do than the murdering of sweet Annie Kempton on Wednesday night.

Bear River has always been known as a quiet little village the people thereof much preferring the society of the church than a life of frivolity. They live to a great extent with themselves, and with them it is Bear River first, last and all the time. What one knows the other knows, but, as fortune would have, very little occurs from keeping even the most menial from pursuing the even tenor of his way.

About twenty-five years ago Isaac Kempton moved there from Queens county. He worked hard to get a start in the world, and by economy as a lumberman and small farmer, amassed quite a little sum of money. But as with many, there came a crash, and he was left with little of this world's good. He was not despondent and though afterwards he lost a foot, which was cut off at the ankle, he began life anew. He has struggled ever since and has bettered himself considerably. His wife was also an industrious woman, and she helped Isaac fight the battles of the world. Five children—one boy and four girls—were all living, the son, who is married, near the old homestead; Annie who remained to keep house for her father, and the others are in the States. One girl married very well, and wishing a housekeeper, her mother went on, where she has since remained, thereby hoping to gain a few dollars. She never forgot Annie, though, and well remembering that money is often wanted by girls, sent her some from time to time. After spending a very enjoyable Xmas day, the mother on the 27th ult., wrote a very touching letter to her daughter, which the Spectator man found between the inner and outside windows. It was sympathetic, and the mother's love expressed in homely language, only as a mother could do. She spoke of Annie's reported illness, and begged her to take life a little more easy, and not impair her health. The letter was very touching, and especially so when one considers the circumstances under which it was read.

It would be well to describe the room where the murder was committed. It looked as though a cyclone had struck it. The table was turned over, chairs upset, dishes broken, wood in all directions, and the room in topsy-turvy condition. Near the parlor door, in a pool of blood, lay Annie. Her face was all cut; a terrible gash in her right temple, which corresponds exactly with the edge of a bloody stick; a hole in her head; and her throat cut in three places at least. A large sharp sheath knife was on the floor untouched, but it must have escaped the villain's notice. The gashes in the throat are ugly ones, though one is smooth, and it looks as if done with a sharp knife. On the floor near by were two case knives, covered with blood to the handles, and even the spoons were covered, where it looks as if the villain had taken a meal of preserves and beans that were there, partly eaten.

The floor where Annie lay, was deep in blood, and was indeed a heartrending scene. A motto hanging in the room, "Do right and fear not," was encouragement to the brave girl, and though young, not quite 15 years old, and quite heavy, weighing 140 pounds, she was unable to master him, though she preserved her chastity and honor. The fight from the appearance of the room, must have been a desperate one, and the window panes are spattered with blood.

Annie was a favorite with her school friends, and many the mother feels as keenly as if she was one of their own. The schools are all closed down in memory of the poor girl who has given to the world an example hardly ever equalled, never surpassed.

Coroner Leavitt with his jury of twelve, have done all that could be done to unravel the mystery. Judge Owen, of Annapolis, was on hand, and cross-examined the several witnesses.

At the home where the body lay, the inquest was held, the evidence of Peter Wheeler being taken in presence of the murdered girl. He stood the trial like a Spartan, and though he must have known the thoughts of many, he never flinched. The other evidence was taken in the parlor. But Peter was kept in the room where the body lay. If any man ever carried himself with composure, it was Wheeler, and the first signs of guilt were unnoticeable. He spoke in feeling terms of Annie, and his heart seemed touched like all the rest. Though Peter is said to be a Spaniard, he tells the Spectator he came from Australia, that his father was Irish and mother English. He is a short, stout, thick-set fellow 26 years of age, and could use his fists if needed.

BEAR RIVER, N. S., Jan. 31.—Wheeler is the murderer of Annie Kempton. This has been discovered by Detective Power, who took the prisoner to Digby to day. Wheeler dropped a remark to the effect that "something did not come out that might be some good to me. A respect-

able young fellow and I went up to Kempton's house that night. The young fellow wanted to go in, but I objected and we went back." He refused, however, the name of the young fellow. The detective came back here and struck on young Hardy Benson as the probable man.

Interviewed, Benson admitted having gone to Kempton's house with Peter, starting from Tillie Comeau's Peter went in and he stood at the gate and waited about a quarter of an hour, and Peter came out running and put his arms around Benson, and they then walked down the road together towards Tillie's house. Peter then cautioned Benson for his life not to tell anybody that they were at the house, and told him that Annie was then alone and advised him that he should go back and stay with her. Benson said he thought he would not go back and went home. Next day, after the body was found, Wheeler cautioned Benson not to say a word about this, as there were two knives on the floor and it would appear as if they had each used a knife. While the investigation was going on he sent word to him by a boy, whose name will be given later, not to mention anything about their being at Kempton's house that night. Benson also stated that when they neared the house Peter said he would go in. Peter also said to Detective Power, "Why, Annie had not gone home up to the time of my returning home with the boy with the wood. I saw her going up past Tillie's about 7 o'clock."

The whole thing simmers down to this: Peter struck Annie with the club when he was at the house about 6 o'clock. When he went up with Benson he went for the purpose, fearing that he had not killed her before, and that he would finish the job. This was the time he cut her throat. He then wanted Benson to go up and stay all night in order that suspicion would fall on him.

An important item of evidence as to the time of the murder has just come to light. A dish of beans was discovered in the oven of the kitchen stove, showing that Annie had placed them to warm for her supper. She was fated never to eat any supper. In fact her supper time was the time in which she struggled against and received her death wound.

The funeral took place this afternoon and was one of the largest ever seen in Bear River. The casket was completely covered with beautiful flowers, the gifts of friends of the deceased. The school children and teachers marched in the procession. The service was conducted by Rev. John Craig, assisted by Rev. S. Langille. In touching and eloquent language he spoke of the terrible death of Annie Kempton, and characterized her as dying in the defence of her virtue, as a martyr would die. In her struggle for right she lost her life at the hands of a human fiend, but her reward will follow in heaven.

DIGBY, Feb. 3.—Peter Wheeler, the suspected murderer of Annie Kempton, is weakening every hour.

He dreads his preliminary examination at Bear River on Thursday and greatly prefers having it here. He passes sleepless nights in jail here and eats very little.

Crowds of people visited the jail on Sunday to see him, but Sheriff VanBlarcom refused admittance to all.

His examination is expected to divulge additional startling facts, and the prisoner well knows it.

Albert J. S. Copp, crown prosecutor for Digby county, has taken charge of the case.

Detective Power, who went to Halifax Saturday, will return and give damaging evidence against the prisoner.

Mr. Copp's reason for conducting the preliminary examination at Bear River instead of Digby is a sensible one. All the witnesses reside here, and to bring them here would be a large expense to the county.

Nesbett Thompson, of South River road, Antigonish, N. S., when attempting to load his sled, slipped and fell, and a stone falling on him, killed him. He was twenty-five years of age.



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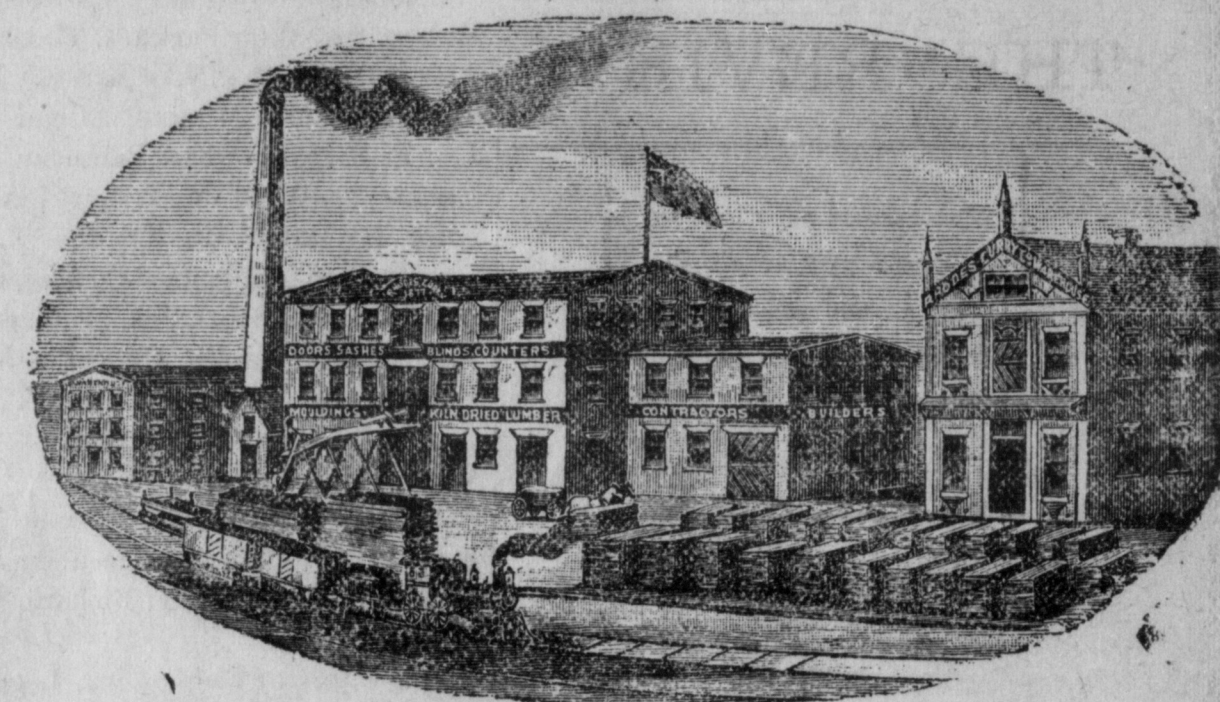
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