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BRITISH COLUMBIA.

OF the many suggestive contrasts observable by the traveller visiting North America, one of the most striking will present itself on extending his visit beyond the more familiar show resorts on the western littoral, in a northerly direction to British Columbia, and its pleasingly English-looking capital, Victoria, the largest town on the forest-matted Vancouver Island. The people of the better class you meet in the streets of the latter are, with few exceptions, of the English country-town type, sturdy, well-nurtured, florid-complexioned men, and plainly-dressed, healthy-looking women, a race that thrives on the solid English roast beef eaten in a more tranquil frame of mind than is noticeable among the ever-hurried inmates of American homes or hotels. The houses are often of the English villa type, neat, trim-looking buildings standing in their own gardens, and covered with evergreen creepers that betoken the mildness of the climate, and give these dwellings an attractive, home-like air one sadly misses in a great many parts of the States. The streets as well as the roads leading into the country are wide and well-kept; very different to the condition of those hollow mockeries that rouse one's indignation in and around most American towns, where, as a rule, the quality of streets and roads deteriorates as the town grows. The surroundings are of the pleasantest and probably the most novel. It would be difficult to find another spot in the world where sea and land, snow-clad, nobly proportioned peaks, and fyord-like coves skirted by majestic forests, have fashioned more strikingly beautiful landscape. Over the whole scene an air of peaceful calm is diffused, appreciated by the visitor the longer he has travelled in the noisily busy West. It is perhaps most observable on Sunday, a day kept more in the English fashion than it is south of the line, where Sunday is considered a "good day to finish up the week's business and start on the new one's work;" and where Bibles, not metaphorically but actually, are sometimes printed interleaved with advertisements.

British Columbia, the only British territory on the Pacific littoral of America, has, to use the American humorist's expression, not only "a good deal of climate sticking about it," as we shall presently hear, but also a good deal of history for such a comparatively small and young country. A glance at the latter will account for its phenomenal rise, its stagnation, and its not improbable reascendancy at no far-off date. From the time that Vancouver, in 1790, discovered and navigated the great inland archipelago of Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia, separated from the Pacific Ocean by Vancouver



СЪБРАНАТО НА СССР

Island and the northerly part of what is now Washington Territory, up to the year 1848, both the mainland and the chief island that was called after him remained in much the same wild and unexplored condition in which that bold navigator found and also left them. It was not till 1849 Vancouver Island was constituted a colony, James Douglas, one of the most famous pioneers England has ever produced, being appointed the first Governor. Being made a colony did not, however, suffice to colonise this wild and singularly remote spot. More powerfully attractive forces were needed to bring other than Hudson Bay Company voyageurs and fur traders to this lonely realm. It was gold that did what perhaps at that period no other power could have achieved; it peopled first California and then British Columbia. In the ten years that had elapsed since the spring of 1848, when gold was first discovered in California, the usual reaction from the world-stirring paroxysm of feverish excitement had made itself felt there. Hence the news, at first but vaguely rumoured, of wonderfully rich finds on British Columbia's main river, the Fraser, reached the land of gold in the nick of time. Of the tens of thousands of eager gold-seekers who had crowded to California in the ten years preceding 1858, when the gold discoveries on the Fraser were made, but few had returned to their Eastern homes. Without awaiting further confirmation of the truth of these reports, most of these peripatetic miners tied up their scanty bundles and took ship up the coast to Victoria, the outfitting place and point of departure for mines four hundred or five hundred miles up the forested interior of the mainland. The first arrivals found, where now the city of Victoria stands, a cluster of log cabins and a storehouse surrounded by a businesslike-looking stockade, the usual make up of an Hudson Bay Company trading post, although an army of hungry and mangy mongrels and an equally ill-assorted assembly of natives must be included in the foreground of the picture. A year later there was a considerable town in which, it is said, some 20,000 miners wintered the following season, spending with lavish hands the golden fruit of their hard labour: the "dust" that filled the buckskin pouches, not unfrequently to such plethoric dimensions as to require the assistance of a sumpter horse to "pack" it down from the mines.

But these bright days did not last long. The country was in those days too remote from all channels of commerce, and nearly incredible difficulties made a systematic development of the auriferous deposits quite impossible. The necessary supplies and tools—machinery could not be transported at all—had to be got up at extravagant cost to the great camps in the interior, localities which for the first few years—until the famous, and no doubt for its length, most costly waggon road of modern days, the Cariboo road,

had been built—could only be gained by sturdy foot travellers prepared to tramp four hundred miles, carrying their blankets and provisions on their backs. When flour cost from 4s. to 8s. a pound, and bacon reached the same prohibitive price, the barest necessities of life, fined down as they were to a point of frugality that spoke well for the perseverance and hardiness of these pioneers, swallowed up what under ordinary circumstances would be called very remunerative returns. Thus it came that only the richest and most approachable deposits were worked, and even these only in a primitively superficial manner, the impossibility of employing really workmanlike appliances, as well as the exorbitant rates of wages prevailing, when an ordinary labourer received £3 a day, forming insurmountable obstacles.

Twenty or more years ago, the Colonial Secretary of the day, when replying to some question in the House of Commons, remarked that the population of British Columbia consisted of a "motley inundation of immigrant diggers," language that befitted the mouthpiece of a policy that was fast estranging England from her loyal but disparaged colonial offsprings, amongst which the then youngest was the most remote, and from circumstances beyond her infantile control also the most underrated. In the two decades that have elapsed since the decline of the mining industry in British Columbia, and the consequent disappearance of the less desirable elements of its floating population, a close amalgamation of the heterogeneous elements of its society has taken place. The isolated position of this little people on the far-away Pacific, far removed from the highways of commerce and civilisation, neglected by the army of rich and idle tourists, knitted them together in bonds of almost family kinship. And not without happy results, for it would be hard to find a more loyal and independent race of men, staidly contented with the homes they have in the course of years made for themselves, living and letting live on the easy-going, hospitable principles inculcated by the peculiar conditions and sudden reverses to which life in the boisterous mining camps of the early days had exposed them all. Unlike many of the Californian valleys—where once stood flourishing mining "cities" of five and six thousand inhabitants, but which disappeared from the face of the earth as suddenly as they had started into creation, leaving not a trace behind to mark the spot where building land was once worth £200 the square rod—the mining population of British Columbia, when the decrease in the output of gold caused also there the inevitable reaction, did not as quickly disperse. And for good reasons. While some had made, and what was perhaps rarer in those madly extravagant days, had saved money, many found themselves without the wherewithal to drift to pastures new. To both classes the country, its exhaustless game and fish supplies,

as well as its climate, was attractive. They had all they required; the rich a pleasant, if lazy, existence among the free-and-easy surroundings that had become dear to them, the poor high rates of wages to induce them to remain at or near the scenes of their success or failure. And while hitherto the good people of British Columbia, in their beautiful but isolated country, the "Sleepy Hollow" of America, have shown but little of that keen nervous aptitude for business which distinguishes the American of the Pacific Coast to so remarkable an extent, an absence which is easily perceptible in the easy-going, slow manner in which every-day dealings are transacted, it is to be expected that an infusion of more active elements will probably develop this quality. The men of British Columbia have always borne, and not without some good reason, that their day would come again, that the recognition of the undeniable richness and diversity of their country's resources would inaugurate another great "boom," this time of a more lasting character than the one wrought by gold.

Foremost among the causes that could achieve such an end were, of course, improved communication and renewed industry. About two years ago, the first important link connecting British Columbia with the United States was established, by the completion of the Northern Pacific Railway, the most northerly of the four or five great transcontinental lines that cross the vast expanse of the United States. It terminates on Puget Sound, within a few hours' steam from Victoria, thereby shortening the journey of some thirty or forty days from London to the capital of British Columbia, to fifteen or sixteen. Before then a weekly steamer from San Francisco was the sole mail route to gain the province, while a few years earlier, before the completion of the Union Pacific road, letters and travellers were several months on the road.

But a far more important link with the centres of enterprise and with the mother country has now been forged by the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, that great national undertaking of which the people of Canada can with every right be proud. It is a vast enterprise quite out of proportion to the population of the Dominion. It even gives the persevering Canadians the privilege to exult over their far wealthier and ten times as numerous neighbours south of the border, for their line is not only the longest in the world, but it is also the only true transcontinental railway system in all America, the great overland routes that cross the United States from sea to sea being each made up of several distinct companies. In another respect, too, the Canadian Pacific is remarkable. Unlike all other overland lines which have sought large centres of population, such as San Francisco, Portland, and Tacoma, for their western terminus, the directors of the Canadian Pacific

Railway have scarcely definitely determined on which of the numerous coves of Burrard Inlet, a great, fyord-like, twenty-mile-long firth, the future rival of San Francisco shall spring up. In other words, this gigantic enterprise, and gigantic it deserves to be called, entered, when it crossed the Rocky Mountains, a bold voyage of discovery the like of which was hitherto unknown in the history of railways. At the first glance such an attempt to reverse the relationship between population and railways appears a riskful undertaking, but an examination of the country, an even cursory inspection of its resources, which as yet await recognition by capital, will change such pessimistic considerations; while the disadvantage of finding no great terminal city ready built is one that is amply counterbalanced, so far as the railway company's coffers are concerned, by the circumstance that the land where the new city is to spring up, belongs to a great extent to the company, and land sales will therefore afford a large revenue. That a considerable town will soon stand where now there is a dense forest of huge many-century-old Douglas pines, there can be no doubt; be the exact spot at Port Moody, at the most inland extremity of Burrard Inlet, or what is now more likely, at Coal Harbour, a portion of the same great cove but twelve miles nearer the Gulf of Georgia, the site is equally admirable, and the harbour accommodation of equal excellence. In these days of rapid transit a saving of fifty or one hundred miles will revolutionise the traffic of certain routes; how much then must the reduction of about 1,075 miles in the journey from Liverpool to Yokohama give future prominence to the terminal city of the Canadian Pacific.

The fact that British Columbia is our only colonial possession on the American Pacific, on which the commerce of the world is rapidly centering itself, lends gravity to a possible future danger to the Imperial interests of Great Britain, arising from the colony's geographical position. It needs but a brief retrospective glance at the genesis of the United States to show what a wonderful expansion of its southern and western boundaries has been brought about by a peculiarly insidious process, which, for want of a better name, one might term Americanisation—a bloodless but very effectual method of annexation, absorbing vast countries, not at the point of the bayonet, but by the commercial enterprise of its citizens. Most of the western territories—Texas, California, and portions of Oregon and Washington Territory, as well as Alaska—have all in their turn been thus Americanised. Mexico, Cuba, and some of the central American States are now undergoing that process uninterrupted by meddlesome European intervention. By the acquisition of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands the United States has pushed its empire, as it were, to the very door of Japan and China, and

the only missing link, the only possible rival to exclusive trade in the Pacific, is British Columbia, with its splendid harbours, its inexhaustible coal-fields, and unrivalled forests, in both of which latter resources her wealth is superior to that of any district south of it. The American of the Pacific coast, we need hardly be told, is a peculiarly energetic and enterprising individual, and he never tires of telling you that British Columbia, wedged in between American countries, Alaska, as a topweight pressing downwards, meeting the upward expansion of Washington, Idaho, and Montana Territories, will be unable to resist Americanisation. This process may be expected to commence when British Columbia promises to become a dangerous rival, a now not remote contingency.

The cry of secession revived in Canada from time to time, has never found popular favour in British Columbia, which has always been one of the most loyal colonial possessions of Great Britain. Whether it will continue so depends to a very great extent upon the districts from which it will receive the bulk of immigration in the next years; whether from the eastern provinces of the Dominion and the old country, or whether from those neighbouring districts that are not separated from it by great mountain chains or thousands of miles of sea. Already Californian capital is arriving, millions of Yankee dollars, invested in vast stretches of coal-fields, silver-mines, forest land, and the construction of short lines of railways—capital that, shame to say, was not forthcoming from any other part of the world, and which, coming at this early stage, must necessarily be considered only the vanguard of other millions. Where the shrewd business man of the Pacific coast has invested his dollars, there, too, he will make his home. Startling as it may sound, it is yet absolute truth that to-day capital from San Francisco, employed in building the only railway line on Vancouver Island, controls the vast coal-fields of British Columbia on Vancouver Island. The English man-of-war loading coal at the *only* naval and coaling station Great Britain possesses on the entire Pacific littoral of North and South America, will have to buy its fuel from San Francisco's millionaires, adepts at "corners." Under these circumstances it will not take many years to bring to an issue the question whether the Queen's birthday or the 4th of July will be the *fête* day of the dominant race. To-day these two representative holidays are kept with equal impressiveness in British Columbia. Indeed, I saw more flags flying on the latter, on my last visit to Victoria at that season of the year, than were exhibited on the preceding *fête* day of Englishmen; a show of bunting, hoisted, it is true, by peaceful citizens of two countries dwelling together in perfect harmony, but yet not unsuggestive of future danger to Great Britain's vital interests in the new world. Geography is anything but a

favourite study in good old England, but even the Eton boy, who actually gives half an hour every week to that science, will be able to realise the strategic importance of being able to convey troops, arms, and harbour defences to the shores of the Pacific within ten or eleven days from the time the transport weighs anchor at Plymouth.

To British Columbia's climates, for it would be misleading to speak of only one, we can best refer by glancing briefly at the topography of the country. The "Sea of Mountains," which it is often called, or the Switzerland of America, as it is perhaps better described, extends through nearly twelve degrees of latitude, with a varying breadth and a varying elevation. Its northern half is an inhospitable, forest-matted, exceedingly rugged region that, except for mining, possesses no attractions, and suffers from a severity of climate not in contrast, as is that of the more southerly districts, with its latitude. Of the southern half, to which these remarks are exclusively confined, we have to note multiform climatic conditions. Vancouver Island and the archipelagic fringe of coast line has a climate not dissimilar to that of the south of England, with less rain in summer. Snow rarely lies, and, as Lord Lansdowne, in a recent speech, remarked, "exotic plants blossom in the gardens of Victoria, while at Ottawa there are several feet of snow and the thermometer registers 30° F. below zero." Leaving the coast line with its serene summers and rainy winters (about 50 inches), and entering the dry interior, we find, say, round Kamloops, an annual rainfall of only about 10 or 15 inches, making irrigation requisite, and at Okanagan a trifle more; the extremes of temperature in both localities are much greater than on the coast, the mercury occasionally creeping down to 20° and 25° F. below zero, rivers and lakes frozen for two or three months, while in summer the heat is quite great. In the easternmost portion of the province yet more local climates prevail. Thus, where the Canadian Pacific crosses consecutively the Rocky Mountains, Columbia River, and that most wonderful of all American mountain ranges the Selkirks—a densely forested region—a rainy and snowy climate prevails. On the other hand a long day's ride, starting from where the Canadian Pacific Railway first approaches the Columbia, and following that river up in a southerly direction to its source, will bring you to the Kootenay Valley, lying in about the same latitude as the Channel Islands, where the rainfall is only about 20 to 25 inches, and not sufficiently enduring cold to freeze the deeper lakes or to prevent cattle and horses from wintering out.

To the intending emigrant British Columbia offers many, and under certain circumstances superior, advantages, but they are by no means those that invite emigration to Manitoba, or to the Northwest Territories. In British Columbia there are no, or few, such

vast expanses of agricultural land ready for immediate cultivation and obtainable at such very reasonable rates as four shillings an acre. From the land the new-comer can acquire at first cost, he will, according to location, have either to clear the timber and brush, or he will have to dyke it, or it requires irrigation. The soil is ordinarily very good; the land that requires dyking is, as a rule, of surpassing excellence, producing crops such as only the richest alluvial land of California can rival. Clearing timber, if it is at all heavy, is an expensive proceeding, costing from £6 to £20 per acre, and hence can be resorted to only where the neighbourhood of towns holds out inducements. Dyking and irrigating are much less expensive, the former amounting to about £2 an acre, while for the latter no ruling price can be given, as the cost depends entirely upon the distance from whence the water has to be brought. The prime cost of agricultural land ready for cultivation is, under all circumstances, higher in British Columbia than in the eastern regions; and well it may, for the climate and good local markets give it a more substantial value than is possessed by those vast wheat regions of the North-west. Its value will rapidly increase as the country becomes more settled up, creating a local demand for dairy and farm produce that cannot be supplied so cheaply from elsewhere.

There is some truth in the reflections of Canadians upon the limited cereal-producing capacity of British Columbia. Almost all the flour used in Victoria and in the coast districts comes from Washington and Oregon, and has to pay a not inconsiderable duty on entering the Dominion; but now that the Canadian Pacific Railway has thrown wide open to British Columbia the doors of the immense granaries of the North-west and Manitoba, every bushel of wheat consumed in British Columbia will probably come from across the Rocky Mountains. Good land on the Pacific slope is far too valuable for wheat-growing. Throughout North America there are literally limitless expanses suitable for this much-produced crop; but only in very few districts, and those almost exclusively confined to the Pacific coast of North America, do we find that happy combination of rich soil and a mild climate with frostless summers which is essential for growing fruits, hops, and the more remunerative crops of vegetables and roots. In parts of California and in the more favoured regions of Oregon and Washington Territory, where similar conditions prevail, fruit and hop growing has completely disestablished the wheat farm, and people who now make from £20 to £40 per acre by them look back with a pitying contemptuous smile to the olden days of an always uncertain and never very paying crop. Hitherto very little hops have been raised, although soil and climate are very suitable in British Columbia, for there was no way of exporting it to the coast or to Europe, a heavy import duty of 4d. per

pound closing the doors of the United States, while the seven or eight months' journey to Europe *viâ* the Horn was equally impracticable, for fast transshipment is an essential point with this crop. No doubt a considerable traffic can be created for the Canadian Pacific road by competing for those paying shipments from Washington Territory, and sending them through Canada in bond to Europe. In parts of British Columbia the conditions favouring hop culture are quite as good as those in the neighbouring valleys; indeed, in one respect they are far more encouraging, for, as is well known, the labour question is one of great importance to the hop grower, who requires for the picking season a hundredfold increased force. The presence of Indians in British Columbia, who, unlike the American Indians, have long become accustomed to work for whites, and who now every hop-picking season migrate in large numbers to the Washington yards, where they are much prized as the most expert pickers, gives the future home-grower a very important advantage. In the one interior district—the Kootenay country—where hops can be grown, there is also a sufficiently large body of willing aboriginal pickers. As for the fruit markets of British North America and Great Britain, British Columbia has them at her door. Eastern Canada, Manitoba, and the North-west, with their millions of population, unable from the severity of the climate to grow their own vegetables and fruit, need no longer pay extravagantly high prices for Californian produce; nor need the rapidly-growing demands of Covent Garden be always met by shiploads of Golden State peaches and pears.

What was California before she had a railway to the Atlantic? Although the available land in British Columbia is, of course, of an infinitely smaller extent, there is yet enough to allow the province, now that she has a railway, to occupy much the same position towards Eastern Canada as sunny California does to the United States. Indeed, as a mere summer pleasure resort, British Columbia has far more engaging attractions than those of her southern neighbour. In other respects, too, her resources warrant most hopeful forecasts. Her coal, to which we have already referred, is the best on the entire west coast of America. San Francisco uses Vancouver coal almost exclusively for domestic purposes. Columbian timber wealth is simply enormous, and only those who have wandered for weeks or months in her forests can appreciate what that wealth will mean in the near future. Her fisheries promise an equally wonderful prodigality, and present an enormous scope for immediate enterprise. The great West and North-west can now be supplied with her salmon, of which there are seven different kinds (one of an hitherto unknown species, which never ascend rivers); with her enormous halibut, cod, herring, sturgeon sometimes 1,000 lbs. in weight, the choice red-fish, and the delicate oolackan or candlefish, with all of

which the waters teem. In no industry, however, will the completion of the Canadian Pacific work such beneficial changes, or, rather, inaugurate a more widespread business, than in that of mining. Hitherto the exploitation of the country's mineral wealth was simply a scraping of the surface by the individual efforts of poor men, unassisted by capital, machinery, or organization. According to official reports nine and a half millions sterling worth of gold has been taken out of her stream beds and gravel beds by such rude appliances as could be transported on men's or horses' backs, or by yet ruder makeshifts when even that was not possible on account of the distance and rugged, densely-forested character of the country. These nine and a half millions' worth of nuggets and "dust" were all alluvial gold that had become separated from the native rock or matrix by the denuding effects of water. This matrix is still there, so that the unworked wealth of gold in British Columbia is infinitely greater than the first hardy prospectors, with their primitive tools, could suppose. As a stock-raising country only a few districts claim attention. They are in the interior, where there is a zone of upland grazing country with excellent bunch-grass, offering good opportunities to the stockman. The ranges near the Canadian Pacific have, however, been all taken up; and with the exception of the Okanagan country quite in the south, and the Upper Kootenay Valley in the extreme south-east corner of the province, I know of none open to the new-comer. The latter valley—upon the beauties and attractions of which all the early explorers, and even the Parliamentary Blue-books embracing Paliser's most interesting report of his renowned exploration, dwell with singular unanimity—deserves attention also, from the farmer's and fruit-grower's point of view. To both its very sheltered position, low altitude, and frostless summers offer attractions; while to the miner, the fact that out of one little tributary to the Kootenay River £400,000 worth of gold was taken with the rudest implements in two summers, should be a strong inducement to avail himself of the infinitely improved means of communication to reach that hitherto sequestered and pleasing valley.

There is much to see, to enjoy, and to learn in British Columbia; and the future is likely to ratify the opinion of it recently expressed by the Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, on the occasion of his first visit:—"I may honestly say it appears to me one of the most attractive countries, not only on this continent, but probably in the whole world."

WM. A. BAILLIE-GROHMAN.



