

the whole country is mountainous, and comparatively little is fit for cultivation; but its fisheries and mineral treasures are practically inexhaustible, and its immense forests will be able to supply the markets of the North-West with building materials for generations to come. Add to this the fact that some one of its ports must yet become the depot of the vast trans-Pacific trade (inasmuch as the distance from Yokohama to Liverpool via the Canadian Pacific Railway is more than 1,000 miles shorter than by way of San Francisco), and it becomes clear that British Columbia will yet play an important part in the history, not only of the Dominion, but of the world.

Compared with the extent of territory, the population is very sparse. According to the census of 1881, it numbered less than 50,000 souls, of whom more than 25,000 were Indians. To these should be added some eight or ten thousand Chinese. With a population so scant and so widely scattered, the progress of mission work could not be otherwise than slow; but with the opening up of railway communication, and the consequent development of the country's resources, there is every reason to expect a rapid increase of population in the near future.

II.—MISSIONS TO THE WHITE POPULATION.

Over twenty-five years have elapsed since the first band of missionaries, headed by the Rev. Dr. Evans, went to British Columbia. At the very outset they were confronted by difficulties of no ordinary character. The population was sparse and scattered; facilities for travel were few and costly; rates of living were enormously high; while the cost of labor and building materials was such that only men of sublime faith and undaunted courage would have undertaken the task of building churches and parsonages. But they labored on, and the result of their labors is seen to-day. Persons converted under their preaching are still to be found all over the Province; and the names of Evans, and Robson, and Browning, and White, and Derrick, and Russ are still held in grateful remembrance by many who were benefited by their ministrations.

The entire white membership of the Methodist Church in British Columbia, as shown by the Minutes of 1885, is less than 600. This, considering the length of time that has elapsed since the mission was begun, and the vast amount of money expended, appears very small; but it should be borne in mind that in addition to the difficulties already referred to, there were others of a more serious character, growing out of the circumstances and habits of the people. Many of those who first emigrated to British Columbia were actuated mainly, if not solely, by a desire to make money, and hence they became regardless of methods if only the end could be secured. The Sabbath was disregarded, and became a day of business or of pleasure; the house of God was shunned; old habits of prayer, and reverence for sacred things, were left east of the Mountains; saloons by the score and

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