

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

B RITISH COLUMBIA has been called "England's youngest child:" it is the last addition to our large family of colonies which now cover nearly one sixth of the globe. Perhaps it is usual in families to consider the last-born member for the time being the prodigy of the household, and certainly we have been wont to boast great things of the present capacity and the future glory of Columbia. It reached by a bound to a height of interest and of notoriety which other countries have attained only after long years of waiting, and which some have never succeeded in making their own. Since 1806, when it first became British soil, it had been leased by the Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company, and formed a part of those vast hunting-grounds and game preserves which were mentioned in our last paper; but in 1858 the late Lord Lytton, the then Colonial Secretary, declined to renew the lease to that Company, and British Columbia was raised to the dignity of a colony. There was the island of Vancouver, with Victoria for its capital, and still further to the north Queen Charlotte's Island; while on the mainland there was Columbia proper, with its chief town of New Westminster running far up northward to the country that was then Russian territory, the Rocky Mountains forming its eastern boundary, dividing it from Rupert's Land. These made up a country equal in area to England and France together; its character had suffered much from misrepresentation: it had been declared to be a region of eternal fog, of bitter cold, with a barren soil, and altogether unfit for human habitation. But it was found on consulting maps that the latitude of Victoria was that of Paris; that the American ports, only a few score miles to the south, were always open, and that either from the action of the Gulf Stream, or other cause not ascertained, the climate of that western coast was soft and humid; that fruits and cereals which did well in England, flourished in Vancouver's Island; and in a short time we in this country were indebted to California and