

channels through which ships of burden could make their way through them up to British Columbia. The Boundary Commissioners of 1858, sent out to determine by astronomical observation the line of the Oregon Treaty, lost no time in reporting these discoveries to their respective Governments. The most southern passage, known as the Rosario Channel, lies next the coast of Washington. Its adoption as the continuation of the boundary line would place the whole archipelago of islets in the possession of England. The Haro Channel, claimed by the United States, lies along the coast of Vancouver Island, and would bring the archipelago within United States' soil. These two channels are about twenty miles apart. That on the Washington side was the only one, up to a recent period, in use; and, indeed, had been used by all the English and American navigators: that on the Vancouver side, though marked on some of the Spanish charts, was quite unknown to more modern traders until the masters of Hudson's Bay company's vessels availed themselves of its shorter route to Victoria.

Of course, to two such vast landowners as Great Britain and the United States, the rocks and pine-clad acres which lie between these two channels are intrinsically valueless. It is, however, their peculiar position which constitutes their importance. Let us consider for a moment how the claim of the United States' Government would affect these British possessions on the Pacific. British Columbia can only be approached through the Straits of Juan de Fuca—the entrance to the Gulf of Georgia,—lying between the Territory of Washington and Vancouver Island. These straits are thirteen miles wide at their entrance on the Pacific, but soon diminish to eleven miles. When we come opposite the islet of San Juan, the passage dwindles to five miles. Small steamers, by hugging the coast of Vancouver Island, can place five miles between themselves and San Juan; but large ocean-going vessels must pass within two miles of that islet, as also of the islets of Henry and Stewart. They would thus be exposed to the full range of modern artillery. Nearly similar objections might be urged by the United States' Government against the adoption of the Rosario Channel, if that passage were a key to any of the possessions of the Union. But the Gulf of Georgia simply leads to British Columbia, and to no place else. Fortunately, however, we are not restricted to those two channels. The Boundary Commissioners of 1858 ascertained the existence of a third channel, navigable for steam vessels, to which the name of the Douglas Channel has been given. It lies midway between these two entrance passages, leaving the islet of San