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Correspondence, Documents, &c.

VANCOUVER AND QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLAND.

[The writer of the following letter, having at a late meeting of the S.P.G. made a statement on the interesting subject to which it refers, was asked to put the substance of it in writing; and we have much pleasure in complying with a request which has been made to us for its insertion.]

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I regret very much that I have been prevented from forwarding sooner to you the information you desired, and thought might prove useful to you in promoting “the establishment of a Mission on Vancouver’s Island, whose operations should ultimately extend to the other British possessions.” I hope, however, the information which this letter may convey will prove available on another occasion in aiding you to carry out this benevolent design.

In the arrangement of the remarks which I am about to make, I shall first state what I have learned by my own observation, and from the testimony of others well acquainted with and long resident in these territories, relative to their natural productions and local advantages, which I believe to be so great as must inevitably and shortly attract thither a great influx of trade and colonization, and (if these be not accompanied with and leavened by Christian knowledge and principle) will prove destructive to the native Indian population, as they have done to their brethren on the east side of the Rocky Mountains and to the tribes of New Holland. Secondly, I shall state some particulars of the present religious, moral, and social condition of these people, and the prospect which it presents as a field for carrying on successful missionary efforts; and, lastly, I shall venture to make a few suggestions as to the mode in which these may be; in my opinion, most efficiently directed.

The island of Vancouver lies between 48° and 49° of north latitude and 123° and 129° of west longitude; its length may be estimated at 290 miles, and its average breadth at 55. This must be considered as only an approximation to its actual extent, as no complete and accurate survey has been made, either of it or of the other possessions of the Crown on these coasts. Of these it is the largest and by far the most important to England, because of its agricultural and mineral wealth, of its proximity to China and the East, and its consequent advantages as an emporium for trade, of its position at the termination of the United States boundary line, and of the projected railway across the continent of America:—a project which, however remote its execution may appear to some, American enterprise, by the aid of borrowed British capital, will eventually and quickly accomplish through their own territories, should England continue to be insensible to the superior facilities afforded by hers for such an undertaking, and to the incalculable advantages which would result therefrom to herself and to her North American colonies.