

spectator of the events which culminated in what is known as the Red River rebellion. A history of the strife brought on by that arch rebel and poltroon, Louis Riel, from the pen of Mr. Begg would be a valuable addition to Canadian literature.

The stories to which I refer are said by many to equal in every regard the best of the late Mr. Ballantyne, whose death occurred the other day at Rome. It may not be generally known that the late Mr. Ballantyne laid the foundation for his life's work on Canadian soil. After leaving school in Scotland, his native country, he was engaged as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay company and served at different posts in the Hudson's Bay region. He was later transferred to a post at a point on St. Lawrence river, where he had little to do and plenty of time for contemplation. In this solitude his romantic proclivities began to show themselves, and it was here, says the *Manitoba Free Press*, that he involuntarily began his career as an author. One day finding time passing wearily he sat down and inscribed a letter to his mother giving a description of life in the northern wilderness. In due course the letter reached Scotland, and after the writer's mother had read it was passed around to friends, and in this way came into the hand of a publisher, who induced Mrs. Ballantyne to let him publish it. Shortly after this Mr. Ballantyne returned to Scotland and was persuaded, but not readily, to write more stories of life in Canadian fur country. At first he was indifferent to the success of his books, but finally began to enjoy writing principally because he found that his efforts gave pleasure to others, especially to young people for whom his stories were more particularly intended.

The question is asked me why it is that the press of this city does not devote more space in discussing the necessity of enlarging the trade relations to which Victoria is entitled as a natural shipping centre. The theme is an ever timely one and as has been remarked, "it is not sufficient to be satisfied with the certainty of our commercial importance as the gateway of the Pacific Northwest. We should hasten the day by forecasting the future, combining forces to obtain the wisest and earliest results, and foster every project that will tend to secure to us those markets which can consume the outputs and manufactures of our rich and varied sources of forest, field furnace and factory, to the end that we may be a commercial community second to none." It is gratifying to note that the other cities of the Province are taking a deep interest in this subject, and as the field is unlimited, there is no reason to believe that healthy competition will result other than to the good of all, and hasten the time when British Columbia shall control the greater portion of the trade which must eventually come to the sound country. The C. P. R. should lend its assistance, however, in this direction, but have, up to this time, failed to do. Shippers must be enabled to handle the

products which are imported, and to do so, better local rates on merchandise eastward must be afforded.

The Toronto *Empire* registers the following well-defined grievance against the church choirs of that city: "The number of incompetent choirmasters in the city of Toronto is immense. Many of these men have remunerative positions, when it is considered that the average choirmaster can not only count on his specific stipend for his official services, but on a large clientele of pupils from the congregation. It generally means \$2,000 a year, if he happens to get into a prosperous church. It is a mournful fact, however, that many of them prefer backbiting their rivals to exhibiting any enterprise themselves. Their choirs are drilled in a perfunctory way, and laz through the *Te Deum* or anthem, and the congregation gets treated to the same chants over and over again. The enterprising choirmasters of this city of churches could be counted on the fingers of one's hands, and leave some fingers over. Oftentimes the sermons of the pastor give warrant for the perfunctory, stale quality of the choirmaster's efforts, of course, but that is no excuse. No wonder people do not flock to church. There is nothing to occasion flocks. By far the greater number of them are so conscious of the inferiority of their weekly efforts as to be naturally timorous about the publication of their programmes. Among some of the choirmasters who have thus made silent confession of their weakness are men esteemed clever and distinguished. If they have real power, why do they continuously fail to do their best? At Christmas time there was quite a flood of announcements which evidenced the fact that once in a while some of these men can put a good foot forward. But during the rest of the year the choirmasters have not conscience enough or ambition enough to do their best. It looks as if nothing short of dynamite would wake some of the sleepy fellows into a state of interest and enthusiasm." If the foregoing remarks were applied to the Victoria choirs, there would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and reasonably so, for not even half of it could be truthfully said.

It is often remarked that comparisons are odious, and no doubt in many cases this is true, but as I walked around this city—so favored by nature and its surroundings—the other night, my thoughts turned with sadness to a city in the east where I had lived many years. There nature had not been so lavish with her artistic touches, nor had she bestowed upon it such a beautiful climate. Before I was aware of the current of my thoughts I was making comparisons. I dropped into the Driad hotel reading room, and the first person I met was an old friend, that had just crossed the continent, deeply interested in one of the daily papers. Soon the stereotyped question How do you like Victoria? was asked. He answered in effect as follows: "I have been here about two weeks, and I think you have a beauti-

ful city; but you certainly need to put forth more energy to get it into condition and finish up what nature has given you. Improve the sanitary condition, get better streets and better lighting, secure a good, pure water supply, erase Chinatown from the centre of the city; a nicer place to live in could not be found. But to do this you must get more men of brains. Another thing occurs to me and that is, your leading intelligent, educated men seem to lack self dignity. Can you say your clergymen possess it? What about the quarrel I read of in an eastern paper about the formation of a Central Presbyterian church? And, doctors! Why, if I mistake not, not very far from here I saw in large, bold letters printed on every window and door of a doctor's office 'Always Open,' and near by I met a boy carrying a small hand-grab upon which in large white letters was painted a doctor's name and beneath it 'always open.' Just as you came in I was reading the evidence given in the police court relating to the cause of death of a woman named Mrs. Manson, I think, and really I sympathize with the family of that woman. According to the report, the coroner allowed his jury to bring in a verdict of wilful neglect against the husband while the magistrate, after what seems to have been a full inquiry, dismissed the case. The coroner is a doctor, and must be an exceedingly astute man, one of good, keen intelligent observation. I observe they are now investigating a case in which another medical man figures prominently as having given a certificate that death was due to heart disease, although he had only looked at the face of the deceased, and did he not remark it was a common practice among medical men of the city? Well, I am forgetting, as you say, this is a young city and I should not compare it with the rest." The foregoing is merely printed to show what outsiders think of Victoria.

The Victoria rugby football team has again added defeat to its "unbroken record," this time being defeated by the weakest team in the league—that of New Westminster. Why is this the case? Many excuses perhaps may be brought forward, but it is said that the greatest cause in this particular match was conceit on the part of the committee. Another cause, which will in the end cause more discontent and hard feeling among its members than anything else, is the little "cliquism" displayed in selecting the team to represent the city club. Men of experience in football matters have repeatedly "kicked" against retaining players who have shown a disposition to "funk" at a time when a little grit would win, or at least turn the tide. In the match at Westminster last Saturday the team was very weak in the "backs" except Marshall, who will no doubt be a fixture in the first fifteen from now on. Marshall played a magnificent game, tackling and running well, in fact the only one who scored a try for Victoria. I would strongly advise the rugby committee to reconstruct their team in the half and three-quarter back division. Give it a trial.

PERE GRINATOR.