

which in a still earlier age threaded their way through the primæval forest. Some dam had been gradually formed, perhaps by the growth of a weed akin to that which is now choking parts of our modern disused canals and to that which has produced the peat-bogs, or by those persevering dam-makers, the beavers. The streams thus ceased to flow, and were transformed into a large, shallow lake; and this, deprived of outlet, became stagnant, and slowly rotted the lower portion of the trees which stood in it. One may note a similar effect to-day in the case of trees caught by a flood which is long in subsiding. They generally die. After awhile, the trees in the stagnant lake were killed, and in course of time came toppling down, the decay of the trunks having commenced "just where the water-line ringed the bark," and where fungus, rot, and insects were busiest at work. Ultimately the interior of the trunks throughout their length, even though protected by six inches of bark, decayed together with the surrounding smaller trees and forest undergrowth, the whole combining to form the more or less treacherous "black land."

These trees, the Canon said, was "firs of some sort." So also are the arboreal giants of the western island—indeed of several sorts. The rotted oaks of the primæval forest he likewise found to have been finer specimens than any now growing in our country. So also do the oaks in the western island of to-day surpass in size and beauty the modern British oaks. The fir trees the Canon saw uncovered in the swamp showed, a few feet above where their roots broadened out, diameters—not circumferences—of from four to six feet; and one trunk must have measured "sixty or seventy feet from the ground before it ceased to be timber that might be squared."

After this revelation from our own long past, it seems not unreasonable to believe with Dr. Tolmie that once upon a time Great Britain as well as Vancouver Island grew the "big trees" which, until they are ruthlessly exterminated, as seems not unlikely, will still be the glory of the much-favoured North Pacific American coast and even up to the far interior. If, as is sometimes said, the far-western trees have taken a thousand years to grow, tardy repentance in the shape of re-afforestation hereafter will scarcely repair the present-day waste. Year by year, the western island gets more like the eastern one with farm-houses, villa residences, trim gardens, meadows, &c. The change is not always for the better, climatically or in other ways.