

Historical association, kinship and pleasant social memories mingled in the valedictory we waved from Prospect Point in the early summer morn, while the battleships came sailing down the Narrows in perfect precision and alignment as coolly as if menaced by the guns of the Dardanelles instead of flanked in homage by Cathedral pines. Hearts were touched as the "Hood" with a fine grace rounded the Point, the marines and tars standing at attention, the band on the aft deck playing "Auld Lang Syne"; and as her flag stood out to the opening breeze from the Straits the parting thought of affectionate pride—in time of peace as in time of war—was that of a hundred years ago:

"Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze—
Your glorious standard launch again . . ."

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EPILOGUE. The purpose in the visit of this fine squadron was not merely to give a spectacular feast or the occasion for a round of social pleasures. It was doubtless to some extent a gesture. There may have been the suggestion, though unstressed, that a great Navy, which has given us the protection under which we have the leisure to criticise, imposes a staggering burden on the Home taxpayer which ought to be

shared in ratio; but in any case there was direct import in the spoken word. With hundreds of others I was privileged to hear Admiral Field address the Canadian Club, and nothing could have been more tactful or less intrusive than the terms in which he asked Canada to look all round the question of her defence in view of the partial disarmament of the Imperial Navy. In local parlance, what are we going to do about it? If we follow the lead of a courteous critic and tell this distinguished friendly naval officer to "mind his own business" it can only mean one of two things: either that in self satisfaction we feel we have nothing to learn, or that if there be incipient danger now, or later, we would rather suffer from it than be told of it. Evidently, like the curate's egg, our code of courteous criticism is bad in spots, and the defect merits publicity, only that it may be refuted. We may assume from the courteous rejoinder that some among us delude themselves into the idea that peace has descended like dew upon the earth and that preparedness is an article in an old Order as dead as the Dodo. The visit of the fine cruiser "Adelaide"—on the way to England to be fitted with greater motive power—gave silent witness that a sister Dominion takes another view. We need not be alarmists or infuse bombast—in our case, irony—into the Kipling words "Count up your battleships"; but at least it is a wise old Latin maxim—Semper paratus—"Always ready!"

A Literary Tom-Tidler's-Ground

By Lionel Stevenson

The Canadian province with the greatest and most varied endowment of natural magnificence, with an individuality altogether its own, is the one which has almost entirely failed as yet to find expression in literature. While there are many people in British Columbia who can write with undeniable ability in poetry and prose, the majority of them have not attempted to interpret the distinctive scenes and conditions which abound on every hand. A setting composed of two mighty natural phenomena, the Rockies and the Pacific; industries which combine adventure and big administrative problems; a history not long but redolent of romance; a population including picturesque emissaries of many races; all these things, and more, are capable of being used with immense literary effectiveness, and British Columbia might occupy an enviable place not only in Canadian literature but in that of the world. Yet our British Columbia poets give us lyrics that might emanate from any country in which modern civilization thrives.

The province's two great boundaries, the mountains and the ocean, loom in the background of all the topics I have mentioned. The Rockies, cutting her off from the rest of Canada, have given British Columbia a history essentially different from that of Eastern provinces. All her early affairs depended on the Pacific: Vancouver's sailors replace Wolfe's soldiers, Spaniard and Russian replace Frenchman and Yankee. And her modern social and economic situation is controlled by the same factor: the Chinese and the Hindu form her chief immigration problem, her ocean traffic is extending into all the seven seas. In literature the historical theme is entirely untouched. What could be more fascinating than the little vessels venturing farther and farther into uncharted seas, sending reconnoitring parties into tortuous inlets, bursting upon virgin harbours? or the courtly interchange of challenges between British and Spanish commanders? Themes for poetry or romance crowd to the mind.

A later era in history brings grimmer scenes. The early settlers, after incredibly long and tedious sailing "around the horn" had to seek home-sites in the impenetrable forest that came down the hillsides to the rocky coastline. Through the

interior the Hudson's Bay Company traders, having explored the rivers and established the overland route, were planting their forts. Then came the gold rush, a season of vigorous exploits and unbridled passions. Successors to the miners in virility were the railway builders, and as well as the picturesque qualities in their life and work there is the larger drama in their achievement, which linked British Columbia to the East and consummated the Dominion. It is needless to dwell on the literary potentialities of every glimpse in the panorama. Yet the only books on the period are several almost forgotten novels of Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley, and a couple of volumes by D. W. Higgins in a transitional form between fiction and reminiscence which is not a great artistic success. As a curiosity may be included British Columbia's first poet, the famous Captain Jack Crawford, some of whose verses are dated from Barkerville in the sixties.

Coming to the more complex life of the present day one finds that the material for literature is more plentiful than ever. The mode of living is different from that of Eastern Canada. Establishing homesteads has never been the primary object of the inhabitants. Ever since gold-rush days, British Columbia has been the rallying-ground of those who feel the irresistible westward impulse, those roving spirits to whom settled life is intolerable. Self-confident, insouciant, they have adventured in many strange corners of the world and are still unsatiable. There is drama of another sort in the position of the new-comer. Countless families of the military and official classes have retired from lives of comparative luxury and come to the uncongenial toil of the ranch. Young Englishmen from an environment of tradition and culture, arrive to seek a competency from the land, and succeed or fail according to their natures. Apart from a few poems, such as Lloyd Roberts' "Fruit Rancher" and Phillips-Wolley's "Songs of an English Esau," these pathetic or humorous struggles, with their dramatic elements of contrast and irony, remain unrecorded.

The great industries of the province, mining, forestry and fisheries, suggest the same drama of conflict. Singly or in little bands, men match themselves against the elements or