

late as the winter of 1861-62, the roads were absolutely impassable. There were no street lights, sewers, water or cabs—none of the conveniences that now contribute to make life without the business centre enjoyable. Many of the heaviest merchants occupied rooms above or behind their warehouses and raised families of children blooming with health and vigor. The first gas was made on Wharf Street by J. Calvert and John T. Little, both Americans. Mr. Little's house stood on the west side of Wharf Street, directly opposite the Royal Hotel, which was the first brick building erected in Victoria, the foundation being laid by James Wilcox in the summer of 1858. The Little house was the first building lighted by gas in the city, a small retort having been erected for its supply. From that effort sprang the present Victoria Gas Works. Calvert and Little secured a charter from the Colonial Legislature that permitted them to charge \$7.50 per thousand cubic feet, and had they had a sufficient number of customers, would have made speedy fortunes, although it must be remembered that coal at that time was \$12.50 a ton, and lime and wages were correspondingly high. Bachelor merchants not only slept in their offices, but cooked there as well. On one occasion I went into a Wharf Street store to buy a flask of quicksilver, which was sold wholesale at \$2.00 a pound. The merchant and I had a long conversation as to prices. He made several attempts to cut the argument short by manifesting a desire to retire to the