

merly the back door of British America, is now becoming the front door. Its position is unique and commanding, and, in the progress of the world, vastly important. It is as large as England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Portugal combined, with a climate not unlike those countries. It has an area of 383,000 square miles, backed by half a continent extending eastward to the Atlantic ocean, all under the benign sway of the much-loved Queen. British Columbia's great mountain ranges look out on the boundless waters of the Pacific. This ocean is full of deepest concern to thoughtful men of all nations, who, with strained vision, survey its world of waters, glorious in extent in the richness of its inhabited islands as well as in the present and prospective extent of its commerce.

It is over forty years since my first voyage on the Pacific. There was but little commerce then with the Orient, yet there were settlements on the coasts of California, Mexico, Oregon and British Columbia. Now a general strife has set in among the nations as to which shall determine and control the illimitable fields of commerce in the far East, which shall have most to say about a new map of Asia. British Columbia, more English than England, stands north of the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, while Uncle Sam owns all southward to the Mexican line. This neck of water is fortified by the British, and will doubtless soon be by the Federal Government; then these two friendly powers will control the commanding situation, firmly locking or unlocking the straits at will.

Once inside the sealed doorway, to the north on the British side looms up for two hundred miles the expansive Gulf of Georgia, with its charming islands and beautiful cities of Victoria and Vancouver. Victoria is built on the site of an Indian village and camping ground. In America this is all that need be said to establish its beauty, its healthfulness and the fertility of its soil.

Many years ago in cruising around the coast I chanced upon an old seaman named Dan Harris, living in a hut on the opposite side of the Sound. He told me he had been cast away on the coast, where he remained. He said at one time he had gone to Victoria to purchase a wife at the Indian village. A father there had many daughters, but he refused to sell one alone, while if Harris would take two he would reduce the price. Two were purchased, placed in the canoe and brought home. Harris said the girls quarreled and he was forced to trade one off for a cooking stove, and that it was the best cooking stove ever brought to the coast.

The Hudson Bay Company built large warehouses at Victoria and it remained many years one of the chief posts of that powerful