



## Vancouver Island---The Island Beautiful

(Winifred Philpot).

An interesting stage of beginning to grow up is the discovery that many of the laboriously written copy-book precepts are all wrong. I shall never forget my fiendish glee when an ancient book of proverbs fell into my hands giving a most didactic sentence for both sides of the questions involved whereas my elders had ever quoted the one most suited to their point of view as final.

In my youth the good gods hurled me into Italy. The night before I left London, a tediously wise friend pointed out how wrong it was to wander afar before I knew my own land. He was quite mistaken. . . . although at the time he sounded very logical. A hundred chances came later to see Brighton; that was the one glorious opportunity to live in Rome. Imagine an old age without the knowledge of Florence and Venice and Pisa, and all that wonder land of sound and color, books, music, pictures in their right setting for all the years to come; imagine all this lost, because forsooth, one had not previously seen the Welsh mountains. And ever after for my own part, I have gone where I could, when I could, and have taken to myself what I could and thus have added the local colour and glamour of many strange lands to my life.

And none must be confused nor compared with another. All are vital, all are beautiful to the God-given understanding eye. This is why I deprecate the oft seen comparison of British Columbia mountains, lakes and forests with those of Switzerland, Italy or Southern Austria. The former are here—about and above—take them, use them, but do not abuse them by comparisons. And so it is with my beloved Island. I cannot see that it matters whether or no it is more beautiful than the mainland, but what does matter is whether we are deliberately or idly leaving out much that will appeal give rest and joy, enrich.

I am just going to tell of what we have on the Island, not boasting, knowing full well there are greater glories elsewhere—not beseeching, our treasures are too royal for that. I am not going to be coherent nor will there be any continuity nor can I tell you all, for such a simple reason, I know very little, but that which I write of I love, which surely is the best of all reasons for writing.

Architecture—you did not know we had wonderful exam-

ples on the Island? Drive through the forest at the far end of Cameron Lake—did you ever see more glorious specimens of Early English and then the pure Norman—I grant you the periods are rather mixed, the Norman should rather blend into the later period, but what matters that, the glory and strength of the one, the lofty beauty and detail of the other are all there, giving, whether we want it or not, an immediate sense of the holy, the illimitable, the mysterious, and should the Gods be good to you as in their wonder working they have been to me, and you be given the revelation of that forest by midday, by midnight, by winter, by summer, then blessed are ye.

If you are already of the faithful come in the early summer—being of the faithful you will be willing to potter, find our orchids, lie down under our dogwood, kiss, an you will, our linnoe borealis lift up your eyes to our mountains, throw pebbles idly into our brooks—listen for, and then hunt out our water falls, talk with the natives and explore the crossroads.

Don't leave the other things undone, God forbid that you should return without the thrills of the Malahat; should not fish the waters of Sproat Lake, nor tremble at the majesty of the Campbell River Falls. . . . but there are many other things to be added unto them. . . . if you will. Camp out if you can, listen to this—a tent on the shore, backed by a cedar forest facing the sea and the islands and the west—trout fried in butter straight from frying pan to the plate—away with hotels!

Shall I tell you of one of my secret places?, really mine, and it is real, although you will not find it in any guide books. Now you are in a civilized community, twenty minutes in a car and you have reached the last farm; a trail through the forest, up and down and over, then the sound of many waters, (yes, we have music, classical, not ragtime, as well as architecture) finally you are on the banks of a wide calm river—but why the roar, the pull of falling water, the suggestion of tragedy near by? To the left the river takes an abrupt right angle turn, and without a moment's warning that great volume of water has fallen headlong to the rocks far below—fallen down a chasm so narrow that a log carried from above cannot fall too, but has lodged between the banks lengthways, and far below the river rushes on to the sea, no longer calm; turquoise blue and green in its turbulence. The