

THE ATONEMENT.

bour of Esquimaux, sufficiently commodious to shelter the largest navy, easy of access, and capable of being rendered impregnable. This last advantage may be better appreciated when it is remembered that the Americans have possession of the country opposite Vancouver Island, and South of British Columbia, and regard our settlement on the shores of the Pacific with unconcealed irritation and jealousy.

Between Victoria and Esquimaux, the relative position of which places I could scarcely hope to explain without the aid of a map, lie the Indian village of the tribe of Songhees, and the tents of the native visitors to Victoria, who come down in their canoes in large numbers from the northern parts of the island and mainland to sell their furs and skins, and see the white men of whom they have heard so much. These Indians are not very agreeable neighbours to Victoria. They are altogether much inferior to the red man of North America in physical strength, intellect, and habits. As a rule, they too readily contract the vices of the Europeans with whom they are brought into contact. Their villages present generally a picture of the most squalid filth and misery imaginable. Except when he is fishing, hunting, or fighting, the Indian rarely works, leaving the women of his tribe to labour for him, and spending his time in sleeping, drinking when he can obtain the means, and gambling.

Steamers run now regularly from Victoria to the Fraser, a distance of some 85 miles across the Gulf of Georgia; but the time was, a few years back, when the miners made the passage as they best could, crossing in old boats and crazy canoes, and often losing their lives in the venture. The way lies among many islands, between which the waters of the Strait race at great speed, making it a most dangerous and treacherous current for any but the experienced mariner to navigate. There is not much to be said of these islands, among which is San Juan, which, it may be remembered, the Americans took forcible possession of a few years back while the boundary dispute between them and our government were pending, and which is still held by an equal force of men belonging to either country. There are two other islands, Orcas and Lopez, equal in size to San Juan; the rest are mere rocky islets, thickly clothed with pine trees to the water's edge. The shores of British Columbia are, like them, densely wooded, and the lofty impenetrable timber appears from the sea to stretch in a line so unbroken that the entrance to the Fraser is quite undistinguishable. Indeed, the navigator Vancouver, who sailed along them, looking out keenly for any inland waters, which he had especial instructions to explore, passed along this coast in perfect ignorance that he had gone by a river's mouth at all.

There is a dangerous bank of shifting sands at the Fraser's mouth, which renders it somewhat difficult of access. It is very common for ships to ground on entering; but, fortunately, it is protected from heavy seas by the adjacent shore of Vancouver Island, and serious consequences seldom happen. The Fraser is a wide, swift river, in the summer much swollen by the snow, which melts among the hills. At its entrance the banks are flat; but the mountains soon close in upon it, and for many miles it winds between them, increasing in rapidity, until at one spot it takes the steamer eight hours to struggle fifteen miles against the fierce current. It is too shallow at this spot, and for some way below, for the steamers which cross from Victoria to navigate it, and their cargoes are transferred into flat-bottomed steamers, drawing no more than twenty or twenty-four inches of water, and propelled by a great ungainly wheel, project-

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

A FEW years ago Victoria, now the capital of Vancouver Island, and the seat of government for that settlement and British Columbia, consisted of a few huts gathered about the stockade of an old fort of the Hudson Bay Company, erected on the shore of the harbour. In 1858, however, when the mineral wealth of the banks of the Fraser was discovered, a stream of immigrants poured into the place from Australia, California, and Europe; so that it became in the course of a few months a large and populous town of canvas, the tents of the new comers stretching for some miles along the shore. In time the canvas town gave way to one of wooden huts, which, in their turn, are being replaced by good stone houses; and before long Victoria will be as striking an instance of the magical power of gold to cause a city to spring up where a little while back the savage and the wild beast were uninterrupted, as Melbourne and San Francisco have been before it. Victoria, however, cannot be said to possess perfectly those natural advantages which would fit it alone to become a prosperous city. Among other drawbacks, its harbour is shallow, and the entrance intricate, while without there is little if any shelter for ships exposed to heavy winds. But a little distance from Victoria by sea, and separated from it by a neck of land but three miles wide, lies the noble har-

* It is generally believed that the passage in question was omitted after the first edition of the "Moral Sentiments;" but we have before us the third edition, London, 1787; and from that third edition the above extract has been made.

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