

OUR WILD WESTLAND.

POINTS ON THE PACIFIC PROVINCE.

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XIV.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COAST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA—SITUATION OF VANCOUVER'S ISLAND—DISCOVERY OF THE MAINLAND—VANCOUVER CITY—ITS PHENOMENAL DEVELOPMENT—PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

I propose to close my articles on the Pacific Province of the Dominion by giving the latest, most complete, and authentic account of the present and prospective condition of British Columbia. I have gathered my information during the last year from various sources—from the press, from government officials, engineers, surveyors, ranchers, miners, lawyers, merchants, farmers, and also largely from my own observation and experience. To this somewhat extensive and exhaustive subject I shall, therefore, devote this and the concluding chapter of my series in the earnest hope of benefiting, not only future settlers, but that province in general in which I have spent many happy and prosperous months. The first impression of the trans-continental traveller landed at Vancouver, the terminus of the C.P.R., gazing seaward over the unbroken extent of the Gulf of Georgia, is surprise at the size of this immense body of water rolling inwards, bounded like a vast ocean only by the horizon. His surprise visibly increases when he discovers that the entire coast of British Columbia, from Washington Territory to Alaska, is washed by such inland seas; and is, furthermore, indented by so many bays and inlets, and dotted with such a number of islands, that it has earned for itself the appellation of the North-West Archipelago, or the Thousand Isles of the North. Of these seas, the most notable are Queen Charlotte Sound and the Gulf of Georgia, on the farther side of which is Vancouver's Island, with Victoria, the capital, 75 miles, let it be understood, from the mainland of the province. Extending into the land from the Gulf, at irregular intervals, for distances ranging from one to fifty miles, are numerous inlets, all navigable and landlocked.

The first large opening on the Coast is the mouth of the Fraser River, emptying into the Gulf of Georgia. Ten miles north of it Burrard's Inlet indents the mainland, extending inwards from English Bay, which also communicates with the Gulf of Georgia. Immediately north of Burrard's Inlet is Howe's Sound, another estuary of English Bay. To it succeed, following up the coast line to Alaska, Bute Inlet, Millbank Sound, numerous other bays and inlets, and the mouths of the Rivers Skeena and Naas. The most important of all of them, from the fact that it is the only one approachable from the interior of the province, is Burrard's Inlet, on which the Canadian Pacific Railway has established its western terminus.

It is now nearly a century since Captain George Vancouver, R.N., while on a voyage of discovery round the world, entered the Straits of Juan de Fuca, separating the Island of Vancouver from Washington Territory. He anchored his men-of-war, the Discovery and the Chatham, in Birch Bay, and, manning the ship's boats, set out to explore the coast of the mainland. Entering English Bay, he saw before him two openings, the clearness of whose waters at once convinced him they were not the mouths of rivers. Perceiving that the entrance to the northern inlet (Howe's Sound) was almost barred by an island, he chose the southern one, as the most important of the two, and took possession of the country in the name of the reigning sovereign. He called the opening Burrard's Inlet, in honour of Sir Harry Burrard, of the English navy. Sailing up the inlet to within half a mile of its head, he left behind him the record of being the first white man who had ever visited what was destined to be one of the most important harbours on the Pacific. At the narrows, connecting the inner waters of Burrard's Inlet with English Bay, the width of the opening, although very deep, does not exceed more than 200 yards. Through this narrow passage there is a current at

the strongest ebb and flow of the tides of about eight knots an hour. Just inside these narrows the inlet widens out into a fine harbour, called Coal Harbour, on which the City of Vancouver is located. The distance between Vancouver and the opposite shore of the inlet is three miles across, and its ample bosom could accommodate the whole shipping of New York. East of Vancouver the inlet divides into two nearly equal parts: the north arm extending inland for a distance of 20 miles, while the south arm reaches inland but 14 miles. At its head is Port Moody. The harbour of Vancouver is landlocked. The storms which occasionally rage over the waters of the Gulf of Georgia cannot even ruffle its surface, and the depth of water in all parts of the inlet is sufficient to float the largest vessels, yet not too deep for safe anchorage, so that ships can ride in safety at all seasons.

The city of Vancouver is situated on the south side of Burrard's Inlet, about three miles from the narrows. It is built upon a peninsula formed by the waters of Burrard's Inlet on the north and those of False Creek and English Bay on the south. This peninsula widens out towards English Bay: but at its narrowest point its width does not exceed one mile and a half. On this neck of land the original town site of Vancouver was located, and it is here to-day that the principal business portion is centered.

The town rises gradually back from the water's edge of both Burrard's Inlet and English Bay, until at its highest point the elevation is about 200 feet; but the average elevation of Vancouver does not exceed 100 feet. There is just sufficient slope to the land on which it is built to afford perfect drainage, without creating any steep grades in the main thoroughfares. Vancouver's situation is extremely picturesque from every point of view. Just across the inlet nestles a little Indian village, containing a church, a school, and regularly laid out streets. A little further to the east of this settlement, immediately opposite Vancouver, is the town of Moodyville, receiving its support from the largest sawmill in the province erected there. Looking inland from the city the eye rests upon an almost impenetrable forest, which loses in the distance its sharp outline, and blends into one green harmony, perfectly reflected in the still waters of the inlet. Rising to the very summit of the Coast Mountains, which stand out in bold relief as sentinels on the northern shore, is the same dense forest of the finest wood in the world for general purposes. This range attains an elevation of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Towering still above the heights of the nearer mountains are the two peaks of the Twin Sisters, resting majestically on the top of the higher range in the background. Their pinnacles are the abode of eternal snow, and their aspect is always imposing in its massive purity. To the west of the city lies the broad expanse of English Bay, while still further out, yet distinctly visible, is the long sweep of the Gulf of Georgia. To the south is the second inlet, known as False Creek, while still beyond, and beyond again, is the same forest of fir which everywhere meets the landward gaze.

The growth and development of Vancouver are phenomenal, eclipsing even the architectural enterprises of Seattle and Tacoma. Three years and a half ago the city rose from its own ashes. I saw it in October, 1886, a town of 300 wooden houses. To-day it has a population of 8,000. It possesses gas, electric light, water works, a quarter of a million dollar hotel, and is, moreover and above all, the terminus of the longest railway in the world, and of a regular line of steamers to China and Japan. Its progress may readily be understood when it is authoritatively stated that property, that in Vancouver three years ago was put on the market at from \$300 to \$600 a lot, is now worth from \$100 to \$400 a foot. Men who three years ago invested \$1,000 or \$2,000 in Vancouver real estate are to-day independently wealthy. Vancouver is not only the terminus of more than 3,000 miles of railroad, but it is the receiving and shipping point for the trade of Japan and China, which now finds its way over the Canadian Pacific Railway.

I would meet the question so often and so per-

tinently asked, What is there to make a city of Vancouver? by another. What has made Victoria, B.C., one of the richest cities on the Pacific Coast in proportion to its size? If the resources of the country were such that, in the early days of its almost complete isolation from the world at large, a city of the size and importance of Victoria could be supported, what may not be anticipated for the principal city on the mainland when the changes wrought by the advent of a great trans-continental railway are fully matured. Before the building of the C.P.R. the only means of communication with the interior was by the lumbering stage coach and the still slower pack mule. In order to get supplies into the mining district it was necessary to convey them by pack train from 100 to 400 miles, and the freight charges on these goods often amounted to 10, 20, or even 25 cents per pound, while miles of country might be traversed without meeting one single inhabitant. The changed condition of affairs to-day will certainly support a much larger city than Victoria has ever been, and Vancouver seems destined to be the distributing point for the Dominion on the Pacific Coast. A railroad that is the making of one city may be the undoing of another. Victoria can never again draw upon such an extent of country as she did in the past when her situation at the southern extremity of Vancouver's Island, together with her position in the social, political, and commercial centre of British Columbia, were especially favourable to her creation and development. Victoria, as the capital of the Pacific Province, absorbed the entire trade of the vast territory that paid tribute to her. It was long prophesied by the far-seeing that at no distant day a large city must arise on the mainland of British Columbia. There was a wonderfully rich country to be developed, but until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway it was unattainable. Vancouver's Island, containing about 20,000 square miles of territory, with its inexhaustible mines of coal and iron, and its wealth of forest and farming land, can support a city of probably twice the present size of Victoria. But the mainland proper of British Columbia, covering an area of more than 320,305 square miles, rich in all the resources of a great country, must support a large city of its own. The products of the mainland could never be shipped across the Gulf of Georgia to Victoria, a distance of 75 miles, only to be reshipped from thence to their destination. When furs, gold dust, and fish oil were the principal articles of export, the margin of profits was not so close that a rehandling offered any serious obstacle to their being sent to market the roundabout way *via* Victoria. With the completion of the C.P.R., however, a new era dawned on the province. The completion of the road meant competition with the outside world. Like all others it must depend for its support upon the traffic passed over it. The day of active competition came, and competition would not warrant any unnecessary rehandling of freight, nor would it brook any serious delays in the transmission of passengers to their journey's end. When a traveller over this road, bent on reaching his journey's end, arrived at the western terminus, it would not do to send him on a little pleasure trip to Victoria before allowing him to proceed to Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, or San Francisco. He must be dispatched on his way with all possible speed. When a carload of freight arrived at the terminus, it would be equally imprudent to send it 75 miles off to pay tribute to Victoria. Again, when a train came steaming into Vancouver after its long continental journey of 3,000 miles, it would seem like an act of sheer folly to ferry it over to Victoria to be cleaned and repaired.

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad necessitated the creation of large machinery and repair shops at Vancouver, giving employment directly and indirectly to many hundreds of men. It involved the construction of a large and perfectly appointed hotel to meet the demands of travel, also the establishment of head offices at the terminus to preside over the immense traffic of a trans-continental line. All this formed the nucleus of a city, whose success was further ensured by the subsidizing of a line of steamers running every three