

## VICTORIA.

## The Capital of British Columbia.

Much has been written and said as to the natural beauty of the Queen City of the Northern Pacific Coast—Victoria—and her surroundings her great natural advantages for shipping and manufacturing purposes, as well as her wonderful climate. Many of the your readers will recollect the opinions I expressed in the summer of 1891 as to the truthfulness of much that had been circulated in the East concerning Canada's inheritance on this coast. My experience and observations then were of the spring and summer seasons. Being now in the country I am in a position to say something of the fall and winter months. Such of your readers as may be of the notion of emigrating to this Province can rely on such statements as I may now, or in future letters, make, as being reliable.

## THE CITY OF VICTORIA

is situated on the south east corner of Vancouver Island, in lat. 48° 25m. 20 sec. north, and west long. 123° 22m. 24 sec. On the south east and west are the Straits of Fuca, on the north the ever green hills of Vancouver. The present harbor is not a very commodious one—sufficient, however, to accommodate vessels not drawing over 18 feet of water. A water harbor is now being utilized. A large, substantial deck and wharf has been constructed, at which the San Francisco ocean steamers load and unload their cargo, while at the unrivalled harbor of Esquimalt, 34 miles distant from the city, excellent anchorage is to be found for the largest vessels afloat. Here is located the only naval station Her Majesty has on the North Pacific Coast. The supply of stores and ammunition in the several buildings is very extensive. Vessels carrying the largest armaments can be equipped for long voyages on short notice. Repairs can likewise be attended to, as the machine shop contains such ponderous machinery as is necessary in connection with naval architecture and mechanism. One or more men-of-war are always in port. The older portion of the residents of the city are from England and Scotland, with a slight mixture of Irish, Americans, and foreigners. The younger portion are principally Canadians.

Slow but sure has been Victoria's motto in the past. Her growth has been steady. No inflation or bubble to cause an unwarranted advance in real estate has visited this city since 1853. Then it was equally as crazy as the worst days Winnipeg ever saw, without, however, the immense country to sustain a great city that was tributary to the City of the Plains. During the last two years much substantial progress has been made by the city in way of buildings, wharves, and other improvements, and the introduction of electric light. Real estate has increased slowly, and at present is still going up, the advance in some cases being twenty five per cent. in a year. In side property is now at its full value, possibly higher than facts will warrant its being held at. Rents are fair. Business promises on Government, Fort Johnston, and Yates streets are hard to be obtained. Out side property, a mile from the post office, is held at prices ranging from \$20 to \$1,500 per acre, according to location, at which figures considerable can be procured. The houses are all full, none can be had at any reasonable figure, and the erection of a large number during the incoming spring and summer is a certainty and an equally safe investment. The hotel accommodation is being extended. In a word, the onward progress of the city is very marked. By many a "boom" is anticipated on the completion of the railway, but I fear many will be badly "left." Streets are being extended and outlying properties formerly farmed opened into city lots. Many of these are admirably adapted for suburban residences, as trees are already well advanced. Good pure water is everywhere obtainable.

## THE WEATHER.

Victoria's balmy climate has attained a world-wide fame. At this date occasional warm showers have the tendency to keep the streets moist, the grass green, and impart a freshness in general to the herbage. One reads with wonder the records of the thermometer in other portions of the Dominion indicating a degree of freezing that astounds those who have resided on this coast for years, ranging from 10° to 40° below zero. More it rarely freezes. A slight flurry of snow causes every conceivable remark, and a new coat is assured

that this is a rare occurrence and hitherto unknown at that particular season of the year. Two days since in my meanderings around the suburbs of the city, I plucked gowans, daisies, and wild roses on vacant lots, while in gardens I beheld all the varieties of roses, fuchsias, geraniums, ivy, and honeysuckles. In the fields the Chinese are cultivating all the vegetables, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, parsley, celery, onions, and delivering them daily to the city. This is, indeed, a great contrast with the weather most of your readers are now experiencing east of the mountains and the great lakes.

On the streets many of the ladies appear in gossamers, and a few in garment trimmed with fur. Far overcoats are worn by the gentlemen. The store doors are open, and the display of goods and merchandise inviting. I am free to confess that all this to my mind has the effect of making people listless as compared with the sharp, clear, bracing weather of other portions of the Dominion.

## The Defense of Khartoum.

Khartoum is naturally marked out by its situation as the capital of the Soudan. Built in the angle formed by the junction of the Blue and White Niles, the meeting point of the roads from Dongola and Egypt on the northwest and north from Suakim and Berber on the northeast, from Darfur on the west, from Kordofan, Senaar, and the equatorial provinces on the south, it is the commercial centre of the whole region, and has ever since the conquest of the country by Egypt been the chief seat of the Egyptian power, and the residence of the governor-general of the Soudan. The town, near which are some ruins of the time of the Pharaohs, is built along the left bank of the Blue Nile, with the White Nile in its rear, in a wide, barren, and stoneless plain, and protected by dikes against inundation from the two rivers. It is 1,400 feet above the sea, and has some 50,000 inhabitants, of whom about two-thirds are slaves, for Khartoum was at one time the head quarters of that iniquitous traffic, which, after the subjugation of the country by Egypt, rapidly supplanted the legitimate trade in ivory and other natural products of the Soudan, and is the *font et origo mali* in all the wars which have constantly disturbed the country.

Khartoum is, from a military point of view, a position of great strength. It is protected by five ditched earthwork forts, but these are said to be weakly armed, and its most efficient protection are the broad rivers on either side of it. A force coming from the west would find it a matter of great difficulty to cross the White Nile in the face of an enemy; and, even if the movement were effected, the approach to the town across a plain which affords no shelter whatever to an attacking force, would be a very difficult operation in face of defenders armed with weapons of precision. The garrison of Khartoum is estimated at 4,000 men, all thus armed. It is true that the mehdhi, since the capture of Obeid, must have a good many weapons of precision himself, but his troops are said, whether from fanaticism or ignorance, to be averse to using them. Col. Stewart, writing from Khartoum on Feb. 20, soon after the fall of El Obeid, declared that it was "very improbable the mehdhi should venture" to Khartoum. In the course of the spring, however, the mehdhi did venture, but was easily repulsed. It is likely, therefore, that after a great success he will make another attempt on the capital, but it is not likely that he will do so without loss of time. The present season indeed is favorable to military operations, whereas the summer, and especially the months from June to September—the time of the rains and floods—greatly interfere with them.

But his movements hitherto have been characterized by anything but rapidity. It was two months after his victory over Yacub Pasha in the spring of last year before he appeared at El Obeid, and seven months before he took it. One circumstance may cause him to hasten his movements. According to one of the mehdhi's prophecies he would be proclaimed at Khartoum prophet and ruler of the Soudan on the 12th of this month, which was the beginning of the new Mussulman century of 1353 after Hegira. He may not wish to let this prophecy remain long unfulfilled.

A winter opening: The Christmas clock.

## The Chinese People.

The following memorandum was drawn up by Gen. (Chinese) Gordon in 1881 for the information of the Chinese Government, and has many points of interest in the present situation:—

"In spite of the opinion of some foreigners, it will be generally acknowledged that the Chinese are contented and happy, and the country is rich and prosperous, and that the people are as a whole united in their sentiments and ardently desire to remain a nation. At constant intervals, however, the whole of this human hive is stirred by some dispute between the Pekin Government and some foreign power. The Chinese people, proud of their ancient prestige, applaud the high tone taken up by the Pekin Government, crediting the government with the power to support their strong words. This goes on for a time when the government gives in, and corresponding vexation is felt by the people. The recurrence of these disputes, the inevitable surrender ultimately of the Pekin Government, has the tendency of shaking the Chinese people's confidence in the central government. The central government appreciates the fact that little by little their prestige is being destroyed by their own actions among the Chinese people: each crisis then becomes more accentuated or difficult to surmount, as the central government know; each concession is another nail in their coffin. The central government fear that the taking up of a spirited position by any pre-eminent Chinese would carry the Chinese people with him, and therefore the central government endeavor to keep up appearances and to skirt the precipice of war as near as they possibly can, while never intending to enter into war.

"The central government residing in the extremity of the middle kingdom, away from the great influences which are now working in China, can never alter one iota from what they were years ago; they are being steadily left behind by the people they govern. They know this, and endeavor to stem these influences in all ways in their power, hoping to keep the people backward and in ignorance, and to retard their progress to the same pace (sic) they themselves go, if it can be called a pace at all.

"It is therefore a maxim that 'no progress can be made by the Pekin Government.' To them any progress, whether slow or quick, is synonymous with slow or quick extinction, for they will never move.

"The term, 'Pekin Government' is used advisedly, for if the central government were moved from Pekin into some province where the pulsations and aspirations of the Chinese people could have their legitimate effect, then the central government and Chinese people having a union of thought, would work together.

"It may be asked. How can the present state of things be altered? How can China maintain the high position that the wealth, industry, and innate goodness of the Chinese people entitle her to have among the nations of the world? Some may say by the revolt of this Chinaman or of that Chinaman. To me this seems most undesirable, or, in the first place, such action would not have the blessing of God, and, in the second, it would result in the country being plung-

ed into civil war. The fair, upright, and open course for the Chinese people to take is to work, through the press and by petitions, on the central government, and to request them to move from Pekin and bring themselves thus into more union with the Chinese people, and thus save that people the constant humiliations they have got to put up with owing to the seat of the central government being at Pekin. This recommendation would need no secret societies, no rebellion, no treason. If taken up and persevered in, it must succeed, and not one life need be lost.

"The central government at Pekin could not answer the Chinese people except in the affirmative when the Chinese people say to the central government:—'By you residing aloof from us in Pekin, where you are exposed to danger, you separate our interest from yours, and you bring on us humiliation which we would never have to bear if you resided in the interior. Take our application into consideration and grant our wishes.'

"I have been kindly treated by the central Pekin Government and by the Chinese people; it is for the welfare of both parties that I have written and signed this paper. I may have expressed myself too strongly with respect to the non-progressive state of the Pekin Government, who may desire the welfare of the middle kingdom as ardently as any other Chinese; but as long as the Pekin Government allows themselves to be led and directed by those drones of the hive, the censors, so long must the Pekin Government bear the blame earned by those drones in plunging China into difficulties. In the insect world the bees get rid of the drones in the hive."

## No Hit Him Hard.

"I met X on the avenue with his bride. They had just returned from their wedding tour."

"Where are they going to live?"

"I don't know. He told me he had been house-hunting since yesterday morning, and intended to take a flat."

"Ah! indeed! He has decided to follow his wife's example."

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