

Victoria City and the Island of Vancouver

By Agnes Deans Cameron, in the Canada-West Magazine



HERE the press of America tomorrow to announce the discovery in mid-ocean of an island half the size of troubled Ireland, an island within the sphere of English influence, where pulp-woods could be had for the pre-empting, where through the

summer months salmon in shoals swim up to the cannery doors and all but deliver themselves into the waiting tins of the canner, where herring glut the eastern harbors so that navigation is a burden, where sperm whales in land-locked harbors are caught by steam, an island where 300-foot firs fringe the lip of ice-free harbors, and without transshipping the mill shunts its planned product into the waiting holds of sea-going ships, an island underlaid with coal measures ample for a continent's supply for a century, where strawberries produce \$700 to the acre and wapiti roam in undepleted bands and one may catch 72-pound salmon on the rod—were we to hear, I say, for the first time of such an island, how men would crowd the decks and flash each to his fellow all round the Seven Seas the message:

"O young Mariner
Down to the harbor call your companions,
Launch your vessel and crowd your canvas,
And ere it vanishes over the margin
After it, follow it, follow the Gleam!"

And yet all these things that we have hinted are true of North America's isle o' dreams, golden Vancouver, on the far-off Georgian land, these things and a thousand more.

In 1778 Captain Cook cast anchor in Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Cook was seeking the elusive Anian Strait, that will-o'-the-wisp which was to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific, whose existence all navigators for two centuries utterly believed in and eagerly sought. Cook went north to the Arctic and then returned to the Sandwich Islands, where he was killed by natives.

In the spring of 1842 James Douglas, with a handful of men from the steamer Beaver landed on the buttercup swarded shore of Beacon Hill. An empire's history is marking that March day, and this little group of fifteen men is about to begin a chapter. To this end they employ no cunning colors of the cloister. Hewn logs and cedar posts are their writing tools. They came, these sturdy Scots, to build a fort for the Hudson's Bay Company. Hard tasks were theirs and rugged duties ere they fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces, and no visions of a peopled continent from ocean to ocean had they.

Most of the pioneers of colony times, having borne the day's burden and heat have passed away, but two empire builders remain, the chaplain and the speaker of the first House of Assembly, which met in 1856, scholarly gentlemen of the old school, Bishop Cridge, and the "Old Doctor"—the Hon. J. S. Helmcken. Far-seeing both, broad-minded, courageous, yet withal gentle and most kindly, these two will be held in affectionate remembrance as long as one stone stands on another in Victoria City, and honor is a name to conjure with.

Through all these years, northward and westward—seaward, did Vancouver Island direct her energies. Northward to the Yukon, coastwise to all the ancient wealth of Mexico, beyond the sugar-canes of Honolulu and the rose gardens of Nippon to Australia, India and the Isles of the Sea does she send her wares. Australia is her market and New Zealand, and in the morning mists comes a cry for Douglas firs and sockeye salmon "out o' China 'cross the Bay." Vancouver "hears the East a-calling," the East just beyond the Rockies, calling for her shingles, her strawberries, and her salmon; but on the edge of things,

"From East to West the circling word has passed
Till West is East beside our land-locked blue."

and in the East which we call the Orient does Vancouver Island find her true market. The trans-Pacific lands are her oyster.

Vancouver Island's trade is already the largest in the world per head of population. What does she send out to the rest of the map? Fish, coal, gold, silver, copper, lead, timber, masts and spars, furs and seal-skins, fish-oil, apples, whales and strawberries. The coasting vessels round her shores have a capacity of eight million tons and the sea-going vessels a tonnage of two million.

For many years out and in from Victoria Harbor plied the little black steamer "Beaver," the first steamer to cross the Atlantic westward and the first craft whose paddle wheels churned the waters of the Pacific. The old "Beaver" played an honorable part in the history of this west coast. In the days when the Sailor King ruled in Britain her keel was laid on the Thames bank in the year 1835, and it was the hand of a Duchess that broke the christening bottle over her bows. These were the days when men said not "How Cheap?" but "How Good?" It was the son of James Watt who built her engines, and yeoman work were they to do in another ocean and a New World. Up and down the Pacific coast she carried the fur traders, eager miners crowded her decks, seeking fortunes on Fraser placers; she became a survey ship for the British gov-

Miss Agnes Deans Cameron Sings the Praises of Her Picturesque Birth-Place on the Shores of the Pacific

ernment, and Imperial hydrographers compiled their charts in her aft cabin. The decadence of steamships is pathetic. We pity war-horses made to do duty in milk-wagons. From court-ladies to skid-greasers slipped the Beaver in her latter days, and none so poor to do her reverence. A tide rip landed her on the rocks of Vancouver harbor, and a passing steamer, an insolent new-comer, gave her her wash. Then broke her mighty heart. Down through her oaken ribs slipped those salt-incrusted Watt boilers, and she yielded the ghost.

From that day to this the romance of the sea clings to the harbor of Victoria, where the world-end steamers wait. Years ago, in a little cottage on Birdcage Walk, all through a winter and a summer, Lady Franklin waited for the word that came not from the ill-fated Polar expedition of Sir John. From the same harbor sailed last year the Arctic expedition of Lefingwell and Einer Mikkelsen, in the little "Duchess of Bedford," on the bold and debonaire search for a dream continent in Beaufort Sea.

Round the Horn in the early sixties came to this timber-covered colony a unique cargo, the iron church of St. John, sent all the way

old Juan de Fuca and Sir Francis Drake were not so far off in their visions of a short cut to Europe. The Anian Strait of which they fondly dreamed was a myth; the great transcontinental waterway through which they said the whales sporting themselves on every side must have passed, was a chimera of the imagination. But the transcontinental highway has been built, not once, but many times, a highway of steel and railroad sleepers, and to Victoria's front doors to connect with these come the ships of all the world.

The island of Vancouver has a diversity of inhabitants commensurate with the diversity of its industries. At the south, Victoria, which Edgar Wallace in the London Mail, calls "the Little-Johnny-Head-In-the-Air city of Canada," the population here is English and Scottish, sprinkled with Americans and Canadians, Chinese and Japs are an integral part of the people, and an Indian rancherie flourishes in the heart of the city.

Fifty miles north is the town of Duncan, a ranching community of English younger sons, where "Punch" and the London "Times" are read and British politics discussed, and where the small landed proprietor in immaculate

woods, wood that average 150 cords to the acre, running up as high as 500 cords.

Vancouver Island pulp makes not only paper but hollow ware, cigar boxes, picture frames, car wheels, water pipes, telegraph poles, coffins, mattresses, lead pencils, shoe heels, vases, and ornaments, horse-shoes, bicycle bars, fruit tins, hats, piano cases and paving brick. Vancouver Island may well say, "Let me make the paper for the Orient, I care not who spoils it with the written word."

From the waters that surround this island \$10,000,000 worth of fish is taken annually, giving employment to 20,000 people. The Atlantic fisheries have reached the maximum of development, whereas in the West only salmon has been exploited. The day of the commercial development of the halibut fisheries and those of the cod, herring, sturgeon, oolachan, smelt, sardines, anchovies, oysters, clams, shrimps, and prawns, has yet to come. Vancouver Island has been so busy with the big things that she has ignored these smaller fry.

On the west coast of Vancouver Island is the world's largest whaling station. Two steamships and three factories are kept busy for twelve months in the year shooting the

Seattle, and runs inside the coast line as far south as Phoenix, Arizona; then crossing the Southern States, enters the Atlantic at Norfolk, Virginia. All north of this line, that is all of Canada, and practically all of the United States except Florida, is colder than Victoria in January and February.

The atmosphere of Victoria is unique. The idle tourist, spending a summer week within her borders, carries the witchery of her charm with him wherever he wanders. What makes that charm? It is compounded of many simples—the sea has much to do with it, the multitudinous roses contribute, the gentle voices of the people play no small part, the breezes are soft with suggestiveness.

The sun never sets with greater beauty than over the edge of the Sooke Hills, tipping the rough-hewn silver of the Olympics with a rosy glow, and spilling itself in prodigality over the waters of the Fucan Straits. It doesn't take an artist to catch a quick, elusive glimpse of that light that never was on sea or land. You see the reflection of it in the rounded face of that small laddie standing with the piece of kelp in his hand, arrested in his play by the impelling beauty of the colors of that split spectrum.

Victoria is the most beautiful city of Canada, and the most wealthy city on the Pacific coast per capita. On the streets is the most cosmopolitan crowd that ever jostled cheek by jowl in an American city.

Ask a dozen men in rotation how each makes his living. The first is a lumberman, he converts Douglas firs into ship masts and bridge timbers. The next man draws from his pocket a buckskin poke of dust; he is a gold miner from the Yukon. Number three talks learnedly to you of flats and smalls and sock-eyes, he has half a million invested in salmon canneries. Behind him, arm in arm, are the owner of a "ranch" of Magoon strawberries at Gordon Head, and a breeder of prize Herefords on the Cowichan. The next man is a copper miner at Mount Sicker, and behind him stalks the owner of a sealing schooner plying into Dutch harbor, engaged in warm discussion with a whaler from Sechart.

The next citizen is a lady with an English pedigree and a double-barrelled name, she breeds thoroughbred terriers in her own kennels on an island in the Gulf, and exchanges ideas on the political situation in England with a retired captain of the British army, who owns an adjacent island of his own, and sends out from it, by the hands of an Indian, in a chartered canoe, the MSS. of novels and virile verse, which stand unabashed in the presence of a Kipling or a Jack London.

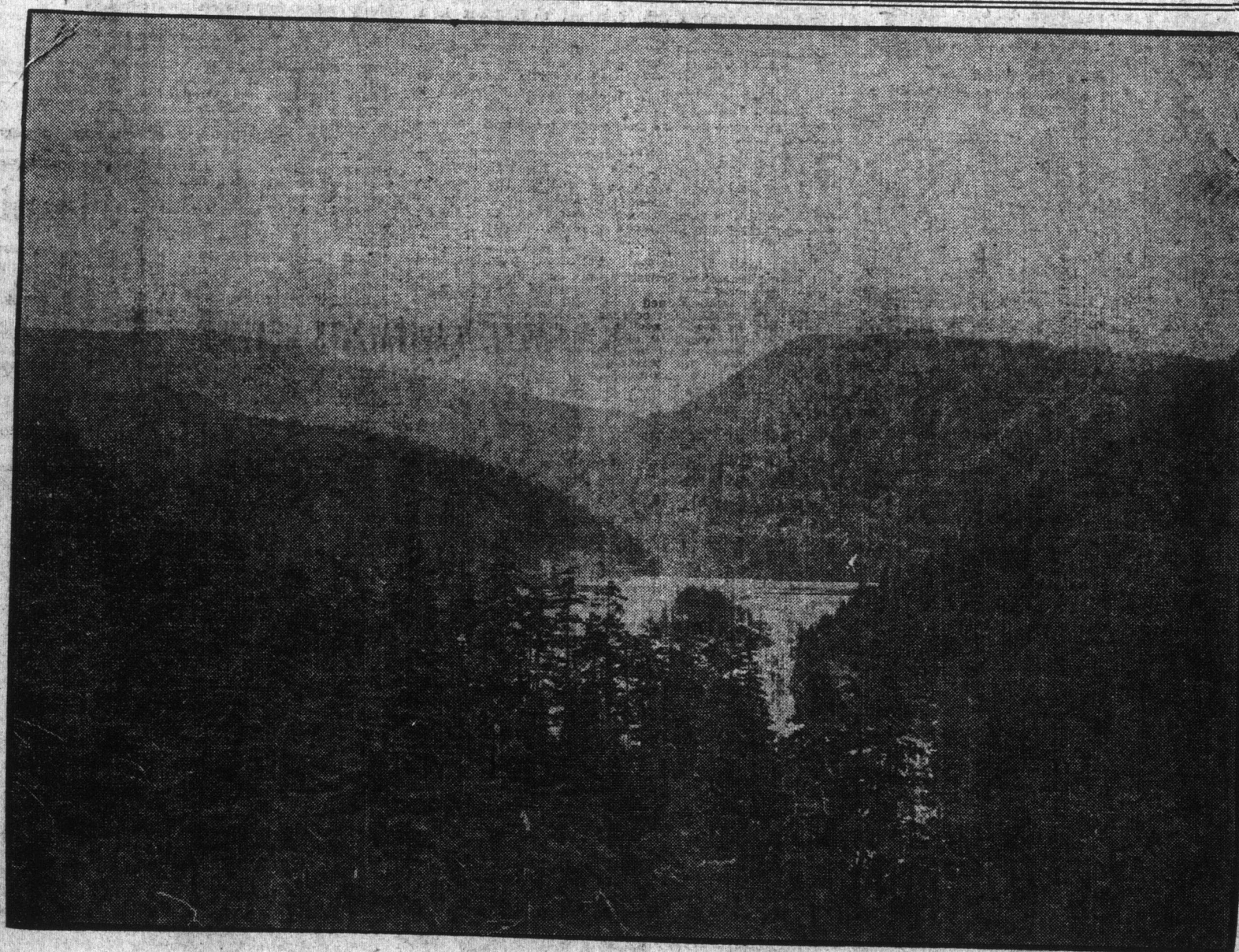
On the streets of the polyglot town the Indian clam digger brushes the smart red tunic of Tommy Atkins, and the sailor from Esquimalt hobnobs with the Hindoo. Down on the waterfront Greek fishermen, swart Italian, Kanaka, Lascar and Songhees half-caste share together their in-shore cabins, and when the salmon run in the Straits and the glutton gulls fly shoreward, go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters.

The city of Victoria runs down in broom and buttercups to the country lanes, and the pines of the forest creep into the city streets. Half an hour's walk from the heart of the town in any direction deposits one in the midst of a tangled jungle of beautiful and sweet scented things, wild roses, arbutus trees, honey-suckles, sweet briar, and the golden blossoms of the broom, over it all the bluest of blue skies, and giant pines the background of the picture. In from the Straits, with the evening breeze, comes a salty sea-suggestiveness, and the happy wayfarer heaves a deep sigh of content, murmuring, "It is good for us to be here!"

An agitation has been started on Vancouver Island in favor of increasing the bounties on the destruction of panthers and wolves, which, according to reports coming in from several points are rapidly increasing in the interior.

Mr. Joseph Drinkwater, who has been the means of bringing this question under public discussion has, it is stated, probably travelled more of the interior wilds of this island than any other man, red or white, and has seen many evidences of the slaughter of deer, elk, beaver and grouse by the ravenous beasts of prey, which he would have exterminated. He says that if hunters had open season twelve months in the year they could not do as much towards the destruction of the best game resources of the island as panthers and wolves are doing. He told of having seen dozens of remnants of carcasses of deer and elk in a day, and knew from his own experience that panthers preyed upon beaver and grouse, killing the hens in the laying and hatching seasons and devouring the eggs.

Mr. Drinkwater contended that there was not a panther or a wolf killed in these parts today because of the bounty of \$7.50 on the former and \$5.00 on the latter. These beasts were killed whenever a man with a gun chanced to meet them, and would be killed under such circumstances every time, if there was not a cent in it. It would not pay a man to hunt panthers or wolves for the present bounty, and he suggested that it be raised to \$25 in both cases, which he believed would induce hunters to take their dogs and guns and make a business of hunting this class of game.—Rod and Gun in Canada.



A Glimpse of Saanich Arm, Vancouver Island

Bond street clothing peddles his own wares and pours out Browning with the morning's milk.

Not far from here a real live "wild man" inhabits the woods, terrorizes the children and puzzles the historical research societies. Slavery exists among the Indian tribes; a young girl was sold for \$1,500 to the highest bidder during a tribal feast, at auction, last week, and cannibalism is said to be regularly practised at Cape Scott.

On the west coast lives a man, the product of a British university, who took his library out into the ocean, tied the books with stones in bags, and drowned them as deep as Prospero buried his books on magic art. This man will not allow his children to be taught reading and brings them up veritable untutored savages, carrying them up to a flat-topped rock, reading to them books on Demonology, and scraping out weird melodies on a cracked fiddle.

The Canadian Pacific railway owns one and a half million acres of this great pine-covered land, a whole island of Sanitarium! Here are no malaria, no rattlesnakes, no earthquakes, no poisonous plants, no blizzards, no electrical storms, no famine nor sword.

Paper pulp making is one of Vancouver Island's most promising industries, and the Orient is her market. The Nile papyrus started this industry, the beech groves of Germany and England succeeded Egypt, and now is the day of the Canadian spruce forests. Vancouver Island has inexhaustible areas of pulp