

original, noble and beautiful among them. There is dear old Aunt Margaret; she is over 70, and still leads a class of over 100 members. Over there is Blind Tommy, his face is full of joy and peace to-day, one would suppose this boy had just seen the new born Saviour with the eyesight of faith. But we are concerned with general features now, and must deny ourselves this pleasure.

Now that daylight has come we can look round about upon the scene that spreads itself before us; the best point of view will be from the hill at the back of the city; overlooking the harbor and giving us a glimpse of the surrounding country; you will not need to hurry to keep warm, overshoes, overcoats, fur mits and caps are unknown here, for we are in the land of perennial sunshine.

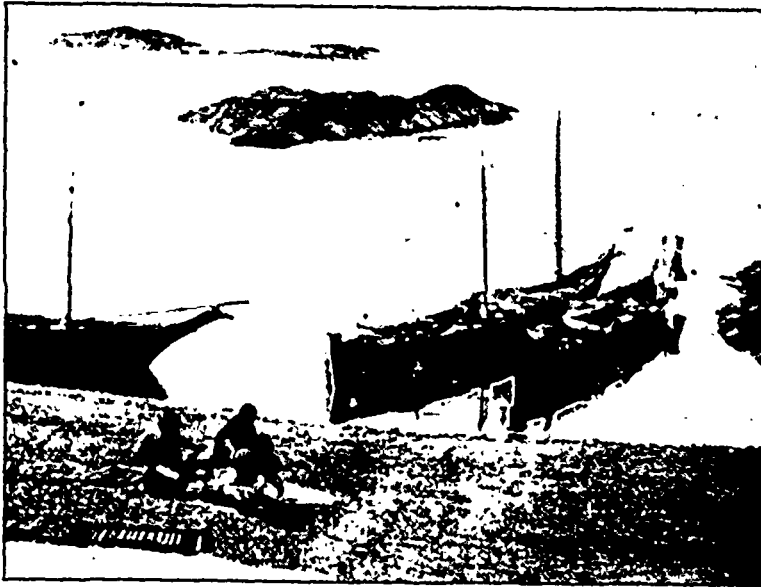
What a contrast this scene presents to a Xmas scene in these regions of snow and ice!

As you look out over that purely tropical scene, you will search in vain for one single sign of winter; you will see spring, summer and autumn all in evidence, but no winter. The trees are bearing their fruit, sending out new

in her tint of green. To the right and left the country lies full of life; trees, plants, and the rarest tropical flowers are struggling for room; everywhere there is growth in profusion; the sugar cane fields are seen with their tall tops, looking in the distance a little like our fields of grain before the sun has painted them with their finishing coat of gold. Over all the sun shines, shining everywhere. It is a wonderful country, no chimneys, no fires, save and except in the out kitchen for cooking, or often still just outside the back door in a "coal pot." As the sun's rays are becoming quite powerful, it will be as well to get home to breakfast.

The ladies will meet you arrayed in light muslin, or cotton dresses. All the doors and windows are wide open, giving a welcome to any cooling breeze there may chance to be.

In doors, the contrast almost ceases; there will be the usual turkey and plum-pudding dinner, a number of guests to help the glad merry making; there will be games for the young folk and groupings of the older ones to tell and re-tell the stories of Xmasses of other days and other lands. On the streets the



OLD METHOD OF MISSIONARY TRAVEL BY OPEN CANOE

shoots, and dropping their dead leaves at one and the same time.

Look at the wonderful growth, the city is like a palm garden with many buildings in between, not only on the outskirts, but right in the heart of the city the beautiful tall cabbage and cocoanut palms raise their tall stubby plumes into the air, and stand like marshalled soldiers guarding the city; then there lies beyond the harbor, sending out its two long arms and clasping in its half embrace the edge of the ocean; here, at rest, lies the ships. They have come from many distant lands, bringing provisions, and are now waiting for their return cargoes. Further on still, there lies the beautiful, restless ocean, dotted here and there with small islands. The poet's description of the ocean:

"Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!" would not answer here, the ocean that lies around these island gems is not blue, but light green, as though the tropical sun, by constant shining, had robbed her of her wonted darker hue and left her pale and delicate Xmas carol idea is being carried to the

extreme of the ludicrous by the unwashed and almost unclothed youthful West Indian. Bands of them parade the city and profess to perform, they wear the most outrageous creations as to masks, head gear, and general get up; the central figure of the crowd is mounted on stilts and is dancing to the music (?) of a life and impromptu drum; they have been on the march for hours, and they will keep it up for hours more, for the West Indian youth is so susceptible to martial or dance music, that to keep still is the one thing he can't do.

Such are the general features of a West Indian Christmas. In the darkness of the evening we look in at the windows and see the groups of young people full of life and enjoyment. Pianos and organs are doing their best to welcome one more Christmas; games, quiet and boisterous, stories wise and otherwise, are all in full swing, and thus the whole world unites to rejoice once more over the glorious announcement

"Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

Our First Xmasses In B. C.

Written expressly for the
RECORDER by
REV. EBENEZER ROBSON.

It was in 1859, in the picturesquely situated town of Fort Hope, then a lively mining camp of 300 inhabitants, that I spent my first Christmas in this "glorious province of ours," as Earl Dufferin called it.

I had as my first mission "The Gold Fields of Fraser River," or that part of them from Murderer's Bar to the canyons including the towns of Hope and Yale, and a dozen local bars or camps, and among them the celebrated Mills Bar, three and a half miles below Yale.

Purchasing rough lumber at White & Coe's sawmill, I brought it up the river in a canoe, and then, with such help as I could secure, packed it up the steep bank and to the lot donated by Governor Douglas to the mission. Planting cedar posts, I heaved timber for sills, joists, plates and rafters and laid the foundation of my parsonage all alone. With Henry Hyde as my assistant I erected the building; C. G. Major and John Robson, my eldest brother, making the shingles by contract.

Into this pioneer parsonage I led my bride, who had come (alone, if not on foot) seven thousand miles to share the trials and triumphs of an itinerant missionary. Her honeymoon was spent in the artistic employment of helping me to cotton, paper and otherwise finish up the rooms of our home. We improvised tables, bedsteads and wash tubs out of rough boards and barrels, and so added to the outfit of furniture which we had secured at the time of our wedding in Victoria, mostly as presents from kind friends. One of these—a rocking chair, presented by Mr. Cooper, chief clerk in the Colonial Treasury—I now sit in as I write these reminiscences.

In this humble home, a clear case of "Love in a cottage"—we spent our first Christmas on the western coast. As Christmas drew near, we thought much of our dear ones far away, and of the Christmas doings in the churches of Montreal and Brockville, which we had left behind. Perhaps some pensive thoughts did mingle with our musings.

Christmas fell on Sunday. The Saturday was spent by the missionary in forcing hunger for the following day; by the missionary's better half in devising and preparing a Christmas dinner; a task somewhat perplexing in the days of famine prices and scant supplies.

About 11:45 p.m. a company of Englishmen—more than that, Cornishmen—sang dear, familiar Christmas carols at our door, and, when invited in, sang more and sang them well. One of these at least still lives and thrives in the same neighborhood, Mr. Wm. Teague, J.P., of Yale. The others, where are they?

These were not alone in making Christmas joyful to us, for on opening the door next morning we found on the knob and sill a variety of good things