

Victoria City and the Island of Vancouver



ARMY MARKWELL, writing in a recent issue of the Winnipeg Free Press, says: Some days the city of Victoria will be the fashionable watering place of the Pacific. It will burst into prominence within the next decade, and California (the

haunt of the poor consumptive) will probably still remain the living graveyard of America. All the American coast line is the open door to Vancouver Island. Steamers gorgeously appointed run from various points in California, Washington and adjoining states of the border West; and the wealthy American, seeking "sights," will want to go through the Rocky mountains. There is, therefore, every chance for the prairie West securing a whole lot of tourist trade, if the Middle West sets about advertising what it has to offer. It suggests itself that some illustrated booklets, setting forth the historical (and other) interesting claims of Winnipeg, might be got up for free circulation; for in this practical way the best results should come back in hard cash. Throughout Canada there might, with the best results, be made such a boon in tourist traffic as would set the wheels of fortune going everywhere. In the Old Country the beaten paths have been well worn out by the present generation, and Canada is in a fair way of being the magnet of the century. Now is the time to work for it.

A year ago it was my privilege to be present at the opening of parliament in England. Yesterday (by courtesy of The Colonist) I occupied a seat on the floor of the House in Victoria, B. C. One can't compare a small colonial assembly to a famous parliament opened in person by a crowned head; but there was in the Island assembly a most dignified gathering, in which neither pomp nor display was attempted, but a very pleasing ceremonial, in which the handsome Premier stood a very distinct figure. Lieutenant-Governor Dunsmuir's duties were fulfilled in the usual businesslike way; while one or two picturesque figures, posing as "Socialist members," broke the sameness of the proceedings by refusing to uncover when the Lieutenant-Governor entered! One wonders at anyone being guilty of a breach of common etiquette for the sake of public notoriety!

Yesterday (January 10) under a sunshine as warm as any June day on the prairie, I walked the distance between Victoria city and beautiful Oak Bay. On the way there, passing by the suburban homes of many Manitobans, it excited wonder to see the spacious and fine grounds, the rich lawns and budding trees of fruitful, with orchards where every Canadian fruit we might mention, grows in abundance. The artistic bungalow houses; greenhouses annex, the ivy-covered walls and deep-cut hedges of privet, box, laurel, holly and hawthorne blossoms. Everywhere a rich green, and beyond a bright blue water reach, with soft breezes from the salt Pacific sea beyond again. Very beautiful the homes—very restful the scenery—very happy and content the atmosphere of this island home of good Canadians, whose appreciation of the natural advantages of this beautiful retreat is shown in the cash expenditures made in ornamental ways. Shrubbery and walks lead to sylvan depths of forest fringes; and all the idea, as the impression left is that of ease, elegance and unostentatious wealth.

Especially beautiful is the property of Mr. Fred Jones, once the Dewdney home. This ex-Winnipegger has secured in additional purchase the estates of Sir James Douglas, first governor of Vancouver Island, also the grand old homestead of Sir Joseph Trutch—all being historical ground, very valuable, and being by Mr. Jones modernized to suit the present day requirements. Other Winnipeg people are housed at various points, among the most artistic being that of Mr. Bradshaw, the well known barrister, whose Albany road home, is a gem set in greens.

Old-timers of the prairie provinces are found in numbers. I had the good luck to meet Mr. Frank I. Clarke, once an editorial writer of the Manitoba Free Press, whose fireside tales of the long-ago should be coaxed into print. As a raconteur Mr. Clarke unconsciously out-Boswells Boswell! With this difference, Mr. Clarke's makes a Johnson of dozens of the famous old-timers, and he limits his biographical powers to the ear of fireside friends. Mr. Clarke now occupies an important position in the provincial government.

"The Empress" is now one of the sights of Victoria. The construction of this palatial hotel has been a happy thought of the "Big Company," and it forms one of the largest assets of all British Columbia. It is, apparently, the exhaustion of thought! One can think of nothing which might be added—one can imagine nothing taken away. It is a striking and fruitful example of Canadian courage, and of national development; for nowhere in Great Britain, or on the Continent, may be found anything in hotels to equal or to beat it!

First, a commanding site with a waterfront, which at night wears a Venetian look in the reflected water lights of James Bay. Broad and curved approaches from three sides, with a sweeping carriage drive to a double portico of the hotel through which the visitor passes to an oak-panelled hall as vast and deep-ceiled

"The Fashionable Watering Place of the Pacific"—A Prediction That It Will Burst Into Prominence Within the Next Decade

as some old English castle. Great beams of oak run the length of the rotunda, or lounge-room, with medallion carvings forming a finish. Massive pillars support these beams, and carvings add beauty to strength here. The ladies' sitting room is exquisitely done in deep cream color, a rich stucco work ceiling, and expensive furnishings with softly tinted lights lend enchantment to a cozy corner dimly lit by a candelabrum of colored lights. The windows and Du Barry furniture, upholstered in soft greys and pink, fit most perfectly in with the idea of luxurious feminine ways. Here, perhaps, most of all, is seen the artistic taste of Mrs. Hayter Reed, to whose fine brain is due the entire arrangement.

The palm garden is an interior "garden," and is a grand square surmounted by a circular dome in Oriental tinted glasses. The rose-

representative editors of Puget Sound cities, included two Manitoba Free Press correspondents. I had the good fortune to be a guest at Mr. Hayter Reed's table, around which were gathered, on that genial gentleman's right and left, Mrs. Frank I. Clarke, Mrs. Ussher, Mrs. Helmcken, Mrs. Simpson-Hayes, Messrs. Eberts (speaker of the British Columbia House), Frank I. Clarke, W. Gosnell, Helmcken and McConnell, with George H. Ham added to the circle, when the party adjourned to the palm garden for coffee and cigars.

It was a brilliant scene; the British Columbia maids and matrons were there in full numbers, and the dress was very elaborate. The after-dinner promenade was turned into a dance; the strains of the orchestra proving too seductive for the formal programme laid down by the hosts. By the way, as hosts on the oc-

tlewomen. In this, the supervisors of what is now known as the "Wonder-Way" of Canada, have shown wonderful wisdom. So much has been written about the grand "Empress" that it suffices me to add: Thought seems to have exhausted itself in its perfection of equipment!

It would be well, perhaps, for young men arriving from Manitoba now to be told that Vancouver Island offers to the settler not afraid of pioneer duties, all that is wanted in free homestead lands; with possibilities in fruit, chicken and cattle ranching at points adjacent to ready markets. Gardening everywhere at minimum cost; the soil is rich and readily put in shape for cultivation, and young men having even limited capital would (after wisely consulting with the immigration authorities) be able to settle themselves where, in a

and the heroes and heroines of a future generation of novelists are today building the nation that will yet enroll many great writers' names!

A very attractive and useful booklet on "Vancouver Island, the Gem of the Pacific," dealing particularly with Nanaimo, Comox, Alberni and Duncan districts, compiled by Mr. George A. Beattie, of Nanaimo, has just been issued. Following are some extracts:

When mention is made of the word Nanaimo, it is instinctively associated with coal, and there is the mistake that all newspaper writers, from a Nanaimo standpoint, make. Nanaimo is famous throughout America as being the Coal City, the model coal city, in every respect. Nanaimoites are justly proud of that distinction, but they are ambitious also, and would have more strings to their bow. True they have coal in such quantities that in this, the next, and for innumerable following generations, the city will be famed for her coal, but it is of her fisheries, her splendid situation on the Island, her fruit and farm lands surrounding, and her other natural and industrial advantages that Nanaimo would talk.

The Nanaimo mines are now producing at the rate of almost 500,000 tons per year, which is more than double what was being taken out last year. This year the Western Fuel Company will pay out fully one and a half millions of dollars in wages, almost double last year. At present 1,300 men are employed, an increase of 60 per cent. over last year.

Manager Stockett of the mines states that he expects to take out 600,000 tons this year, and by 1910, one million tons. The supply of coal is almost inexhaustible not only in the Western Fuel property, but in other holdings all through that district of which Nanaimo is the centre. Mr. Stockett was asked recently, "How about the supply of coal? Is it likely to give out?" He replied, "No, there is scarcely even a possibility of such a thing. We have now in sight more coal than has been produced in all the time the Nanaimo mines have been operating, and there is every reason to believe that further prospecting will prove the existence of far greater fields than have yet been touched."

So much for coal. What about Nanaimo itself? The subject is a large one. To begin with, a more beautifully situated city does not exist on the Pacific Coast. Nanaimo, with her hundreds of pretty little homes, masses of roses, and flowers of every description in generous sized gardens, lies in a perfect land-locked harbor, with Protection and Newcastle Islands flung up against the rough waters of the Gulf. There is a charm about this portal to Vancouver Island that is indescribable, a touch of the Arcadian, a suggestion of the poetical in the little city with her broad outlook on the deep, blue waters of the Gulf, a procession of islands fronting her beautiful harbor. Nanaimo with her historical traditions reaching back into the dim past, with its vague enticing glamor of antiquity; there is the repose and serenity of an older civilization than is found in any part of British Columbia, and yet underneath the surface there are strong, rugged evidences of the Western spirit, Western enterprise, hope and boundless ambition, the symptoms of a city having just discovered herself and coming into her own. And all this amid the sweet and fragrant blooming flowers that are scenting the atmosphere, within easy reach of the secret nooks of the wildwood and the stream; less frequented spots in the woodlands, where one can hide away from the ceaseless grind of everyday life and enjoy the fullest happiness in cool spots in the wilderness by the waters of the Great Gulf, by mountainside and stream.

Nanaimoites themselves have been recruited largely—those who have not been born there—from the British Isles. They have that hearty old English cheer that flings wide the door to the stranger; they have the strong physique of John Bull, and to see the muscular, well-knit frames of the long line of men who tramp to the mines each day, is to see as fine a regiment of Canadians as can be seen from ocean to ocean. A distinctly Nanaimo characteristic, not found, perhaps, in any other Western community, is the fact that those who have been born in Nanaimo have been there for many years. Nanaimo is one of the oldest cities in British Columbia, established in 1853, and it is not an unusual thing to meet people who have resided there for twenty, thirty and forty years. Indeed, this is rather the rule than the exception. They wander away sometimes, but, like Resselas in search in search of happiness, they have come back to their own again.

Commercially Nanaimo is in good shape at present. Of late there has been a large increase in population. Almost daily families are leaving the coal centres of England to take up their residence in the more favored city of Nanaimo. Houses are at a premium and finding a residence is a matter of some serious moment; no better investment can offer itself there at present than the building of new houses. Much of the impetus of the general trade of the city is due to the increased number of employees in the mines and the developments undertaken by the Red Fir Lumber Company, the new whaling station nearby, recently established by the Pacific Whaling Company, and to other expanding local industries and the settlement of the surrounding district by arrivals from Manitoba and other prairie provinces. These have not been the only factors, however,



A View of Mount Baker From Oak Bay, Victoria.

wood pillars came from Australia and are like polished glass. The ceiling, heavily beamed, is inwrought in arabesque designs; and giant palms set here, there and everywhere, render an effect most Oriental and particularly restful to the eye. Nothing to approach this interior "garden" is to be found anywhere; and in fact, nothing to surpass it in hotels might be found. Looking through the ground floor, passing through the magnificent offices, noting the rich quality of everything, and the lavish expenditure stamped thereon, I asked the genial manager, Mr. Stewart Gordon, "Will this big hotel ever pay the company?" "It is built for the public," said Mr. Gordon, adding, "We'll consider ourselves afterwards."

"The Green land of groves, the beautiful waste."

William Cullen Bryant's lines, found in The Western World, apply most appropriately to this fairy-island of Vancouver, foamed by the Pacific sea. It grows on you, this "group of grassy islands," and "the white throng of sails," bring to view "the commerce of the world," of which the poet sings. It is so set apart from the Mainland, so exclusively a little world of its own, that instinctively the feeling comes over you when you cross the threshold of the capital, "I am far away from home!" This is the queer thing about Vancouver Island people, they do not consider themselves as English (or British), and they are offended if classed as Canadians; but they are very particular about being accepted as "British Columbians!" Observe there is more of a distinction than a difference in the classification. I think all island-born peoples are short-sighted, mentally.

The opening of the beautiful Empress hotel by a big press dinner, to which flocked all the

casion, Messrs. Hayter Reed, George H. Ham and Stewart Gordon, exceeded what was expected; they simply proved a long-established fact, i. e., that when the Canadian Pacific Railway Company sets out to do a thing, it is DONE!

Mrs. Stewart Gordon's taste and judgment in the arrangement and disposal of everything connected with the feminine guests' comfort, proved an ability beyond the ordinary. A most graceful and winning manner was shown, in her greeting of each guest, and there was nothing

very few years, rich centres of trade are, sure to lie.

Land, farm land, may be purchased at from \$10 to \$100 an acre within easy reach of towns now flourishing, and as railways are pushing through the country, operating from coast cities, in a very short time will give all the travel and freight accommodation. The Saanich, Victoria, and the districts tributary to the city, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Comox and Alberni, the latter being a busy, bustling town of several hundred, and rapidly coming to the front as a C. P. R. terminal.

WINTER IN VICTORIA

Here is no sharp extreme of biting cold; No deluge drear from lowering cloud outpours; No boisterous rasping wind its fury roars; Nor is the land gripped in the Frost King's hold. The sky is green, dull green the grassy world. The sable crow calls loudly as he soars From the dark festooned fir, to where, in scores, His mates the gharled oak's writhing arms enfold. The rose still shows late hips of yesteryear, The glistening holly flaunts her berries red, Afar, through purple mists, the hills appear, While smiles the warm, benignant Sun o'erhead. Nature's not dead; she does but gently sleep. List! Spring's sweet call; the buds begin to peep. —Donald A. Fraser.

ing whatever of "hotel" suggestion in the entertainment provided. One rather felt they were guests in a private gentleman's home. This seems to be the key-note (it strikes a new note, in all the C. P. R. hotels under the wonderful management and direction of Mr. Reed. It is brought about by securing as managers of the various departments, gentlemen and gen-

Chilliwack, B. C., boasts an orchard which produced on January 9, 1908, an apple crop! This being a second crop for the year 1907-08. It is quite an ordinary thing to see January roses in bloom in the private gardens in Victoria, and the wild crocus is peeping from the hedges everywhere. Still the red rowan-berry—last signs of winter—shines against a background of rich greens, and alternate days of sunshine and rain bring thoughts of early spring.

I like the cool assurance with which the average Briton refers to "the colonies." In one issue of The Bookman appears this crack o' th' pen:

"Letters flourish chiefly in countries where there is a large-leisured class, and though the colonies have made their contributions to our national literature, we at home have not yet accustomed ourselves to look overseas either for readers or writers."

Canada, as a "colony," may thank her colonial stars we have no trashy literature such as emanates from the London publishers of the "leisured class." The "colonials" are writing history on a white page; be it understood,