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THE MISSION WORK OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE.

British Columbia, the most westerly province of the Dominion, has a territory over 750 miles in length, from south to north, with an average width, including islands and water stretches, of nearly 500 miles from east to west. This gives an area of 375,000 square miles. In other words, British Columbia has a territory nearly equal to that of Ontario and Quebec combined. Nearly the whole country is mountainous, and comparatively little is fit for cultivation, but its fisheries and mineral treasures, especially those of the Klondike, are practically inexhaustible, and its immense forests will be able to supply the markets of the North-west with building materials for generations to come. Add to this the fact that some one of its ports must yet become the depot of the vast trans-Pacific trade (inasmuch as the distance from Yokohama to Liverpool via the Canadian Pacific Railway is more than 1,000 miles shorter than by way of San Francisco), and it becomes clear that British Columbia will yet play an important part in the history, not only of the Dominion, but of the world.

MISSIONS TO THE WHITE POPULATION.

Over thirty-six years have elapsed since the first band of missionaries, headed by the Rev. Dr. Evans, went to British Columbia. At the very outset they were confronted by difficulties of no ordinary character. The population was sparse and scattered; facilities for travel were few and costly; rates of living were enormously high. But they laboured on, and the result of their labours is seen today. Persons converted under their preaching are still to be found all over the province; and the names of Evans, and Robson, and Browning, and White, and Derrick, and Russ are still held in grateful remembrance by many who were benefited by their ministrations.

Many of those who first emigrated to British Columbia were actuated mainly, if not solely, by a desire to make money, and hence they became regardless of methods if only the end could be secured. The Sabbath was disregarded, and became a day of business or of pleasure; the house of God was shunned; old habits of prayer, and reverence for sacred things, were left east of the mountains; saloons by the score lent their aid to corrupt the morals of the people. Add to all this the fact that from the first the Methodist missionaries have had to stand almost alone in the fight against prevailing ungodliness, and the wonder is not that they have accomplished so little, but that they have accomplished so much. Labouring, as many of them did, in isolated places, among a scattered people, numbers of whom hated alike the missionary and his message, and uncheered by that frequent intercourse with fellow-workers which is enjoyed in older fields, is it any wonder if the toilers were sometimes

discouraged by that hope deferred that "maketh the heart sick?" All honour to the faithful men who, in despite of such difficulties, stood manfully at their posts, and waited patiently for the harvest.

Vancouver Island is large—some 300 miles in length, by an average of 60 miles in width, comprising an area of some 20,000 square miles. The climate is all that the most exacting could desire, and what soil there is may be described as fairly productive, but it is to be found only in limited quantities, the general character of the island being mountainous.

MISSIONS TO THE INDIANS.

The work among the Indians on the Pacific Coast furnishes one of the most interesting chapters in the whole history of Christian missions. The striking contrast between the habitations, dress,

consuming desire for the salvation of his brethren, till the feeble body gave way beneath the ceaseless strain, and the ransomed spirit went home to God. It was here that the Indians first learned to prize the sacredness of home life, and a street of neat cottages was built, in striking contrast with the huge buildings in which the heathen herded together.

Port Simpson, with which the name of Thomas Crosby and his devoted wife will ever be associated, at once arrests attention as the foremost Indian mission. Twenty-three years ago this spot was the site of a heathen village, with all the darkness, poverty, filth, cruelty, and vice characteristic of such a condition. Now there is a model Christian village. All the old heathen houses have disappeared, and have been replaced by street after street of neat cottages of various designs. A rise of

built her and became her engineer. This man was indeed lifted out of "an horrible pit, and the miry clay," and from the hour of his deliverance his heart was aflame with love to God and human souls.

MISSION TO THE CHINESE.

At the present time there are several thousand Chinamen in British Columbia. They are all from the Province of Canton, and all speak the same dialect. The majority belong to the labouring class, but some are merchants, and a few are mechanics. Very few have their families with them, and in some parts of "Chinatown" they swarm together in large numbers, overcrowding the tenements and neglecting sanitary regulations. As a rule, however, they are quiet, peaceable, and industrious. Few of them patronize the whiskey saloons, but opium smoking and gambling are common, especially the latter.



A LUMBER CAMP—BRITISH COLUMBIA.

appearance, and, in fact, the whole surroundings of those who have received the Gospel, and their still heathen neighbours, affords a most suggestive commentary upon the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to civilize and elevate a people, while the zeal displayed by many in carrying the Gospel to their countrymen, their fidelity in the face of temptation, no less than their consistency of life and conversation proves that the Gospel has come to them, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

Nanaimo was our first Indian Mission on the Pacific Coast. It was here that Thomas Crosby first began his work as a teacher. It was here that the first converts were won, and the first separation of the Christian from the heathen Indians took place. It was here that David Salassellon, of saintly memory, found the Saviour, and from here he went up and down the coast and across to the mainland, as a flame of fire, urged on by a

ground in the rear of the village is crowned by a commodious church, capable of accommodating seven or eight hundred people. On one side is the school-house, large and well built, on the other the "Girls Home." Near by is the Mission House, neat, comfortable, and attractive, with a reception room for the Indians, where they find ready access and welcome at all times.

I venture here to express the opinion that one problem in regard to the Indian work on the Pacific Coast has been solved by the little mission steamer, the "Glad Tidings." The great problem has been how to reach the scattered thousands along the coast, with so few missionaries in the field, and no means of navigating the waters except the native canoe—a method very slow and very dangerous. A remarkable series of providences led to the building of the steam yacht above referred to, and a series of providences, equally wonderful, led to the conversion of the man who

Let the Chinaman learn English, (which he is very eager to do), and let him accept the Christian religion, (which as yet he is averse to do), and he will make a safer and better citizen than some whose support is now eagerly courted by the politicians.

A young man named Vrooman, the son of a Presbyterian missionary who had spent twenty-three years in China, was living in San Francisco. The preceding part of his life had been spent in the Flowery Kingdom, and he spoke Cantonese like a native. Mr. Vrooman received a letter from a Chinese firm in Victoria, asking him to come up to interpret for them in a suit which was shortly to be tried. He responded to the invitation, and while in Victoria saw how spiritually destitute was the condition of the Chinese in that city. He strove to enlist the co-operation of the local churches in behalf of a union mission, but without success. He then turned to the Methodists, from whom he