

THE ISLANDS OF THE GULF.

1. *Description of Vancouver Island.* By Lt.-Col. W. C. GRANT, F.R.G.S.

The position of Vancouver Island is between $48^{\circ} 20'$ and 51° N. lat., and between 123° and $128^{\circ} 20'$ W. long. It is situated on the western coast of North America, within a short distance of the mainland, the Straits of Fuca, which separate the island from the mainland on the south, forming the boundary in those parts between the British territories and those of the United States. The extreme length of Vancouver Island from north to south is 270 miles, with a general breadth of from 40 to 50 miles. The general aspect of the island is that of a broken rocky country densely covered with timber. The proportion which the available land bears to that which is totally incapable of cultivation is extremely small. The whole centre of the island as far as it has yet been explored consists of a barren rocky waste, the timber with which it is covered being, as well from its nature as from its position, unavailable for any useful purpose. Along the sea-coast a few patches of level land are to be met with, where the timber is extremely fine, and suitable either for masts and spars or for being sawn into planks. Small spots of open land, clear of trees, occasionally intervene, but seldom of more than a few hundred acres in extent; on these spots the soil is almost invariably extremely rich, and will produce abundantly every description of crop grown in Great Britain. The climate is agreeable and healthy, the summer is warm and dry; no rain falls from March till November; the remainder of the year is rather a rainy season than a severe winter; some snow falls, but does not generally lie long on the ground; and the frosts are neither hard nor of long duration.