

HAVE BEEN favored with some notes furnished by Mrs. E. G. Alston, nee Miss A. M. Tuzo, sister of a well-known pioneer physician of Victoria, Doctor H. A. Tuzo, who lived at the foot of the hill upon which Christ Church cathedral rests. Mr. E. G. Alston, who will be remembered by the old-timers, came here in 1859, May 26th. He afterwards became registrar-general of Vancouver Island and also of British Columbia. In 1861 he was a member of the old Legislative Council for Vancouver Island, and again for British Columbia in 1868-1870. In short periods of 1871 he was acting attorney-general. In the same year he became Queen's advocate of Sierra Leone, and died there the following year.

On September 2nd, 1861, Mr. Alston was married in Christ Church cathedral to Elizabeth Caroline, daughter of Edward Abbott of Weeting Park, Norfolk, Dr. Cridge officiating and Mr. Crease acting as father to the bride. Of this marriage two children were born: Alfred Edward, now rector of Earl's, Framingham, near Norfolk; and Con-

stant Mr. Garrett made a great effort at decoration by having arbutus leaves sewn together on cardboard cut out in the shape of crowns, anchors, and other somewhat meaningless forms, which were put up in different parts of the church. Until Bishop Hills came I never remember the church being open between one Sunday and the next, but he endeavored to establish daily service and regularly read morning prayer at about 8 o'clock. I do not remember that any parishioners took advantage of this privilege, but Mrs. Hills was all ways there. She wore a red cloak, and day by day I used to see the red cloak enter the church, for we could see distinctly from our (Dr. Tuzo's) house at the foot of the hill.

"The Old Church, as shown in the photographs, had no architectural pretensions, but was at any rate built in a style suitable to the material; it had, therefore, a certain beauty of its own, the tower and low spire being the reverse of despicable. I remember the Presbyterian church hired by the congregation for their worship after the burning of the cathedral, and being specially amazed at the 'rostrum' at the end thereof, which was the most con-

Bygone Days of British Columbia Reminiscences of Old Victoria

BY R. E. GOSNELL

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one morning to go and inquire of my brother. I was hastening over the bridge when I descried my mother at the other end, and I knew her at once in spite of the distance. We quickly met and warmly embraced. Turning, I saw a gentleman standing by; it was Chief Justice Begbie on his way to let me know, and much amused at our meeting in this way.

On the south the bridge led to the old Government buildings, designed by Mr. Tidemann. They were very picturesque, and indeed unique, and I can't help

women in Victoria, and ladies seldom went abroad without the escort of gentlemen, of whom there were often many who could spare the time, being, alas! unable to find employment and having to feed in restaurants and sleep in shanties. Three or four professional men were often glad to share such an abode, a little hut of two or three rooms made out of boards, with a little lean-to for the cooking, without garden, fence, or privacy. I knew a gentleman and his wife who lived some months in a shanty; they were very poor, and kept quite to themselves, though known to be of good standing. One day a friend carried them a letter, for they contain these notes of Mrs. Alston are at an end, but I am able to supplement them with some taken from a journal of her husband, the late Mr. E. G. Alston, who, by the way, was educated at St. Paul's school and at Trinity college, Cambridge, and called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1857. Having made up his mind to go out to British Columbia, then only just begun to be talked about, he started from Liverpool on the Europa on April 2nd, 1859. Among the party were Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Cary (already referred to), Mr. H. M. Ball (afterwards a well-known government official), and Mrs. A. C. Elliott. Some of the comments made by Mr. Alston on the details of the journey out are interesting and amusing. Boats at that time apparently did not seriously cater for the comfort and convenience of their passengers, and the experience of the travellers going from New York to the Isthmus and from San Francisco to Victoria was anything but pleasant. On the 16th of May they reached San Francisco. On the following day he left in the Northern, on which the "best grub yet" was provided, but it was a slow boat, and the weather, hitherto perfect, became bad. He was much depressed on hearing bad reports of the colony; many miners were leaving and returning to California. On the 26th they arrived at Esquimalt, whence he walked to Victoria in the company of Mr. Trutch, and put up at the Orleans House. The next day he made the acquaintance of Messrs. Crease, Gordon, and Begbie, and on the following he called on the governor (Douglas), with

"Esperanto" was a very concise and effective diction.

"The Indian ranches," on the shore opposite the wharf, where the harbor was crossed by a light bridge leading to the road to Esquimalt, were picturesque, but not pleasant; the smell of the flames and the audacity of the fleas made them unapproachable to ladies. There were no pretty wigwags with blanketed and beaded squaws and paposes sitting outside, as in the pictures. The 'Songs' were a low-caste, fish-eating tribe, and sadly degraded by contact with bad whites. The Hudson's Bay Company servants were not drawn from these Indians, but more northerly tribes.

Unfortunately for the interest they contain these notes of Mrs. Alston are at an end, but I am able to supplement them with some taken from a journal of her husband, the late Mr. E. G. Alston, who, by the way, was educated at St. Paul's school and at Trinity college, Cambridge, and called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1857. Having made up his mind to go out to British Columbia, then only just begun to be talked about, he started from Liverpool on the Europa on April 2nd, 1859. Among the party were Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Cary (already referred to), Mr. H. M. Ball (afterwards a well-known government official), and Mrs. A. C. Elliott. Some of the comments made by Mr. Alston on the details of the journey out are interesting and amusing. Boats at that time apparently did not seriously cater for the comfort and convenience of their passengers, and the experience of the travellers going from New York to the Isthmus and from San Francisco to Victoria was anything but pleasant. On the 16th of May they reached San Francisco. On the following day he left in the Northern, on which the "best grub yet" was provided, but it was a slow boat, and the weather, hitherto perfect, became bad. He was much depressed on hearing bad reports of the colony; many miners were leaving and returning to California. On the 26th they arrived at Esquimalt, whence he walked to Victoria in the company of Mr. Trutch, and put up at the Orleans House. The next day he made the acquaintance of Messrs. Crease, Gordon, and Begbie, and on the following he called on the governor (Douglas), with

barred by Pemberton on supposed breach of peace; refused to give bail sentenced to 12 months; removed by habeas corpus." In the next month business began to look up, building operations are started in the town, and good reports came in from the mines. We have splendid news from the up-country diggings. "Miners all going to return in the spring. Wages often 60 and 70 dollars per diem."

Sundry Paragraphs From the Diary of 1859.

"Three miners, next door, who blaspheme frantically through the thin partition, are succeeded by a German who practices on the flute. On the third concert (usually lasting an hour each) I walked out and called on him to inform him that a little music was pleasant if consisting of tunes, but one hour's practice was more agreeable to himself than to me. We came to an agreement by which I was to knock when I had enough of that which is said to soothe the savage breast."

A Typical Day's Work.
"Rose a little before seven, lit the stove, cleaned boots (washed not polished), boiled water for tea, then some rice, which turned out not quite boiled. Molasses thereon. Finished breakfast by half-past eight, had a pipe, and then into the woods (about 10 miles) to eleven, case adjourned, lunched at the Colonial. Walked back at five with a pound of meat in my hand. Obtained some water next door, lit fire, and had a pipe and 'Esays of Elia.' German next door practiced the flute, the inharmonious blackguard! Surveyed my habitation, consisting of a sitting-room, uncarpeted, 10 ft. square, with a table and two chairs, and a chest, on which latter are placed washing utensils, brushes, etc. My sleeping room opens into this and is 10 by 6 ft.; in it a cot, a portmanteau, chair, tin wash-dish. Guncase forms a bolster. This apartment opens into a little closet about 5 ft. square, in which are a stove, shelf for bread, etc., and some wood piled up. From the sitting-room you walk at one step into the field. On the table all day lie my teapot, plate, knife, fork, teacup and saucer, because no other place for same. I sweep out my room before breakfast, first sprinkling the floor with yesterday's tealeaves."

"Barbarus."
E. G. A.
(Meal expenses for one week circ 5 dol.)

Colonial Dress.
"Old colonists can be at once distinguished from new, for while the former either dress regardless of all style or else come out resplendent in almost new clothes ordered before departure, or seedy garments, relics of better days. All have left their home for some strong reason, very few for the mere gratification of adventure. Some, because impudently made domestic life disagreeable, others in the hope of retrieving a lost reputation, and a few in the honest pursuit of gaining a

er-else trouble would follow. Raby said he would put up with what he succeeded in raising the window. A snail of whiskey rushed in with the cold air; a huge loaf was thrust in and tumbled on my bed. Crease told him to go home, saguare which amid protestations of friendship he obeyed by running away. In a quarter of an hour he returned again, opened the window as before, and down tumbled an assortment of cakes (like quails), etc., and sweet things. Finally he retired, thanking me for his respect and gratitude sufficiently.

Cowichan Indians.

"On reaching the encampment we were at first doubtful of the character of our hosts, but finding it very odd we resolved to trust to them; so we carried our baggage, cleared out a square around a huge fire, brought out salmon and potatoes which a good-looking blackman cooked excellently though without very much scruple as to cleanliness. Made a capital supper in the presence of the regularly employed. Handed baby round and lit our pipes. Dispensed tea also, which they did not seem to care about. Elliott and Kerr sang some songs to them: 'A Life on the Ocean Wave,' 'Annie Laurie,' 'God Save the Queen,' etc. They sang in return some Indian songs, and their mass, male and female voices taking up the chorus parts. Their voices accorded very well. In a cleared part of the camp, against the wall, we were shown an altar with rude wood crucifix, etc., and pictures of the virgin on either side. The Tybys' wife crossed ourselves (sic), one taking off our hats. Very much struck with the scene, occurring as it did in the evening, the Tybys lighting the way with a torch of pitch sticks. It appears that a P. priest went to work among them in February last and has succeeded in persuading them to leave off drinking spirits, and to learn the elements of his religion. They regularly every morning and evening, to the sound of a bell, come forth from their different camps, having first washed their faces (an innovation), to attend mass and prayers. Later on Indians came from great distances to hear mass on Sundays; two at Saanich canoed five miles for that purpose. Cowichan Indians never steal now, as others universally do."

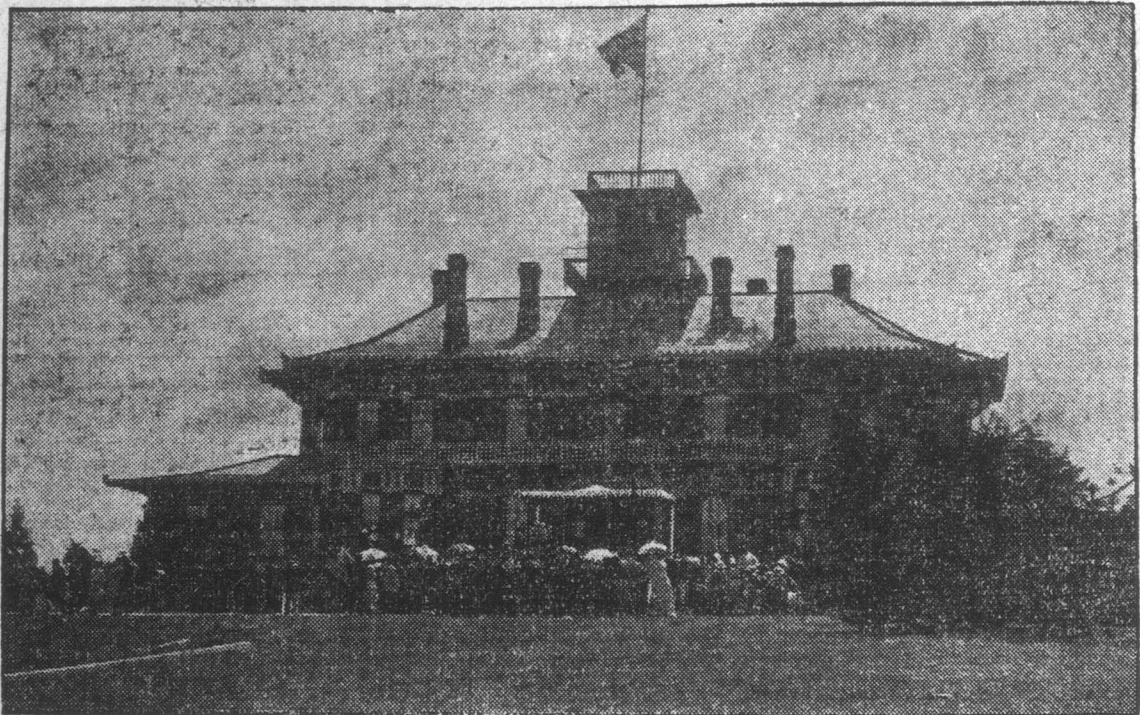
Stray References.

The following extracts from letters may be of interest historically.
"May 5, 1866. I was very glad to reach Victoria last Friday morning. Everything beautiful, but dreadfully dull as to business is much worse than I ever remember since 1860."

"August 5th. Everything is deplorably dull here. Very little business and people slumping up and leaving constantly. The miserable squabbles in this small political world and the hostility between Governor Seymour and his general unpopularity, all add to the general depression. If I had any notion of the state of things when in England I should have tried hard for a change. The miners' rebellion has not turned out well, but the old mines at Cariboo are paying fairly. Some exertions are being made to develop the coalfields on this island, and it is to this mineral rather than to gold that we must look for our ultimate prosperity. Gold will never make a country; it can only attract people and draw capital to more enduring sources of wealth."

"November (same year). Some time back I made up my mind to resign the registrarship, and should have done well for as soon as it was known I had offered of business far more lucrative than the appointment. However, the (new) governor (Marsgrave) advised me to hold on."

"The same views (as to the mistaken merging of all interests in that of the gold industry) are set forth at length in the Handbook of British Columbia, by Mr. Alston, published in 1876. This contains a long extract from the Columbia Mission report, from the same pen. He attributed the depression which lasted, more or less, during the seven years preceding confederation, not to the want of confederation with Canada or to the isolation of the colony but primarily to the insecure and false basis of trade which had been brought about by the gold craze and the neglect of the more solid and enduring industries, and secondarily to the constant agitation kept up by a certain class of politicians. Though personally opposed to confederation, he seems to have acquiesced in the view that there was no other way of salvation. He has remained in the colony, there is no doubt but that he would have taken from his official position and retired on private practice, for in his letters from Sierra Leone in 1872 he frequently refers to the state of things in British Columbia, and says that he never could have endured to be mixed up with the petty political squabbles and agitations that were rife at that time. 'It is possible,' remarks his son, 'that he was mistaken, for equally good men lived through it and survived to be of use to this province.' But it is evident that he was more at home in a colony with responsible, but not representative government."



Old-time Function at Government Buildings, Victoria.

stance Jane (Mrs. Robert Gordon). Very shortly after the birth of the second child Mrs. Alston died very suddenly. The burial took place on the 4th of February, 1865. Among the chief mourners were Messrs. Pearce, Watson, A. Pemberton, R. Woods, Wootton, Jackson and Turner. Messrs. Mr. Cridge officiated. Among the others present were Archdeacon Gilson, Messrs. Reece, Edwards, Bridgman, Burnaby, Drake, McCreight and many others. On the 4th of February, 1867, Mr. Alston married Miss A. M. Tuzo, to whom reference has already been made. Mrs. Alston's notes are very interesting, and are in the nature of remarks upon a set of old photographs of Victoria, taken in 1861-'62, which are indicated by the special headings following:

Christ Church.
The wooden church, erected, I think, in Governor Blanchard's time, had a plain interior, white walls and painted pews. The governor's pew was a large square apartment with a table and cushioned seats, carpets and hussocks. In my time (1859) Governor Douglas and his daughters were regularly in the pew on Sunday mornings, with their visitors, if any. I sat there with them several times. There was always service in the morning, afternoon and evening, and Holy Communion on the first Sunday in the month after morning prayer and litany. There were free seats behind the governor's pew, and in the gallery, where was also the organ. The choir consisted of a few ladies and gentlemen who sat on either side, outside and near the rails. The singing consisted of hymns only. The first attempt at singing responses and psalms was made in the iron church (afterwards St. John's), when Mr. Gribbell was ordained and became assistant to Mr. Jenms, at which time there was much practising among special few ladies, whereof I was one for a while. At Christmas a few green boughs were stuck about, and a year or two later

spacious object in the building, even when not occupied by Dean Cridge.

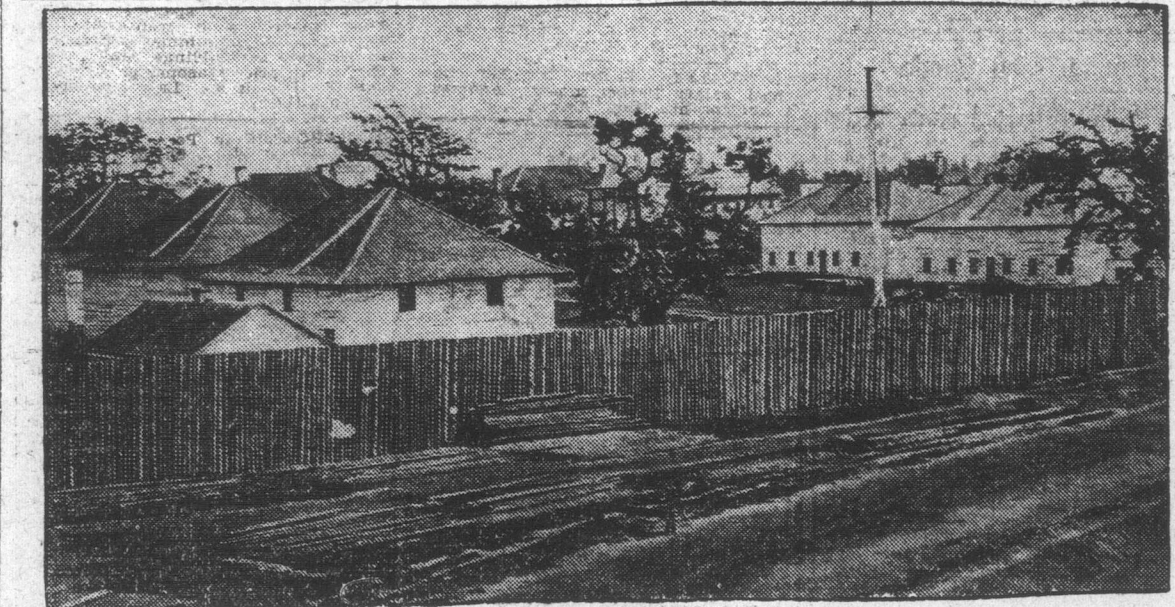
The Old Streets.
"Fort street, leading eastwards from the company's fort, could hardly be called a 'street' in '59, but in a few months it sprang into the semblance of one, especially at the lower end. It was at the upper end of this street that E. G. Alston built a house, in a piece of five acres, afterwards occupied by Sir Henry Crease. In the town end of the street the roadway was not yet made in '59, and there were great mud-holes everywhere. When the shops were put up a few wooden planks were raised on piles driven in the mud; later on pavements were made of boards. In the warm, dry weather the heat curled the planks and sprang the nails, and as one walked they rattled under foot and one was in constant danger of tripping up or of upsetting one's neighbor—not a mean danger, for the roadway was far below. Of the shopkeepers of those early times I remember Jay & Co., who had a monopoly of the florist and seedmen's business in the colony, into which they imported divers foreign plants, notably holly, which took them two years to grow from seed. Then there were Searby & Moss, chemists; Hibben & Carswell, booksellers, and several others, who all did well and some of them became important people. Last, but not least, there was Mr. Harris, the owner of 'Liverpool Market,' who became the first mayor of Victoria.

The Bridge.
"The bridge crossing James Bay, but now done away with, together with the bay itself, enters a good deal into my remembrance of my first year in Victoria. When I was staying at the Mowats' and had to cross it frequently to get to the fort, where by brother (Dr. Tuzo) was living. Just before Christmas in that year ('59) I was expecting the arrival of my mother from Canada, and not knowing exactly when the steamer would come in I started early

thinking it a shame they were destroyed. There was surely room for the new buildings elsewhere, and these later, though undoubtedly handsome, are but an example of the very numerous type, whereas the old ones were alone of their kind, and ought to have been left to become historic monuments of the colony.

"On the southeast side of James Bay stood Governor Douglas' house and garden, separated from the water by a high fence and a path. Through the chinks in this fence Alice Douglas used to talk to her lover, a Mr. Good, her father's private secretary, and afterwards a government clerk.

"In 1859 Mr. George Cary, the attorney-general, arrived with his wife in the steamer preceding that which brought my brother and me. They were both young and she was very pretty, quiet and unassuming. They lived in a four-roomed cottage hastily run up not far from the town. There were no women to help, and Mrs. Cary was afraid of the Indians, and so they had to employ the services of a white man for the rough work. It was very lonely for her, with her husband away all day, and I kept her company for some weeks, a sort of thing I often did in those days, having as yet no home duties of my own. It was not unusual to find a lady waiting patiently alone for some friend to come in and put the finishing touches to her toilette when a dinner party was in prospect. Once when I was staying with the Cary's he had an altercation with a man and lost his temper. He was promptly locked up for the night before any friend knew of it. We were greatly alarmed at his absence and set up all night waiting for him, but in the morning he was released and came home. After a year or so Mr. Cary built a house in the castellated style. It was only just finished when he was attacked with softening of the brain, and they were obliged to leave the colony. "In these early days there were few



Old Hudson's Bay Company Stockade, Victoria.

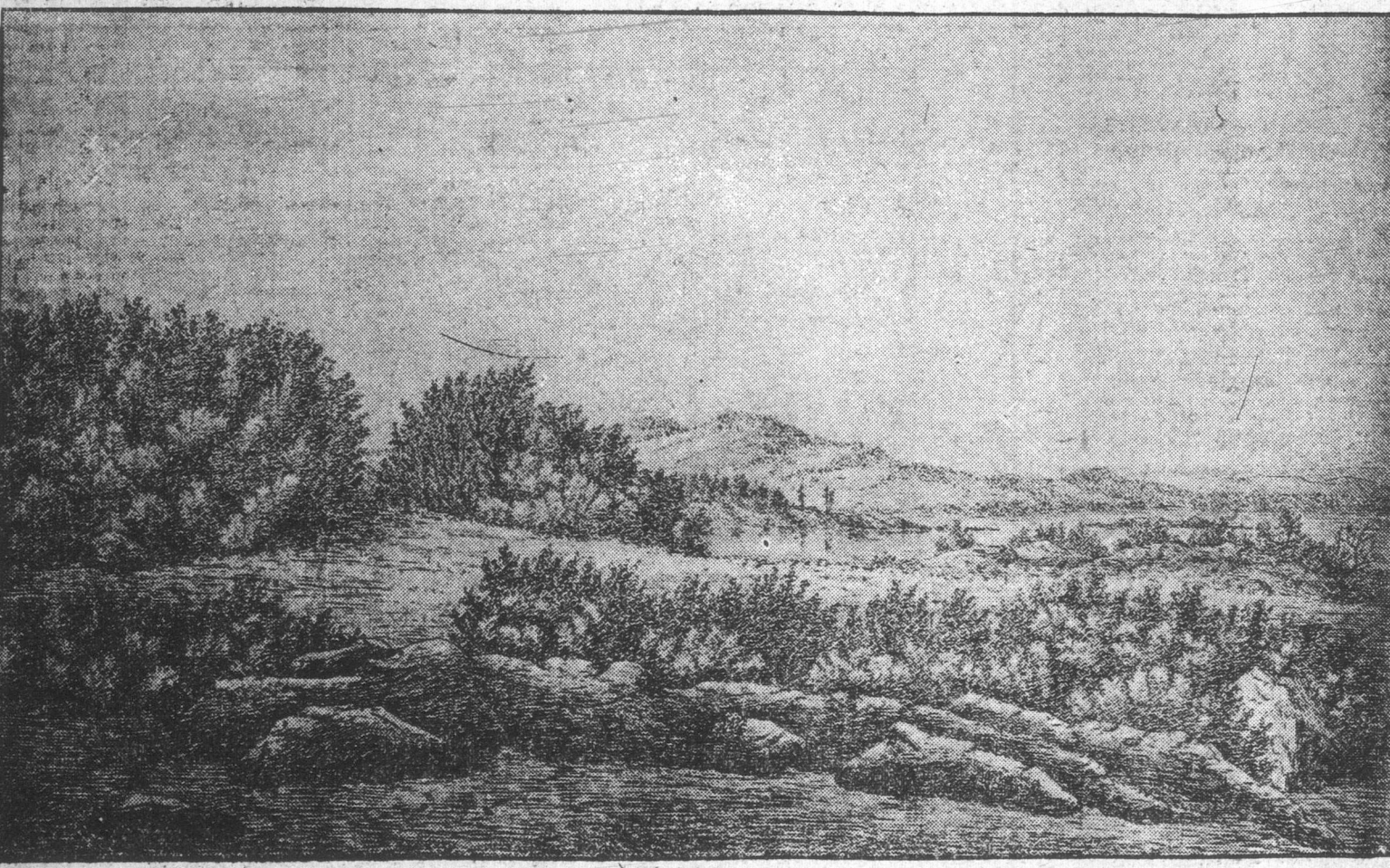
railing or fence with a narrow counter within it. On one side was a wide counter with narrow entrance to it, just wide enough to admit one Indian at a time; here he showed his skins and furs, and examined the goods he wished to take in exchange, after having pointed out what he wanted. The Indian was a man of few words, and "Chinook," a jargon used by all tribes in their dealings with the company (made up somewhat on the principle of

what he does not seem to have been impressed at first sight."

On June 1st he left with a Mr. Elliott for Queensborough (afterwards New Westminster), a "blackguard place," where he was laid up for some days in a canvas-covered shanty with a sprained knee; this, added to the poor outlook of things in general, made him very melancholy, and he had some thoughts of returning home by the next steamer. He had landed with about £150 in his pocket, and there seemed no possibility of a livelihood or any prospect of provision for a wife and home. However, the knee got better, and leaving Queensborough in the Beaver on June 10th, he returned to Victoria, where, in spite of all, he decided to remain, considering his accident in favor of Victoria as against the mainland. A little legal work came in and he, therefore, "picked up a little pluck." He began to take interest in public affairs, and on July 2nd attended a land reform meeting, at which he was appointed secretary, and spoke.

"The San Juan dispute was now beginning, a controversy which was afterwards, and as usual, decided entirely in favor of the United States. On July 27th the American force coolly landed, and on the 30th the British warships were sent. Hitherto, although people talked "very big about war," a pacific modus vivendi was arrived at, and until the final settlement the island remained in the joint occupation of both parties. The Rev. A. E. Alston, his son, remembers on several occasions going there in the Enterprise to entertainments given by the garrison. Dr. Tuzo was appointed acting medical officer to the British marines there.

After having lodged in various places, the hotel at Mr. Crosby's, Mr. Cary's, and in a shanty by himself (Waterbutt Hall), Mr. Alston now moves over to Mr. Crease's house, where he is "much more comfortable." But prospects are still cloudy, and he thinks seriously of going on to Singapore, having come to the conclusion that it will take years for this place to become sufficiently prosperous to support much law. Mr. Ring, another barrister, had a friend in Singapore, and was writing for information and letter of introduction. In spite of his poverty Mr. Alston was ever assisting his friends. Frequently such entries such as this are come across: "Lent C. 31 dollars." On October 20th is noted the incident mentioned above (page 3): "Cary returned from B. C.



View of Haro Straits, near Victoria—As it appeared in 1862.

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