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OUR RAILWAY TO THE PACIFIC.*

BY THE MARQUIS OF LORNE.

THERE is no fairer land in the world than the country about Victoria, the capital of Vancouver. The climate of much of the Island is like that of Devonshire or Jersey. A more rigorous winter is to be met with at its northern end, and the high mountains which surround most of it afford opportunities of seeking an occasional snow-field in winter. But about Victoria the snow never lies long, and its inhabitants are far more ignorant of the art of skating than are their English cousins.

The great coal mines of Nanaimo, near one of the best harbours on the island, are seventy-five miles distant, and their produce is brought by rail and steamer to "the city." A quaint and charming town it is, with very pleasant society, many English and Canadians having recently settled there. Great forests of Douglas fir cover the whole region, with a lovely undergrowth of arbutus, sallal, an evergreen shrub, and small maples, while underneath all grows a luxuriant vegetation of fern and other plants, giving proof of the mildness and moisture characteristic of the coast.

Many Chinese and some thousands of Indians live in this part of British Columbia. The Chinese make excellent servants, but are not popular, and it is probable that their numbers will be much diminished in a few years. The Indians are wholly unlike their brethren of the plains of the interior. They are almost wholly fish-eaters. On the islands to the north they build houses of carved woodwork, reminding the traveller much of the Sandwich Islanders' habitations. They are not inclined

* Abridged from *Good Words*.