

Our Contributors.

NOTES BY THE WAY—VICTORIA, NANAIMO
AND NEW WESTMINSTER.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, resembles Halifax more than it resembles any other city in the Dominion. Halifax is a seaport, so is Victoria; Halifax is a naval station, so is Victoria; Halifax has accumulated capital, so has Victoria; Halifax is intensely British, so is Victoria; Halifax, or a part of it at least, has no particular love for confederation, and it must be confessed that there are some excellent people in Victoria who have no special desire to fight or die for connection with the "Back East."

An Ontario man is not long in Victoria until he realizes that he has struck a city very unlike any that he sees at home. In the first ten minutes you are pretty sure to see a dozen Chinamen, and of course that is something new. In the next ten you may meet half-a-dozen "middies" from one of the men-of-war in port, and that too is a new sight. You hire a conveyance of some kind, and before you are in it five minutes you discover that whether it is one horse or two horse it is unlike anything you ever rode in at home. You go into a store and buy something and your bill perhaps gently reminds you that you are on the coast. Your barber is a first-class artist, but he has a soul and a scale of prices that despise "Back East" figures. Drop into one of the courts and the first thing you notice is that the judges and lawyers wear white wigs. Listen to the business men talk and you soon learn that hundred dollar bills are shoved around as freely as tens in any Ontario city. Go out into the residential parts of the city and you notice that nearly all the houses are built of wood, that nearly all are painted a yellowish brown colour to withstand the effects of the rainy season, and that nearly all are more or less ornamental in style of architecture. Listen to any two citizens conversing, and just as likely as not they are discussing the catch of salmon on the Fraser, or the strike in the coal mines at Nanaimo, or the forced return of the sealing vessels, or the arrival of one of the "Empresses"—topics that you would not hear touched in Ontario in a century. Almost everything is different from what you see in any Ontario city or town and this difference makes Victoria intensely interesting to an Ontario man. He is never wearied looking at "the same old thing over again." The climate is different, the business in many lines is new to him, the "old-timers"—mainly Scotchmen and Englishmen who came out from the old country in the Hudson Bay and Crown Colony days—are in many respects unlike any class at present in Ontario. These and many other considerations make Victoria an exceedingly interesting city to visit. The interest is increased by the great business activity prevailing at the present time. Splendid business blocks are being built on the principal business streets, and in the residential parts of the city new buildings meet you always everywhere. I am not sufficiently familiar with the features of a boom to know one when I see it, but it struck me there was a slight suggestion of a boom in Victoria. I asked several leading citizens, and they assured me that it was "the natural growth of the place." Let it go at that. They should know better than a visitor about the growth of their own city.

I have often heard that the people of Victoria are a little cold and exclusive in their treatment of strangers. Exactly the reverse was my experience. Being an intensely British people, shut off from the rest of the Dominion by Principal Grant's "sea of mountains," some of them may seem a trifle "offish" at first sight, but on further acquaintance the apparent "offishness" soon wears away, and the visitor finds as genial, kindly, large-hearted people in the British Columbia capital as can be found in any part of the Dominion. That some of the Victoria people have no special love for confederation is, I believe, a fact—an unfortunate fact it may be—but a fact all the same. They are not alone, however, in their lack of love for the confederation compact. There are excellent people in Halifax, St. John, Fredericton and other eastern places who are not fired with ambition to fight or die for confederation. No doubt habit has much to do with our forms of speech, but it is something more than habit that makes some Halifax and Victoria people say to an Ontario man: "You have come from Canada." These good people have never yet realized that they live in Canada and are themselves Canadians.

The present business activity of Victoria, I was told, dates from the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Pacific end of the road was built from the west, and Victoria was the principal base of supplies. Since that time the city has grown rapidly, and there are no signs of abatement visible to the eye of a casual visitor. The prosperity puzzles an Ontario man. Brought up in an agricultural country, we Ontario people are likely to think that a city or town cannot amount to anything unless it is buttressed by rich agricultural lands. Here is a busy, progressive, wealthy city with scarcely enough agricultural land around it under cultivation to raise enough of chicken feed for the local market. Ask a Victoria man what are the factors that produce the prosperity, and he at once tells you that they are the timber and the lumber trade, the coal, the fisheries, the presence of the war ships, the seal industry and the mines. If the Ontario man has any sense he says very little on the subject because he knows that with the exception of the lumber

and timber business these are factors with which he is not familiar. If the Ontario man is gifted in the art of discussing things he does not understand, and some Ontario men are highly gifted in that way, he may not go very far until he reveals the fact that he really does not know the colour of a sealskin when it comes out of the water. About the only thing an Ontario man can feel absolutely certain of, looking at the business of Victoria, is that there may be great business prosperity without agriculture.

NANAIMO.

Seventy miles north of Victoria, on the east side of the island of Vancouver, and close down to the water's edge, stands the city of Nanaimo. The streets are laid out in a rather irregular kind of way. Whether the irregularity was caused by the nature of the ground on which the city is built, the site being a hillside, or by the eccentricity of the people who founded the city I cannot say, but certainly the place is unique in its plan, or perhaps I should say, want of plan. The irregularity of the streets, however, does not interfere with business. Nanaimo is the coal city of the coast, and so excellent is the fuel found there that it overrides all fiscal laws and more than holds its own in the market of San Francisco and other cities. The supply seems practically unlimited, the amount of money that changes hands seems fabulous to economical eastern people, and one cannot resist the conclusion that some day Nanaimo may be the greatest money-producing spot on the coast. The human family cannot do without fuel any more than without food. Let any man look at the coal fields of Nanaimo and then at the wheat fields around Brandon and say if the Almighty has not given us one of the richest countries on earth. If Canadians cannot develop our resources and govern this splendid land honestly, they deserve to be scourged. A nobler heritage was never given to any people. Canaan was nothing compared with Canada.

NEW WESTMINSTER.

Sixteen miles from the mouth of the Fraser River and on its northern bank stands the beautiful city of New Westminster. Viewed from the deck of a steamboat in the turn of the river, at which the first sight of the city is obtained, New Westminster looks more beautiful perhaps than any other place on the coast. The bank on which the city is built rises rather sharply from the water's edge, and the whole city is seen at a glance. The two principal business streets run parallel with the river, and are on level ground, but the moment you leave them you have to climb. If you want to know the exact condition of your breathing apparatus and the extent of your locomotive power, just turn northward off the main street and make a few calls in the residential part. To overcome the difficulty of walking so much up and down hill the authorities are running an electric railway around to the back part of the city, and then the climbing will cease. New Westminster has an air of prosperous solidity and good taste about it that strikes a stranger very forcibly. Walking about the streets at every turn you catch yourself saying: "Now this is a highly respectable kind of place." To use an expression often heard on the coast, it is an "awfully decent" sort of city. Just what it is that gives the city such an air of pronounced respectability it might be hard to say, but it strikes a visitor that way.

Westminster and Vancouver City, twelve miles apart, are by this time united by an electric railway. I hoped to have a ride over the road, but it was not ready for opening when I left, and I had to be satisfied with a look at one of the beautiful cars as it stood on the main street. Speaking of electric cars reminds one that the coast cities are far and away ahead of eastern cities in this matter. A street car in Vancouver City or Victoria can easily run an eighth of a mile while an old horse on one of our Ontario street railways is getting himself pulled together for a start. New Westminster, like the other cities of the coast, seems to be growing rapidly, and with the lumber and fish industries at its door can hardly fail to hold its own in any emergency.

Next week I may say something about the coast as viewed from a Presbyterian standpoint.

FRIENDS' MISSION, MOUNT LEBANON, SYRIA.

BRUMMANA, July 25, 1891.—I left Montreal on the 20th of May, and on the 20th of June reached Jerusalem, and amongst other friends there met Mr. Ben-Oliel, full of zeal and expectancy.

Last Tuesday I paid my second visit to this place, which for a score of years past has been the centre of one of the most important missions in this country. Brummana is a village of over 2,000 inhabitants (Maronites, Greeks, Druses), situated 2,500 feet above and ten miles east of Beyrou, and in all respects appears to be central in relation to Mount Lebanon.

This mission consists of a boys' training school and a similar one for the girls, and over half-a-dozen day schools in villages immediately round about, and a meeting house where services are held on first days and the evenings of other days, much after the manner of Friends' meetings in the west. From a certain standpoint the medical mission connected with this station is the most important of all, for it draws from all sects, from all villages, and in speaking with some of the patients yesterday I discovered one who had actually come from Damascus, more than eighty miles distant, and is being treated for his eyes in the hospital.

The medical work consists of two main departments. A.—The hospital, a white stone building, tiled roof, situated practically in the midst of a snober forest, fitted to accommodate sixteen indoor patients, where medical attendance, food, medicine and spiritual help are supplied. B.—The dispensary, where the medical officer attends from three to four hours on four days of the week, assisted by Maria Felscham, who, like Ellen Clayton, the lady superintendent of the hospital, is a volunteer worker from England, spending as well as being spent in the service of humanity here. People come on foot from various villages of several hours' and sometimes of several days' journey, and seeing that they are poor for the most part, receive medical advice free, and medicine also in some cases. I have some acquaintance with similar institutions in other parts of the world, but the work here seems to strike me forcibly in two of its particulars, first, the medical man is a Christian native, trained in this country, has visited England twice in the interest of his work, and appears to consider the spiritual care of his patients as much his duty as the curing of their bodily diseases, and hence his bottles of medicine are adorned with texts of Scripture. Tracts are also at hand, and he sends them forth from the dispensary and distributes them when he is on the road, and in respect to his character there appears to be but one opinion in the communities round about. Second, this work is blessed with a train of Christian helpers, the nurses for example, both in the male as well as in the female wards, read to the patients and teach them texts and hymns. Now, in the event of the Presbyterian Church starting a medical mission in Palestine, would it not be well for her to enquire a little more into the genesis and growth of this mission here, with a view to ascertain the best way of manning the station? Dr. Hingston Fox, 43 Finsbury Circus, London, England, or Dr. Beshara Manasseh, Brummana, Beyrou, Syria, will no doubt be quite willing to assist in giving their experience and counsel. Theophilus Waldmeier (formerly in Abyssinia), who originated and still watches over and superintends this mission, will beyond doubt be glad to hear of and assist similar movements elsewhere.

Schweir.

DR. MUNRO GIBSON.

There is a passage or two in the early life of Dr. Munro Gibson very suggestive and stimulating for young men and worth recounting. In 1857 or 1858 Rev. James Gibson came from Scotland with his family and settled as pastor of a newly-formed Presbyterian Church in Owen Sound. One son got a situation in a bank, and did not reside in Owen Sound. The eldest resident son, "John Munro" (Munro was the family name of his mother), took hold of the public school in Owen Sound, and taught for two years in a rambling log building originally built as a shelter for newly-arrived immigrants by the first crown-land agent in the place. Here he made himself active in all that pertained to the welfare of that vigorous backwoods town. My children were not old enough to go to school, but I know that "John Gibson" gave very good satisfaction. All this time he was poring over his classics, and kept up his standing in Toronto University, going down once or twice a year to pass his examinations; when he generally captured a "bursary" of \$100 or \$150 as well!

It must have been, I think, at the beginning of his third year in Canada that he felt himself compelled to go to Toronto altogether, to finish his course. I remember I called on him there—it must have been in the early part of 1861—and found him grumbling like anything at the fortune that had befallen him. And what do you think it was? He had taken the "Prince of Wales' gold medal," the highest honour of the year, but then it did not give him any ready money to pay his board! And he told me he "would rather have taken a bursary as before, which would have helped him along better." A very odd thing occurred concerning that same "Prince of Wales' gold medal." The next year the papers announced as "Prince of Wales' gold medalist, John M. Gibson." But a few days afterwards the *Globe* explained that "the John M. Gibson who took the Prince of Wales' gold medal this year is not the same John M. Gibson who took it last year." The fact was, the second John M. Gibson was the now "Honourable" of that name in the Ontario Cabinet.

In the autumn of 1858 a few of us got up a little tea and concert in aid of a library for a Sunday school in the town of which I was superintendent. Miss Wilkes, daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, was visiting with another young lady friend, at her uncle's, the late Judge Wilkes, in Owen Sound. They, being quite musical, engaged to help at the concert with voice and instrument. Mr. Gibson, who played delightfully on a flute as well as sang, would also help. There was quite a circle of these young people; and they had a number of evening's practice. The concert was "a grand success." The young people did well, and were very well pleased with each other. Twenty years after, Miss Wilkes, then Mrs. Munro Gibson, asked me "if I had a copy of that old programme?" and I was able to post her a copy of what was, no doubt, a souvenir of a pleasant and memorable evening! I have not seen the Doctor for a good many years, but he has been gaining honour and repute by his writing, his preaching, and his Christian character, and such men deserve to be held in honour.

Newmarket, Ont.

WILLIAM WYE SMITH.