

tions, were actively employed in carrying passengers to the new El Dorado. And it is only to be wondered at that the number of appalling disasters at sea were not more numerous.

Shops, storehouses, and wooden shanties of every description were now going up on all sides and the din of the hammer and saw was perpetual. In six weeks two hundred and twenty-five buildings of all sorts and sizes were constructed. The price of land rose, too. Those who had purchased land before its rise in value reaped small fortunes. Business was flourishing, which was greatly owing to the fact that Victoria had been made a free port by Governor Douglas in years gone by. In fact the place was in the throes of a mighty boom, the reaction of which in after days was to cause much cursing and misery.

As can be readily imagined Governor Douglas was not an idle man during these feverish days. The responsibility of his office had increased an hundred-fold. But he was indefatigable in his endeavours to preserve law and order in the land—a task the magnitude of which cannot be properly comprehended at the present day. The country had been flooded by a roving population, among whom might be found the off-scourings of the world—desperate ruffians who had been accustomed to the lawlessness of American mining camps, and to whom the meaning of the word "Justice" was unknown. Sir James Douglas by his firmness and impartiality during this trying time evoked the admiration and respect of all right-minded men, and they were generally in the majority. Into the breasts of the riotously inclined he instilled a wholesome dread of the majesty of British law.

The bubble burst at last. Owing to the melting of the snows on the hill-tops during the summer months the bars on the Fraser River, the Mecca of the gold-hunters, are covered with water until winter sets in. Those, therefore, who reached the mining region during March or April succeeded in securing large quantities of gold from the bars and sands not yet covered with water. Unfortunately the mass of miners failed to arrive until a month or two later, and, consequently, found the auriferous parts submerged. Ignorant of the periodic

rise and fall of the streams, many, crest-fallen and disappointed, returned to Victoria. Still the arrivals were numerous and the town flourished until bad news commenced to arrive from the diggings, when the gloomiest foreboding soon began to prevail among the less venturesome spirits. The rumour took wing that the river would never fall, and as placer mining could only be prosecuted on bars, "the state of the river became the barometer of public hopes and the pivot on which everybody's expectations turned." This news acted as the first severe check to immigration, which, perhaps, was not an unmixed blessing. Thousands of miners lost all hope and wended their way back to California, broken in spirit and in purse. Victoria had fallen upon evil days, and affairs grew yet more distressing. The unemployed element became overbearing and created disturbances. On one particular occasion a party of disaffected citizens of the United States even went so far as to rescue a prisoner from the hands of the police, after the rough-and-ready manner in vogue in California, and actually had the audacity to propose that the Stars and Stripes should be hoisted over the fort. But a gunboat from Esquimalt soon quelled the riot and brought the pugnacious Americans to a proper state of mind.

It was some time ere Victoria recovered from this set-back; but before long better news arrived from the placer gold fields of newly discovered Cariboo, and Victoria once again began to assume importance as a rendezvous for miners. From this time her growth, if slower, was more permanent. Brick buildings began to replace the wooden structures so hastily built in the days of the gold excitement. From that time Victoria has increased in size and importance, until at present, its suburbs stretch miles distant from the site of the old fort. The old landmarks are fast disappearing and few would recognize in the modern city of to-day the rude backwoods trading post of fifty years ago.

In 1858, at the request of Lord Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir James Douglas severed his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, as it was deemed incompatible for him to attend to the duties of both Governor and