

THE OKANAGAN COUNTRY.

A Wonderful Agricultural and Stock Raising District.

The Route of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway—Yernon the Trade Centre of the District.

While the railways of the western United States are drawing in their feelers, and obedient to the mandates of Jay Gould, are preparing to curl up in their shells for a good five years nap, the great Canadian Pacific system is rushing ahead like a race horse, and is awakening to new life and unsuspected vigor the vast territory through which it passes.

But although all Canada, and especially the province of British Columbia, feel the new blood flowing through their veins from this great artery, and though their vast natural resources and advantages thus, for the first time, have found an adequate channel of development, they have not, nor will not imitate the rashness of their neighbors across the line, nor overvalue in mad speculation the solid advantages of their position. It has frequently been asserted that the Canadian provinces are "slow"—but they are also "sure." There's a steady, moderate growth with never a step backward, and they do not sow the wind to reap the whirlwind, as Los Angeles did three years ago, and as the cities of Puget Sound are doing to-day.

But if any part of this continent would justify the extravagant laudations of an American "boomer," it is the country just being opened up by the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway. This road starts from the Canadian Pacific at Simoom, and has its terminal point at Okanagan Lake, 51 miles distant. And the railway company has already applied to the Dominion Government for permission to extend its line 120 miles further southward to the international boundary. It is designed to eventually connect with that great arterial system of America, the roads, which will in the near future have its terminal point in Alaska.

The country tributary to the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway, contains a good half million acres of the best agricultural land in the province, and over 1,000,000 acres of fine grazing country. The road is built primarily to open up the valleys of the Okanagan and Spallumcheen—a word which means in the Indian dialect, "Beautiful Valley." This is called, by those fortunate enough to live there, "the garden of British Columbia"—and they are about right. It is pre-eminently the great wheat and grain district of the province, and not only that, but there is an abundance of timber for home consumption and domestic purposes; while vegetables of all kinds, tomatoes, Indian corn, melons, potatoes, etc., are grown there in profusion—even almonds from the seed. As for raising stock, cattle and hogs, there is no better place on the Pacific slope. One firm alone shipped last year 3,000 hogs.

The chief towns along the new railway are Landsdowne, Mission, Enderby and Vernon. Enderby has at present only 200 inhabitants, but has a \$100,000 Presbyterian church, and the first roller flour mill in British Columbia, owned by Rickett & Co. of Victoria. They turned out this large year 15,000 bbls. of flour and 700 tons of feed, and when the railway is finished their output will be doubled. The wheat for these mills is of course grown in the adjacent district, and goes far towards furnishing the food supply of the province. There is also a large packing establishment run by Knight & Co., whose business is steadily increasing.

The new town of Vernon is the most charming site in the whole valley. Its location is most picturesque, near Okanagan Lake, and it is practically the terminus of the new railway. It will possibly become, in the long, the point of junction of three railways—the Shuswap and Okanagan, the Columbia and Kootenay, and the S. and O.'s extension to Washington State, which will eventually be a part of the main line to Alaska. Vernon now has got two hotels, stores, government offices, etc., and a large new hotel will be built next year for summer visitors. Okanagan Lake is 70 miles long—and it is miles of beautiful and almost unrivaled scenery. It affords fishing that cannot be beaten, and this lake and the town of Vernon are surrounded by a country abounding in game and affording endless delight to sportsmen. And this spot will be within 48 hours of Victoria when the new road is finished.

The climate of this region is superb. The farmers were ploughing their fields on the 22nd of December just past—there was no frost or snow; the steamers were plying on the Shuswap and Okanagan rivers. The winters are mild and bracing, and the breath of the glorious summers is the very elixir of life.

This favored region is also blessed with great mineral wealth. The coal fields and iron mines which exist there are well known, but have not as yet attracted the attention of capitalists. With the new railway facilities they will soon be developed and prove a source of wealth to the whole province. The precious metals, however, are more accessible to men of moderate capital, and many mines of gold and silver have long been worked in this part of the country.

Among these are the Okanagan mines, 30 miles from the lake of that name, where gold bearing quartz and iron-stones were discovered last year, which have proved very rich. The Mission Creek placer diggings have been worked for years, and still pay well. The Cherry Creek mines are the largest prospects of silver, so far struck in the province. The great mines of gold, silver and coal on the Similkameen river are now being developed. The Bonanza mine, of which Hon. George Vernon is one of the chief owners, has good vein of gold bearing quartz, which is being thoroughly prospected, and also extensive placer diggings, which give good pay dirt. Of the famous Rock Creek gold mines it is unnecessary to write, except that they will utilize the new railway, and be materially developed by the facilities it will afford.

The Shuswap and Okanagan Railway Company was organized in 1887. Work

was begun last April, and next spring the rails will be laid for 22 miles, and trains run to Enderby at the head of navigation in the Shuswap river. The locomotives will roll into Vernon some time next September, and the 51 miles will be completed by December and turned over to the operating department of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which has leased it for twenty-five years. The road-bed, stock, equipment and buildings will all be of the very first class. In this respect indeed, the Canadian roads all offer a marked contrast to the hastily constructed "boom" roads, built for speculative purposes across the American line.

The president of the railway company is Capt. Larkin, of St. Catharines, Ont., to whose energy and financial assistance, the success of this undertaking is largely due. Capt. Larkin built 80 miles of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway, the dry dock at Esquimalt, the great Quebec dock and other Canadian works, and is well known as a successful financier.

The vice-president is M. Lumby, who owns the finest estate in that district, three miles from Enderby. Photographs of his fertile acres, stretching back to the well wooded hills, resemble strongly scenes in the famous valleys of California. Mr. Lumby is the pioneer of that section of British Columbia, and may be called the Father of the new railway.

Geo. Riley, Esq., of St. Catharines, is the secretary and treasurer of the company, and the chief engineer is C. E. Perry, through whose skill the natural obstacles to the route have been overcome. Mr. Perry is a member of the institute of Civil Engineers, was for fifteen years on the government surveys of the Canadian Pacific Railway, had charge of the first division of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway, and was lately engaged on the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern. He is an old and well known citizen of Victoria.

T. W. Patterson & Co., of St. Catharines, are the contractors, and have 500 men at work all summer, and the same number this winter. Their force will be increased to 1000 men next spring, and the work put through with a rush.

This country is rapidly filling up with settlers from the east, allured by its many advantages and the present facilities for getting good land at reasonable prices. Among them is the nephew of the Earl of Aberdeen, who has bought a farm at Mission Valley, 36 miles from the terminal point of the railway, and is going there to start a stock farm. It is a great land for stock, being known as the bunch grass country of the interior.

The development of this region, however, rapid as it has been, and great as the railway now building will make it, is nothing to what will ensue when the line is continued, as it will be, to the international boundary. There it will connect with the existing systems from Spokane Falls, via the valleys of the Columbia and the Okanagan rivers, and will tap the great wheat fields of eastern Washington. It will become one of the main links in the grand railroad system which will stretch forward to Alaska and bring the hidden resources of the far north into the busy markets of the south. Not only the country immediately traversed by the road will enjoy its benefits, but Victoria, British Columbia, and all Canada may well rejoice at its completion.

THE HOLIDAY TRADE.

Christmas Business Never so Brisk in Victoria Before.

The "holiday trade" is not always a good index of the prosperity of a community. It is a barometer, but it is not a thermometer. It indicates that "money is easy," but a poor business by no means signifies the reverse. Many conditions, such as real estate complications, or bad weather may often keep at home the money which would otherwise go to swell the volume of the Christmas trade.

In view of these facts it is gratifying to note the excellent business done by the retail stores of Victoria during the holiday season just past. Notwithstanding the great development of the more solid industries of the city during the past year, and the great extent of the real estate transactions, money seemed to be plenty with everyone, and though Jupiter Pluvius took up his abode somewhere on the Vancouver mountains for a week before Christmas, his rains and mists were not sufficient to dampen the ardor of the votaries of Santa Claus.

An inquiry among the merchants of Victoria emphasizes the fact that the holiday season just past has been brisk and profitable. Many stores report that they have done twice the business of the corresponding period last year; many more say it has been the best week they have ever enjoyed, and not one speaks disparagingly of the result of their late efforts to please the public. Money is easy, business is brisk, and every store keeper has made substantial gains over his previous record. Take it all in all the merchants of Victoria have had a merry Christmas, and look forward with confidence to a very Happy New Year.

MOUNT LEHMAN SCHOOL.

The winter examination of Mount Lehman school was held on Friday, 19th. The pupils were examined in the different branches of the elementary school, particularly that of the fourth class, which was something beyond what a person would expect to find in a country district.

After a few remarks by Trustees Nicholson and King, the teacher was presented by his pupils with an address and a beautiful writing case, which was very gratefully received, and feelingly replied to. Mr. Sutherland has been in charge of this school for a period of three years, and has gained for himself the respect of both pupils and parents. He now leaves to take charge of other business.

The Red River.

The red river of life is the blood; if it be impure, health is impossible and life a burden. Burdock Blood Purifiers, say those who have tried it, is the best blood purifier in the world.

Miss Maude Carleton, Ridgeway, Ont., says: "I am using B. B. R. right along, and find it is a perfect blood purifier, just as advertised."

Mr. J. King, although he has withdrawn the stages from the Esquimalt service, is still able to supply them for any evening parties, as in the past.

A GOOD MATCH.

BY SIDNEY DALE.

"I want you to look your best to-night, my dear."

"May I ask you why, Mrs. Lester?"

The first speaker, a stout elderly lady, with a kind motherly face, smiled as she looked at her pretty companion, a girl of twenty. Mrs. Lester's friends always declared that her governesses fared better than anyone else's. Elsie Stewart had certainly no reason to complain of her treatment as received at her hands.

"Not one, not even my own mother, could be more kind or considerate," she used to say, and she was right.

"My dear," observed the older lady, in reply to the governess' question, "of course, you may ask the reason, and I have no objection to gratifying your curiosity. A great friend of ours is coming to dine here to-night; he is a Scotchman—Mr. Curruthers; a nice, manly fellow. Both Mr. Lester and myself think a great deal of him."

"Is he young?" asked Elsie. She was looking out of the window into the wintry London street.

"Mrs. Lester glanced at her thoughtful face for a moment, and then continued: 'Not very young, my dear, not strikingly handsome; but a good, true-hearted man, very wealthy, and—a splendid catch, and—'

A low laugh from her silent listener interrupted her.

"Excuse me, dear Mrs. Lester, but do you really think your friend, who must be delighted by your description, would look at poor, little, insignificant me?"

Mrs. Lester glanced keenly at the sweet, bright face, and then smiled a curious little smile.

"I think so," she said.

Mrs. Lester's house was in a fashionable part of London, over-looking the Park. The Christmas holidays began that day, and Elsie Stewart walked homeward that afternoon, her duties as governess over for a month. She recalled the conversation of the morning, and smiled.

"As if it would make any difference if this wonderful Scotchman did look at me," she thought with a little toss of her head; and then, as she turned into the quiet street where she lived, the color deepened in her cheeks as a tall young man in a long ulster approached her rapidly, and shook hands warmly.

"You are late to-day," he observed, looking earnestly into her flushed face.

"I could not help it, Frank," she said, as he turned and walked beside her.

"Mrs. Lester kept me talking. I am going there to-night."

"You are? Happy Mrs. Lester," exclaimed the young man called Frank, at which remark Elsie laughed.

Frank Hamilton was a good-looking young fellow of three or four and twenty. He had a pleasant, boyish face, lit up by brown eyes, which seemed unable to remove themselves from his companion's face. "Come for a little stroll in the park, dear. It's not so very late, and I have so much to tell you," he said persuasively; but the girl shook her head.

"No, Frank, not to-day. I must hurry home, really. But have you any news?"

"Yes, darling. I have. You remember my mentioning Charlie Black to you, a great chunk of mine at home. Well, he is going to try his luck in Canada, and he wants me to go with him."

"Oh, Frank!"

The distress in the sweet voice made young Hamilton look graver than ever.

"Don't look like that, dear. I won't go, of course, if you really feel unhappy about it, but it's such a splendid chance, and—"

"Tell me all about it," interrupted Elsie, whose face had grown very pale, and the young man continued.

"I'll tell you it this way, dear. Black's father is the Squire at home and very well off. Charlie is of a roving disposition, and wants to try what ranching in the Northwest is like. I was always a favorite of the old man's, and he offers to pay all expenses if I'll accompany him. Know all my dear friends, it's a awfully good of him, but I can't bear the thought of leaving you darling."

"But you must go, Frank, you must not lose such a chance on my account." The girl's face was still pale, but she spoke bravely, and forced back the tears from her blue eyes. Her companion gave the little girl a hand he held a loving squeeze, and smiled as he met her glance.

"That's my brave little girl. Well said, Elsie! It makes it easier for me when you show pluck like this. Heaven knows, it is hard to leave you," and here his earnest young voice trembled, "but I'll go out there and make my fortune, and then"—he paused.

There was no one else in the quiet little street save a distant policeman, whose back was to the young couple. No one saw the kiss that Frank took unheeded, or the tears Elsie could not keep back as she entered her house. But that night at the brilliantly lighted dinner-table she was as cheerful and merry as ever, and the grave, middle-aged Scotchman who sat opposite her did not guess how dangerously near tears were to the violet eyes he looked at so admiringly.

The Stewarts had lived in the quiet little street in North Kensington ever since Elsie, the eldest child, was five years old. Mr. Stewart, who belonged to a good family in Scotland, had been unfortunate in many ways, and now, at the age of fifty-five, found it hard work to make both ends meet, with four daughters and an invalid wife to provide for. He had been brought up to no profession, and when money troubles arose, he was obliged to leave his Scottish home. The poor man was completely at a loss. Through a friend's influence he managed to get a situation in a large house of business, and there he had plodded on for many years, working late and early for the sake of his wife and children.

"If only some of us had been boys," Elsie, the pretty one of the family, used to say regretfully, looking round at her four sisters. They were all in their teens. Nice, amiable girls, who looked on the bright side of things as possible, and made the somewhat gloomy old house cheerful by their merry voices. Elsie had first met Frank Hamilton at Mrs. Lester's house. He, unfortunately, was as "poor as a church mouse," to use his own expres-

sion, and in no position to make the girl he loved so dearly his wife.

"We must work and wait," Elsie had said, when the softly uttered "Yes" had made him so happy. And at first he had been content to obey her.

Mr. Stewart had not been consulted, for he had been away from home at the time, and the young people decided to keep their engagement a secret till "something turned up," as Frank said. He was the son of a country clergyman, and gained but a small salary at the bank where he worked.

Visions of fortunes easily made in the far North-west, and a happy return to his sweetheart occupied his mind, and when the following week he met her at a large dance given by Mrs. Lester, everything appeared to him "colour de rose," and he soon infected Elsie with his high spirits.

"It was so kind of Mrs. Lester to ask me here to-night," said the girl, as she withdrew to the conservatory, the sweet refrain of a popular waltz floating after them from the ball-room. "I knew you would be here, Frank."

"It seems ages since I saw you," he said, looking admiringly at the white-robed girl beside him.

"Where did you get that gown, Elsie? It is perfect."

"Mother would like to hear that," replied Elsie, laughing. "It is one of her's, renovated. I cannot afford silk gowns, Frank."

"I hope I'll make enough out there to let you have as many as you wish," observed the young man, pressing her hot hand. And then he went on to speak of the long journey before him, and how he intended to work and make money for her sake. "And we will write often, and somehow the time will pass," he added.

"I have given myself two years, Elsie, dear. Surely in that time I ought to be getting on in my career," he said, as he married I shall take you out to Canada, darling, and you will not mind ranch life—will you?"

"I shall not mind anything if you are sweet," returned the girl, with such a sweet, trusting look that Frank longed to kiss her then and there. But that was impossible for the moment, so he said again, and Mr. Curruthers, who was her next partner, came to claim her.

A year passed away, and again Christmas time came round, with its merriment and festivities. But it brought but little happiness or gaiety to the Stewarts. A shadow hung over their home, for Mr. Stewart was dangerously ill, and the girls' young faces were grave and sorrowful.

"Elsie, I really do not know what we are to do," said Nelly, the second girl, coming into the room where Elsie was leaning against the window, gazing out into the foggy street. A fog in London is depressing in itself, and to this Elsie was worried about her father, and anxiously waiting for letters from Frank. Two months had passed since she had heard from him, and the result was that she was full of fears and forebodings.

"What is it now, Nell," she inquired wearily turning from her post of observation at the window.

"Nelly is crying," said Nelly gravely.

"She has been talking to me. Do you know we are as hard up as we can possibly be, Elsie. There is the doctors' bill to pay, and—oh dear, oh dear; it is terrible."

"Oh, I know, I know. It's dreadful. But what can I do?" returned Elsie, thrusting herself into a shabby arm chair, and looking sadly at her sister.

"You might speak to Mr. Curruthers," suggested Nelly, trying to make the dying fire burn. "He thinks so much of you, Elsie, and—why, there's some one at the door. She threw down the paper, and hurried out of the room, while Elsie covered her face with her hands."

Speak to Mr. Curruthers, the man who had been so kind to them in every way, and proved himself a true friend. Why, he had done so much for them already. She could not appeal to him of all people. Presently Nelly appeared, holding a card, and looking both curious and excited.

"A gentleman has seen you, Elsie. Such a nice looking man. Here's his card."

"She held out the piece of paste-board, and Elsie took it, wondering. Then as she glanced at it the room seemed to swing round her, and she grasped the back of a chair for support. The name written there was that of "Mr. Charles Black."

The fog cleared away, and the bright moonlight shone into the little room where Elsie Stewart knelt, struggling with the greatest sorrow that had ever come into her young life.

"Frank! Oh, it can't be true," she sobbed, kissing the photograph she held. And then she looked yearningly into the mirror, and saw the pale, thin, and tearful face of the girl who had been picked up by a passing ship, and saved from a watery grave; how he had been ill for weeks and his life despaired of, but the agony on her face stopped him.

"Elsie, what is it?" he asked hastily, as he stepped to take her in his arms. But she held out her hands to keep him away, and then spoke in a voice he hardly recognized.

"No, no, you must not touch me. Look! she cried despairingly, holding up her slender left hand. He obeyed, and saw the plain gold band shining on the white finger, and when she raised her drooping head, he read the truth in her haggard face. For a moment he grasped the trembling little hands, and the brown eyes met the blue ones with a look Elsie never forgot. Then without a word he turned away, and left her there alone.

"Yes," remarked Mrs. Lester, a few weeks later, as she finished reading the account of some grand ball at which the beautiful Mrs. Curruthers had been present. "It's something to be good looking in the 19th century. With only her face for her fortune that girl made a good match."

Fifteen Months Free.

"FIFTEEN months ago I had a boiling sore throat. I tried many remedies, but got no relief. Then I used the 'Eucalypti' and was cured in a few days. It is the best thing I ever used for my throat."

Mrs. JOHN CORBETT, St. Mary's, Ont.

A Cure for Toothache.

Gibbons' Toothache Gum is guaranteed to cure toothache instantly. Prepared by J. A. Gibbons & Co., Toronto, and sold by druggists. Price, 15 cents.

Back in town at the height of the "season," with as much money as she could spend at her disposal, Elsie drove through the park in the perfectly appointed carriage, accompanied by a niece of her husband's, a Miss McClood, who was enjoying her first "season." Every-thing was full of interest to her, and she chatted merrily, while the young wife seemed to take no notice of the animated scene round her and presented a great contrast to her companion. Elsie's violet eyes were very sad and wistful, and there was a settled look of melancholy on her face.

"It was a warm day, and the sun shone down to the ground, don't you know?"

Mr. Curruthers came to meet them on their return to the large mansion he had taken for the season.

"Is that a telegram, Robert?" inquired his wife, as she sank wearily into a large chair. It was a warm day, and the sun shone down to the ground, don't you know?"

"Yes, my darling," replied her husband, laying his hand affectionately on her shoulder, "from your father; they return next week."

"I must go round and see what state the house is in, to-morrow," said Elsie, and her husband followed her with adoring eyes as she left the room.

The next afternoon Mrs. Curruthers ordered the carriage at 3 o'clock, and drove to her old home, accompanied by Miss McClood.

"I know you have some shopping to do, Ma, so you can leave me here, and call for me on your way home," she said, as they drew up before the well known door. Nothing loath, Miss McClood departed, and Elsie proceeded to interview the old woman who took charge of the house.

"You will let me make you a cup of tea, Ma'am," said the latter, when Elsie had finished giving her orders.

"Certainly, I should like some," she replied in her sweet winning way, and the old dame took herself off to the kitchen regions on hospitable thoughts intent, leaving Elsie alone.

She wandered from room to room, pausing here and there to open a cupboard, or glance into a wardrobe, or look at a picture on the wall. All was in good order. The old caretaker had done her duty well, and Elsie told her so with a pretty smile when she brought the tea.

"I will sit here till the carriage comes for me," she said, sinking into a large arm chair in the drawing room, and with her head on her hand, she fell into a doze. Elsie's eyes wandered round the familiar room. It was just as it used to be in the old days, before she met her husband—or that other. It was seldom that Elsie dared let herself dwell on the past. But the surroundings brought it all back so vividly, she could not help resting her head on the back of her chair, and giving herself up to memories so sweet and yet so bitter, that her eyes grew misty.

Every little incident of that swift, bright dream which had made her so happy for a time, rose up in her mind. Looks, words—all the thousand and one trifling events, which had gone to make up her little romance, came back to her.

A slight noise in the hall roused her with a start, and she rose to her feet, while some words she had read somewhere flashed into her mind:

"I have put my days and dreams out of my mind."

There that are over, dreams that are done, Though we seek life through we shall surely find. There is none of them clear to us now, not one.

"Yes, I must put them out of my mind," she thought sadly. "Was that the carriage, I wonder?"

She uttered a wild cry of fear the next moment, for as she turned towards the door she saw some one standing there; some one tall and slight, clad in grey, a glad light in his brown eyes.

"Frank," faltered Elsie, and a look of such utter despair crossed her whole face, that Frank Hamilton, for it was indeed he, wondered as he saw in it.

"Yes, it is I, my darling, at last. Don't be frightened, Elsie. I am no ghost. Oh, my dearest!"

As the young man spoke, he advanced quickly with outstretched arms, and a look of amazement sprang into his eyes, as the girl shrank away from him with a sobbing cry.

"Why, Elsie, what's the matter, darling?"

"I thought you were dead," she said hoarsely, almost crouching against the wall behind her.

"So did poor Black, and everyone else. We were all of the death of Newfound-land, and"—he was going on to tell her how he had been picked up by a passing ship, and saved from a watery grave; how he had been ill for weeks and his life despaired of, but the agony on her face stopped him.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA LAND and INVESTMENT AGENCY, Ltd

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by order of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, all those pieces or parcels of land marked and numbered on the official map, and described as follows, viz: