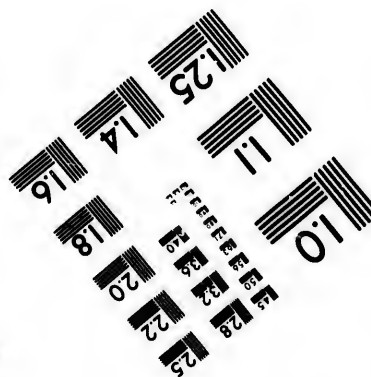
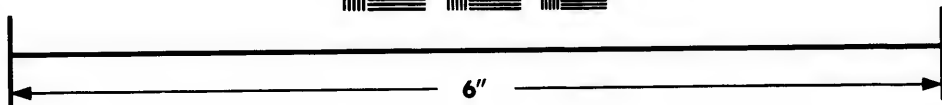
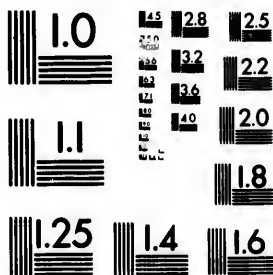


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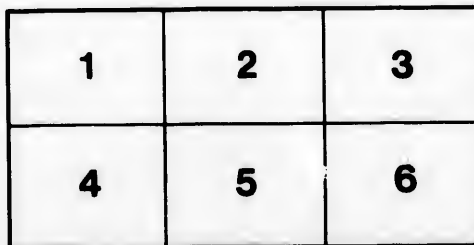
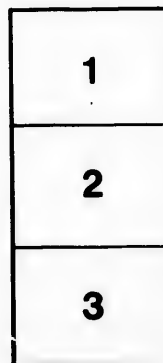
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'I have just heard something that has surprised me,' he said very quietly. 'Is it a fact that you are married?'

James Bulbous started, changed colour, and dropped his eyes for a moment. Then he looked frankly in his father's face. 'I ought to have told you, father. I am ashamed both before Gertrude and you not to have done so. Yes, sir; I am married.'

Matthew examined the pattern of the carpet for a few seconds. 'Have your mother and sister been aware of this?'

'No, sir.'

'Very well. You have taken your course. You have no further claim upon me.'

That was all. The young man reddened and inclined his head. Matthew Bulbous walked from the room, pausing to inspect an engraving on the wall, and drove away to his office.

It was over, as far as the son was concerned. But the blow struck Matthew Bulbous harder in another quarter. Lord Polonius would have to be informed of the downfall of the marriage project. His lordship would doubtless be disappointed; but Matthew realised with bitterness of heart the polite equanimity with which Polonius would bear it. He had ten thousand pounds of Matthew's money to console him, and the ten thousand maledictions now accompanying the money would disturb his lordship very little. This was the keenest agony of it; the wily old Earl had beaten him.

Jem was married. The curses, deep and silent, breathed by Matthew Bulbous on their wedded life, were tempered only by the vindictive satisfaction with which he reflected on what the woman was. The more reason the son had daily to repent of the marriage the greater would be the father's gratification. Matthew knew the kind of creature she was—knew the life she would lead her husband now that the liberal money supplies were cut off. He laughed aloud, thinking of it. It was his only comfort.

A GLIMPSE OF LIFE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

So much has been said and written about this favoured district on the Pacific coast, that there is little fear on hearing its name to-day that any one will say, as happened a few years ago: 'Oh, let me see—that is in South America, is it not?' Still, I think, unless one has had some personal experience of the place, it is difficult to realise how much, and yet how little, life in British Columbia resembles that in England. As it fell to my lot to spend some months on a ranch, many of the points of dissimilarity were perhaps made more noticeable at first than the likeness between this colony and the mother-country.

My husband and I sailed from Liverpool on the 11th of May, and after an easy and comfortable journey of sixteen days' duration, we arrived at our destination, New Westminster, where it was necessary to stay a few days before proceeding to our own home. Here we found my brother waiting to meet us, and with him we went at once to the lodgings he had taken for us, in a quaint but

pretty wooden house, built, as is so much the custom in this country, with the dining-room opening out of the kitchen, and acting as a sort of passage-room—an uncomfortable arrangement in many ways, but useful in saving footsteps in a place where it is almost impossible to obtain domestic help. After a luncheon of Fraser River sturgeon, which was fried like veal cutlets, and tasted delicious, I was taken to see the beauties of the place. New Westminster on that occasion looked charming, for all the fruit-trees were in full blossom, the sky of a deep intense blue, while the snow-clad summits of the Cascade Range were reflected in the depths of the Fraser River, at this point nearly a mile broad.

We passed a pleasant afternoon laying in stores, and buying some chairs and other necessary pieces of furniture; but were both only too glad to feel ourselves sleeping again in beds which were stationary, and to know there was no likelihood of being disturbed at intervals by requests to show our tickets, as had been the case for the last seven nights. The remaining few days we spent in seeing everything of possible interest in the neighbourhood, including a salmon cannery; though just then but little work was being done, for the great salmon 'run' does not come until some weeks later, when from each cannery are packed up and sent away thousands of tins of fish, to be distributed all over the world. During the busy season, both Indians and Chinese are in great request, the former being principally employed as fishermen, and the latter boiling and packing up the salmon.

Having come to the end of all our business, we started about seven o'clock one morning on the steamer *William Irving* to make the best of our way to our home. The trip up the river was very lovely, still the same bright clear atmosphere and wonderful freshness in the air which I noticed on the first day of our arrival. A great drawback to the beauty of the scenery, however, were the blackened fir stumps, which stood up in all directions, and showed only too plainly the ravages of many large forest fires. When we reached Langley, a genuine bush settlement, and originally a fort of the Hudson Bay traders, Jack (my husband), Will, and I set off to see if we could find a conveyance to take us up to Alder Grove. After more than one unsuccessful attempt, we were told it was possible we might get a 'buggy' at the minister's, rather farther along the road. So we toiled on, almost grilled, for it was tremendously hot, and were very fortunate in finding Mrs T— at home. She welcomed us kindly and hospitably, but, sad to say, did not think their horse a safe one for strangers to drive over such a bad country. Off the boys started again on another search expedition, this time coming back with better luck, for a lady from Alder Grove was spending the day in Langley, and would be returning almost immediately. She had a tiny baby with her, and a man to drive; but if I would not mind a seat on a box at the back of her 'backboard,' she would be very pleased. Needless to say I was only too glad to accept her offer; and we were soon ready to start.

No one who has not been over partially cleared roads through a Western forest can have any conception of that drive. Jolt up, jolt down; now the right wheel in mud up to the axle, and

now the left going tilt over a stump a foot high. Every moment I thought I should be thrown off my insecure perch, and had no time to look at what scenery we might be passing through. At last, going down a steep hill, the horse grew so nervous he crouched like a camel, and the whole 'rig' was straining over until I expected to see the shafts snap. Mrs R— began to cry, 'Oh baby, baby!' passed the child to me, and got out instantly, when I handed it to her; and then, in spite of oft-repeated advice about not jumping out of a carriage in danger, I took a good spring, and alighted safely on the ground with no worse damage than yards of torn drapery at my back.

'Oh, Mrs Long,' said Mrs R— reproachfully, 'you would have been all right if you had stayed.'

Perhaps so; but the prospect of sitting behind a plunging horse with a precipice in front and another on the right-hand side hardly seemed to me a sensible idea.

The remaining three miles and a half I did not enjoy much more, as we were mainly occupied in pulling through the great mud-holes, which are often a foot deep and ten feet long, and are caused by the uprooting of enormous tree stumps and roots when the roads are first constructed. Heartily glad was I when we were safely under the shelter of Mrs R—'s hospitable roof, and could comfort ourselves with the thought that no more driving was necessary.

About nine o'clock the next morning we said 'Good-bye' to our hostess, and then set off across a trail to Will's shanty and real bush-life. The trail was such a novel experience, it deserves description. As the roads are at present in a most unfinished condition and few in number, some other communication is necessary between the various settlers' houses; and for this purpose a trail answers admirably. A narrow pathway is trodden out in as direct a line as possible, and the principal large trees notched with an axe—or 'blazed,' as it is called—so that no confusion may arise later on. Often we found it necessary to walk along the huge fallen fir and cedar trunks which lie stretched on the ground in every direction. They are of enormous size, from two to three hundred feet in length, and proportionately broad. Occasionally, we came to a piece of swampy ground, which was made passable by a 'corduroy' bridge, formed of logs laid side by side on the damp earth, and fastened together by cross-pieces, so that in case of high water the bridge can rise or fall like a raft.

Arrived at Will's shanty, we found a little house built of the native cedar of the country, and inside an awful muddle, and chaos reigning, owing to his absence of a fortnight in New Westminster. He showed me some of his land and improvements, and much I sympathised with the difficulties to be met with in clearing land of this description. At noon I was met with a request to prepare dinner as soon as possible; but what to cook and how to cook it, I had not the least idea.

'Bacon and slap-jacks will do well,' said Will; 'and after dinner, I will set some bread.'

So, on a cooking stove, which was standing exposed to the elements at the back of the house, I made my first essay at bush-cookery; and with some assistance and many suggestions, a fairly respectable meal was produced—slap-jacks

proving to be pancakes of flour, water, and baking powder, fried in hot fat. The bachelors, or boys, as all unmarried ranchers are called, are many of them clever cooks and housekeepers, and often I have been able to get hints from them which have proved decidedly useful.

One night we were honoured by a 'chivaree' in our own home, a most doubtful sort of compliment paid to newly-married people on their wedding night. At about eleven o'clock, a procession of young fellows from the different shanties found their way across the trail—anything but an easy matter in the dim light—and came outside the door, calling out and making a great noise. Jack knew what it was directly; and we hastened to let them in and give them whatever provisions we had cooked, with some hot coffee. And after staying two or three hours without making more than half-a-dozen spasmodic remarks apiece, 'they guessed they'd better be quittin',' and returned to their homes to bed. Another pair were less fortunate than ourselves; for, resenting what they considered the impertinence of the intruders, they kept their door shut until three o'clock, when the besieging party broke in, and seating themselves, there and then started to drink some whisky they had with them. The natural consequence was that they were soon in such an uproarious condition that they refused to eat the buns the poor bride had hurriedly baked, declaring them bullets only fit to throw about, and snited the action to the word.

Our house consisted of three good-sized rooms, each of which opened out of the other, so that we were obliged to use the outer one for a kitchen, the middle for a dining-room, and the remaining one as a bedroom. Like nearly all the other shanties, it was made of undressed native cedar planks, taken from the trees by means of a long 'fro,' and built up by the boys themselves. The walls were of course rough and uneven; but, covered with pictures and bric-à-brac, looked pretty and home-like; though the floor defied all efforts to keep it clean by peeling off into long splinters whenever a brush was passed over it. Scrubbing was absolutely out of the question, owing to the porous nature of the wood, which absorbed the water almost like a sponge.

For a fortnight our time was fully occupied in 'packing' our various possessions across the bush. As the house was more than a mile from a road, it necessitated carrying the contents of twenty-three boxes over the trail, anything but an easy or pleasant task. Fortunately, however, no mishaps occurred, in spite of all the difficulties in the way; and we were able to congratulate ourselves on the safe arrival of china and glass with only the breakage of a single tumbler after a journey of six thousand miles.

Having settled our various Lares and Penates, our next care was to make the house 'mosquito-proof'; and to do this it was necessary to cover every hole, crack, and cranny in wall, floor, or ceiling by pasting them over with paper where possible, and by filling in the larger gaps with wads of rag and paper. This process unfortunately took away much from the picturesque effect of the interior, but was the only alternative to being almost consumed by the horrible little pests, which gave us no peace either night or day.

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They are certainly one of the drawbacks of colonial life, and do not receive sufficient attention in any pamphlet addressed to 'intending settlers' which I have yet seen. After all our efforts to keep the creatures out, it was certainly mortifying, one evening on going into my room, to find them buzzing about quite cheerily and in large numbers. I at once set to work to kill as many as I could; and after a while, as a matter of interest, thought I would count the number that had penetrated in such a mysterious manner into our stronghold. But after counting two hundred and eleven, and finding apparently as many more buzzing about as when I had begun, I went on killing, regardless of numbers, though I could never discover in what way they came. We converted the bed into a four-poster, and hung it all over with netting, until it resembled nothing so much as a monstrous meat-safe, and by these means only could we get any rest at all.

Our settlement was twenty-five miles from a town, and boasted two stores and a post-office, where the letters were posted and received once a week. Unless, however, one of the settlers killed a sheep or an ox, we had absolutely no fresh meat at all, and even butter and eggs were difficult to obtain. So we were naturally reduced to living on bacon and tinned meats, with whatever our land produced in the way of potatoes and vegetables. A more decided change from the life one lives in England could hardly be imagined, for, naturally, no servants were to be had, as all the families lived on their own ranches, and the girls were needed at home to help either in the house or on the land. So the family wash took the place of tennis, and all other spare time was filled up with blacking stoves, sweeping, dusting, and cooking meals for the boys, all of which duties I could have done more easily if I had but had a little real practical experience of housekeeping before leaving England. Under these circumstances it will be readily imagined that social visits are few and far between, the consequent loneliness proving one of the greatest trials of my ranching experience.

As Alder Grove had no church, a service was held monthly in a large barn-like building called by courtesy the Hall; but whenever it happened to be an 'off-day,' we had to fill up the time to the best of our abilities; and very tedious in consequence were many of the Sundays, when the heat indoors was almost unbearable, and the mosquitoes too fierce to let one think for a minute of sitting down outside.

Our ranch, like all the others in this district, consisted of one hundred and sixty acres of forest-land, with a heavy undergrowth of fir-trees and balsams, which have sprung up since 1835, when a terrific bush-fire spread its ravages far and wide. Thousands of bare and blackened logs lying in all directions bore witness to the fierceness of the flames; while they, together with the numbers which were still standing, added much to the difficulty and labour of clearing this part of the country and rendering it available for farming purposes. After the smaller green timber had been chopped down and burnt—a comparatively easy matter—these great logs or 'stubs' still remained to be disposed of, which was generally done by

sawing them into lengths and piling the fir into great heaps, ready for burning, while the cedar was reserved for fence-rails or any other building purposes. Frequently, during the later summer months, weeks would go by with hardly a glimpse of the sun, the air being filled with smoke from the various ranches, which spread in every direction for many miles.

Although as a rule we were little troubled with seeing wild animals, of which there were many all round us, yet it fell to our lot one night to receive a visit from a skunk. The little creature, not so large as a full-grown rabbit, had discovered a small hole in the side of the kitchen wall, and with its sharp claws had enlarged it sufficiently to make an entrance, after which it set to work to test the quality of our stores. Unfortunately, the kitten imagined she could banish the intruder as she would do a rat, with the painful result that a quantity of the noxious fluid which makes the skunk so disagreeable an animal was squirted over her, and the whole house rendered almost uninhabitable in consequence. But what was to us of far more importance was the fact that the barrel of flour standing in the kitchen was so tainted that we were obliged to throw it away; while the sugar had also suffered, though in a less degree.

LOVE AT THE 'SHIP.'

THERE had been a fog in the early morning, but the sun gathering strength, burst suddenly from behind a black and indigo cloud and streaked the sea with a copperish hue. Then a lamp on the pier flashed like a diamond in a pin, and out popped the tops of the buoys. Far down the beach were two men and a boat. They were stalwart men, and the eldest was busy shaking from the meshes of a draw-net entangled tufts of maroon and brown seaweed. When all the seaweed was shaken out, the net was piled on a barrow and carried to the boat.

'Poor draughts, Shelah,' said the net-shaker, looking philosophically into the basket that held the fish.

'Poor enough, Master Reeks.—Is it home now?'

'Ay, lad, home it is. Get in the boat, Shelah.'

The young man jumped into the boat and took the oars; the other shoved off, and when he was knee-deep in salt water, clambered in after him. The oarsman gave a lusty pull or two, and they were fairly afloat. Reeks lighted his pipe and began meditatively to smoke. The searching brown eyes of his companion were fixed upon the foreshore of Herringbourne. He was watching it over Reeks' shoulder, as it came out bit by bit from the fog. When his gaze altered, it was to look at the sea, where, under the direct rays of the sun, it had become a huge pot of molten silver, overflowing and running towards the shore.

'Shelah,' said Reeks, speaking of a sudden, 'when are you going to marry my Jen?'

There came a little extra colour into Shelah's smooth tanned cheeks, and before he answered he shifted one of the oars from the tholes and wetted the leather. 'I don't know, muster,' he said.

