

OLD DAYS AND THE NEW.

Vancouver Island as It Was and as It Is.
Life in Victoria.
(Special Correspondence.)

VICTORIA, Dec. 8.—In the old days people took life very easily here in Victoria. They opened their shops late in the morning and closed them up early in the afternoon. Over their dinners they lingered long. They smoked to soothe themselves and talked calmly about nothing in particular. If there were not enough holidays in the year, they made more, so as to supply properly their strong demand for rest. Food was very cheap and easy to get, and labor commanded a high price. The Siwash Indians sold the game they killed to the white man for next to nothing. It cost less for a deer bought from them than it would to buy enough powder and shot to kill it. Salmon, if possible, was still cheaper and easier to get. This state of affairs was, to be sure, favorable to the inhabitants for their commanding of that good and sufficient amount of leisure which poets, philosophers and other men of a brainy caliber say is so necessary for man's happiness.

But this restful state of affairs existed only in the old days. In the new days—the present days—things are altogether different. The hurry up spirit of the nearby, busy United States has crept, or rather rushed, into the town. Everybody is hustling. Men are plenty, and labor is cheap. The shops open early and close late. The people forget to linger, and they have stopped studding the year with holidays. The men who still have a yearning for plenty of leisure have been forced to leave town and go up into the northern part of the island. There they live with the Siwasches and do nothing but fish a little, hunt a little and laze and smoke to their heart's content.

Victoria is the finest town in all British Columbia. About 13,000 people live in it. The hurry up and rush around spirit has resulted in the giving to it of beautifully paved, elegant highways and drives. The better the roads the swifter the rush evidently became the motto of the people after they had arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary for their well being and happiness to try their level best to get 25 hours' time out of the 24.

Also there are many fine buildings and a public park. In the center of the park stands a mound, called Beacon hill. Why it is called Beacon hill is a problem the solving of which may lie in the assertion that the Victorians wished to pay a compliment to Boston, that town which is so conducive to the full development of the human intellect.

The Chinese are well represented here. They seem to have arrived at the conclusion that there are flowerier places even than the Flowery Land, and that this is one of them. They wash clothes, cook, do laboring work, walk sedately about, and, above all, look unpicturesque. If ever prosaicism was embodied, these people embody it. In San Francisco themselves and their quarters are in a way picturesque, but here they are, to say the most, an unstartling and uninteresting lot. The Victorians are always grumbling about them. They assert that when they come to a country they carry hard times on their backs. This is true, because the white capitalist uses them as a means whereby he can starve to death his white brother. In the long winded, bitter discussions concerning them, however, one never hears anything of this fact. Neither does he hear anything about the fact that gold greedy white men smuggle them across frontiers and through harbors in defiance of their own laws and exclusion acts.

Some ten years ago, toward the close of the restful epoch, so to speak, Victoria was a rather trying place to live in. Just then it was the rendezvous of outlaws, of color adventurers and other kindred gentry who had departed in haste from different parts of the world for the good of their health. The gold find in Similkameen, B. C., attracted them, and Victoria was their stopping off place. They were always raising rows and ructions, maiming and killing each other and breaking the peace generally. They had little time for work and plenty time for fighting. As soon as they had made a stake at the placer mines they would come in and spend it and incidentally call the town to witness that they were spending it. They would have been a charming and desirable acquisition to the regular population—in the sense of affording an element of excitement to offset and balance its casiness of peace and manner—if they had exterminated only each other, but now and then they turned their attention to the old time inhabitants, and the result was that they were suppressed vigorously and effectually. They found to their cost that the old timers knew a thing or two more about fighting than they did.

Of late many fine buildings have been put up in Victoria. The courthouse is especially notable, and yesterday morning I puzzled my wits for quite a time trying to think of the style of architecture its designer had followed. At last I dismissed the problem by concluding that the architect had been thinking of a Chinese pagoda, a Grecian temple and something else—I couldn't guess what—at one and the same time. It may have been that the sight of the many Chinese here had affected his imagination to such an extent that he unconsciously swerved in a Celestial direction from the Caucasian ideals of the building art. Be that as it may, however, the courthouse has a fine, imposing effect.

G. W. CLARK.

The Tiger Slaying Championship. At Singapore the post of "tiger slayer in chief for the Straits Settlement" has just been given to M. de Nancout, a Frenchman with a record of 500 tigers killed. Major General Probyn, his competitor, had slain only 400. The island has always been infested by tigers, which are said at times to swim across the strait from the mainland.

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