

OUR BRITISH NEIGHBORS.

IN the minds of the average Oregonian the name Victoria is at once associated with thoughts of defaulting cashiers, postmasters and refugees from justice in general. No sooner do we hear of a bank suspension in Oregon or Washington Territory, of some postmaster's ingenious methods of duplicating accounts, of some conniving rascal who has cheated an unfortunate widow out of her last dollar, than we read in our Victoria dispatches of the safe arrival in that city of those distinguished individuals. A man can at 11:45 o'clock to-day close his office in Portland, after putting all his available assets beyond the reach of his creditors, and in less than twenty-four hours step ashore at Victoria with his ill-gotten gains in his possession and be beyond the reach of American justice. Leaving the wrong-doer in his haven of rest and security, let us turn our attention to Victoria as the more legitimate traveler finds her, and in place of the hoard of wealth which is forced upon her by peculating cashiers and postmasters, pay particular attention to the extensive trade which comes to her through legitimate channels.

Victoria is more than prosperous—she is solid. From her business blocks to her Government buildings—all is stability. Her business firms are solid, and what cannot be said of some of Oregon's thoroughfares, even her roads are solid. Wherever you find the English doing business there will you always find a volume of business to be done, and wherever the English element is predominant there will you always find prosperity. Give an American twenty thousand dollars and he will either make one hundred thousand or lose the entire amount of his original capital. Give an Englishman the same amount of money and he at once seeks for a permanent, secure investment. The English look to a steady development, not to a rapid growth. Their buildings are constructed to stand; their roads are made to last, and their trade once established is retained.

Victoria holds the key to the entire trade of British Columbia. The large fishing interests of Fraser River, the extensive coal interests of Vancouver Island, the immense fur trade of the thousand islands to the north, all pay tribute to Victoria. The Indian in his frail dugout, with his squaw by his side, makes this annual thousand mile trip to Victoria to dispose of his yearly collection of furs. The miner after his year's hard toil in the gold fields of the Stickeen and Fraser comes to Victoria to lay in his winter's supply of provisions. It is in Victoria that those of profligate tendencies from the coal fields of the north spend their hard-earned wages, and it is in Victoria that the cry of "dull times" is never heard.

Nowhere on the Pacific Coast are there such drives as those leading out from Victoria. A drive to Esquimalt, the British naval station, four miles distant, is a most pleasant one. With not a loose stone or a rut to mar the general evenness of the road; with the glistening surface of the waters of San Juan de Fuca and the Royal Roads, and a view of the most beautiful stretch of country imaginable constantly before the eyes, the short drive is replete

with pleasure. At Esquimalt the pleasure seeker will find much to interest him. There he can visit one or more of the immense iron-clads lying peacefully at anchor in the harbor; there he can see in process of construction one of the largest dry docks on the Pacific Coast, and there he can listen to the somewhat lengthy sketches of Indian character from the mouth of the "oldest settler" to his heart's content. At the dry docks he cannot but note the general solidity of the work. When completed this will be the most substantial dock on the Coast. It will receive a vessel 450 feet in length, and in a few hours at most she can be scraped, painted and again ready for sea. Esquimalt will in the near future be a place of no little importance. She will not only enjoy what advantages must accrue to her from her position as the English naval station for the Pacific Coast, but being the western terminus of the Island Railway, she will, on the completion of that road to Nanaimo, enjoy the immense trade of the Nanaimo coal fields.

North of Victoria the next place of importance is Nanaimo. This place is full of historic interest. It was here in the early "50's" that the Hudson's Bay Company established one of their large trading stations. Here, in 1853, this company built for protection against the treacherous Indians the bastion which is still standing intact. The Indian has long ere this learned to not only respect but fear the paleface, and to-day the once dangerous native is feared by the whites no more. The Indian has discovered that retributive justice is sure to follow any of his encroachments on the rights of the white man, and the once untamed savage is now the most docile and harmless of individuals.

At Nanaimo is located the extensive coal mines of the Vancouver Coal & Land Company. A shaft has been sunk to a depth of 600 feet, and from the bottom of this shaft a tunnel, following the ever widening vein of coal, has been run for over 3,000 feet under the harbor. The coal supply here is simply inexhaustible. The coal taken from this mine is of the best quality, as attested by its constant use by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, Occidental & Oriental Steamship Company, San Francisco Gaslight Company, Pacific Coast Steamship Company, Oregon Improvement Company, California Sugar Refinery and the Victoria Gas Company.

Among the contemplated improvements in Nanaimo are the new water works, to be erected by a syndicate of gentlemen composed of W. H. Halleck, J. W. Sterling, Dr. O'Brien, E. Pimbury and others. Water will be brought from the headwaters of Nanaimo River at a point near Stark's Falls, about ten miles from the city. The quality of water supplied from this source is unexcelled. The estimated cost of these improvements is about \$45,000.

The trade of Nanaimo is steady. The miners are paid off weekly and their earnings are mostly spent at home. The merchants doing a cash business are able to meet their payments promptly. There is on record but a single bad debt ever contracted by a Nanaimo merchant, and as facetiously remarked by one of Nanaimo's most solid