

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL

IX.—WHERE WEST MEETS EAST.

By the Editor.

Vancouver looks out to the Orient. It is Canada's western door of commerce with the lands that lie at the gate of the rising sun. And there is much in its population and trade that reflects its relations with the unchanging East. When we stepped ashore from the *Meana* and had shouldered our way through a crowd of hotel touts, porters, expressmen, wharfingers, and idlers, we pushed along a wharf littered with countless packages of tea and silk, past a group of pig-tailed Chinese in blue cotton trousers and smocks and felt-soled shoes, and a few sleek, well-groomed little men from Japan foppishly arrayed in the latest London modes.

You meet representatives of the Hwa Kwo or Kingdom of Flowers (the Sleepy Hollow of the Orient) and of Japan (its America) at every few paces in the streets of Victoria and Vancouver. Each city counts among its population some 3000 or more Chinese. British Columbia has some 15,000 Celestials and about 4000 Japanese. The province is, in fact, to a great extent 'run' on the

Labor of the Yellow Man.

Practically the whole Chinese and Japanese population of British Columbia consists of adult males. They conduct laundries, fruit, vegetable, tobacco shops, and little stalls for the sale of ladies' slippers, curios, and such Chinese delicacies as samshui (rice-spirit), dried shark-fins, squashed duck, and strings of black sausages. The Chinese are the hawkers of the place. They carry their wares in the traditional way in two baskets slung at the end of long sticks, and they have not—as they have in Australia—rival Hindu and Mahomedan peddlers from India to interfere with their monopoly. They are cooks, nurses, house-'maids,' 'generals,' and the rest, and they look spotlessly clean and neat in their white raiment, and as grave and dignified as a congress of ancient Druids. In the Canadian Pacific Company's large hotel youthful Japanese act as bell-boys, and they are voluminously alive and miraculously active and alert. In the Kamloops and elsewhere in the valleys of British Columbia, Chinese are very successfully employed on farms and fruit-ranches. Chinese and Japanese alike are engaged in the logging camps (where, however, the felling is done by white men), on the railway lines as navvies, in saw-mills, fisheries, canneries, stores, factories, mines. They work for what are locally deemed low wages—£5 to £7 per month. The eight-hours' day is to them an unknown institution. They plod away steadily whether the master's eye is upon them or not. 'Set a Chinkie (Chinaman) on a job,' said a local employer to me, 'and he'll freeze to it. He'll keep his eye-teeth in it till midnight, but

He'll see it through'

Except that he has secured wider avenues of employment in British Columbia, John Chinaman's position there is practically the same as that which he occupies in Australia and New Zealand. Like the helix snail, he carries his home—his China—with him wherever he goes: its traditions, habits, and modes of thought. He never adopts the spirit or the ideals of his new surroundings. Chinamen are a placid, stolid, inscrutable race. But they are law-abiding, ingenious, hard-working, frugal, and could live and wax fat where a Canadian would starve.

The Jap is cast in quite a different mould. He has the industry and toughness of the Chinaman, but is far more alert, enterprising, perceptive, and ambitious. He stands not much more than five feet high. But he is well knit, muscular, and dexterous, and every cubic inch in him is a storage battery crammed with energy. An Irishman, crushing and elbowing his way into a packed political gathering, answered an angry remonstrance with the remark: 'What on airth is the use of bein' in a crowd if you don't push?' The Jap is one of the most pushful of all the variegated races of mankind upon this planet. He enjoys pushing for the sheer fun of the thing. Once he took to 'western ideas,' he did so with a high fever of enthusiasm. He has elbowed his way to the practical commercial control of the Hawaiian Islands. And in British Columbia he has managed in a few years to squeeze and crush his way into every avenue of trade and commerce.

A Japanese

will give a Caucasian a start of a mile in business and pass him in the sixth lap. The number of Japanese in British Columbia is small, but they have become, none

the less, relatively serious competitors, especially in the small trades of the province, even with the keen and sturdy business people from Ontario who form the principal stock of its English-speaking population.

The Chinese and Japanese have their vices. But it is their virtues and not their vices that make them such formidable rivals to the European laborer in British Columbia. The introduction of 'inferior peoples' did not get time to develop, as it did in America, from a purely labor to a mainly radical problem in Canada's westernmost province. But it has aroused strong political feeling, and has started an agitation almost as hot and voluble as that which went tongue-clacking nearer home to us over the question of a 'white Australia.' Feeling in British Columbia, as far as I could ascertain it, was strongly divided on the question of the retention or exclusion of the Orientals. 'We're ruined by Chinese cheap labor,' was, in substance, the plaint of many with whom I conversed. Others—and chiefly employers—chorused a different song: 'In the present circumstances of British Columbia, and for many years to come, cheap labor is indispensable, and its exclusion would be a stunning blow to the development of the province.' Between two such contradictory views of men 'on the premises' how should a stranger from afar decide? Just as we reached British Columbia, the anti-Orientals had succeeded in getting a grip upon the lobe of the provincial Government's ear. By

An Order in Council

Chinese and Japanese were forbidden to cut shingle-bolts or logs—a favorite occupation of theirs—on Crown lands. Fresh provincial legislation was also framed for the purpose of closing various other avenues of employment against the Orientals. With a population of close on 45,000,000 in an area not much larger than that of the British Isles, Japan could readily afford to lend or lose a few thousand of its young men to British Columbia. But the Japanese Government is proud and high-spirited. It is disinclined to allow its subjects to go to countries where they will not be received on equal terms, and therefore prohibited Japanese emigration to British Columbia, except in cases of residents of Canada, and bona fide merchants and students. But Chinese immigrants still continued to arrive by every steamer. The Canadian Government serenely pocketed a hundred dollars (£20) poll-tax for each of them. The children of the glowing East landed. But they found no situations vacant on western Canadian soil. So they wended their weary way towards the American border, in the wake of those whose occupation as shingle-bolt cutters, log-splitters, etc., was gone. America did not want the yellow visitors. But her frontier-line was long and her immigration staff too few to deal with the yellow exodus from British territory. And thus it came about that Canada

Got the Poll-tax

and Uncle Sam got the Chinamen. In the mind of many in Western Canada, America has paid too dearly for the cheap labor that wrought in the cotton-fields of the South in the days before the great Civil War. The yellow question in British Columbia never passed the phase of a labor problem, and the opponents of the Orientals maintain that the course of provincial legislation and the action of the Japanese Government will save Canada in the future from such a menacing race difficulty as that which faces Uncle Sam in the Black Belt of the United States.

Another glint of the Orient met our eyes on landing (as already indicated) in great piles of teas and silks—scrawled over with intricate hieroglyphics. They were being shot into C.P.R. freight cars by squads of men, to be sent tearing away over the iron rails to Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, and the cities of the Atlantic seaboard. A little beyond us rose the double funnels and the graceful white hulls of one of the 'Empress' steamers, which the Canadian Pacific Company placed in these waters to develop the trade of America and the Dominion with far Cathay. There is a triplet of those fine

Greyhounds of the Pacific.

Each of them is 485 feet long, of 6000 tons register and 10,000 horse power, and they are the fastest and most luxurious steamers that cut a furrow in the Pacific. They have brought Yokohama within ten days of Vancouver and fourteen of New York and Boston.

Nowadays the race of commerce is to the swift and its battle to the strong. Money-getting is about the most cosmopolitan occupation on earth, and trade, as such, is cold poison to national sentiment. To the tea-importer in the eastern States it matters little that the 'Murikan eagle doesn't scream and flap its wings over British Columbia. It does matter somewhat that Van-