

teeming salmon fisheries in the British Columbian waters of the Fraser; how its yellow tide is (to use an Irish expression) 'stiff' with close-crowded, jostling packs of the finny creatures; how they are ladled out in great netfuls from among struggling myriads whose ranks close up solid again; and so on. It was a fantastic epic that circled around the prosaic piles of pink and steel-blue salmon-tins 'way-back in the lone and spacious West that is the last stronghold of the many-acred squatter in Victoria. The wild romance of war finds, perhaps, its culminating point in the Chinese novel of 'The Flowery Scroll,' which Sir John Bowring has given to 'us in an English dress. Its pig-tailed, slant-eyed hero is a Tamerlane unknown to fame who, with a few hundred indomitable followers, wiped several million Tartar foemen off the face of the earth in one of the briefest campaigns on record. But sport has its romance as well as war. And it ever seemed to me—unacquainted as I was at the time with the

Swarming Life

of the northern seas—that the current descriptions of the British Columbian and Alaskan salmon fisheries were greatly overdrawn—that the writers of them were performing the feat of archery commonly known as drawing the long bow, and that they fairly fell under the apologetic rillery of old Le Blanc, who said (with a wink) of the travellers of his day, that 'if they write nothing but what is possible or probable, they might appear to have lost their labor, and to have observed nothing but what they might have done as well at home.' Some day I hoped to see and judge for myself whether the glittering halo that writers had spun like a glossy gossamer web around the salmon-tins from New Westminster was glowing fact or merely the modern counterpart of 'travellers' tales' such as Mandeville and garrulous, credulous, simple-minded old Webbe gave to the printer in the days when the world was wide.

One cannot eat his bread and have it too. It was an overmastering desire which impelled me to pass among old friends in the Old Land the leafy months when summer decks forest and field in its annual new livery of green. Mid-April saw us in Vancouver. And the salmon, alack! do not 'run' till August. And thus it only remained for me to visit the famous fishing grounds and see the yellow waters of the world's most famous salmon-river and look into the half-deserted canneries that were already beginning their remote preparations for their coming harvest time.

One pleasant day found me and my old college friend and travelling companion seated in the electric railway car that runs south-east for twelve miles through the forest from Vancouver to New Westminster. The car was furnished with neat, cane-covered cushions, and was divided by a sliding door into smoking and non-smoking compartments. Close to the outskirts of Vancouver the track became a narrow lane through the forest of pines and spruce and Douglas fir. And so on and on for many a monotonous mile. The tallest and most valuable timber had already fallen to the woodman's axe and the great stumps littered the floor of the forest, which was deeply covered with a springy carpet of pine-needles, patterned over with trailing blackberry creepers and—in the spewy spots, and beside the still, yellow pools—with the fat emerald leaves and the showy yellow blossoms of an arum, whose reputation is damned with the unpoetic name of 'skunk-cabbage.' All through the forest is the blighted track of the fierce and

Devastating Fires

that sweep from time to time through the valuable timber-lands of British Columbia. Where the axe slays its thousands, fire slays its tens of thousands. In the dense, resinous, and highly-inflammable trees of the British Columbian forests fire wreaks far more deadly devastation than among the more resistant hardwoods that grow with plenty of elbow-room, in the open-gladed timber-lands of Australia. To right and left of our track, amid the deep green of the forest, thousands of straight, charred tree-trunks rose like tall pillars of coal—looking as gaunt and weird in their way as the ghostly-looking arrays of ring-barked eucalyptus that form such a forbidding feature of the landscape in many parts of the Australian bush. Everywhere, as we passed, a jungle of young forest was rising in a fast and rampant growth. Here and there were little rectangular clearings, with weatherboard cottages and neat gardens—bright with blossom of plum and almond. But the circling tree-growth hugged them round almost so closely that a forest fire coming that way would lick the little homesteads off the face of the earth. Other such clearings lay farther afield to right and left of the electric railroad—strung together like the knots on a tally-cord by

narrow, muddy, stump-strewn, unformed forest tracks. And so on for miles ran the chain of monotony: green trees, massive stumps, charred boles, and dense forest pierced by narrow tracks. Nearing New Westminster we saw in a large clearing near the iron road the fine Catholic orphanage conducted by the Sisters of Providence. Then the bush thinned out, and we were spinning along at a merry pace down the fertile slopes to the Fraser. Beyond its broad and turbid flood rose other rich river-banks covered with sparse timber and bearing fruit-trees and cereals. A steep and winding descent—taken at a rapid run which seemed to threaten a 'header' into the rolling Fraser—brought us at the last moment by a sharp sweep to the terminus in the chief thoroughfare of

New Westminster.

The city counts some 8000 inhabitants. It is sixteen miles from the spot where the Fraser empties itself into the Strait of Georgia. The city reclines comfortably on a very manageable and sunny slope that runs up from the Fraser, where it rests, very appropriately, upon the long range of salmon canneries—its chief industry—that lines the river-banks. Like Geelong, New Westminster is a city that has missed its chance. It grew up—or rather sprung up, so sudden was its rise—during the high fever of excitement that accompanied the 'breaking out' of the gold-diggings on the Fraser in 1858. In the same year the mountainous mainland on which it stands was made a Crown colony. New Westminster—then a small town of wooden shanties—became its capital. It still remained the capital when British Columbia and Vancouver Island were united under a single government in 1866. The transfer of the capital to Victoria (on Vancouver Island) was a blow from which New Westminster suffers still. Three years ago it passed through the fire—or rather the fire passed through it and reduced it to smoke and ashes. But no western town is of any importance until it has passed through the ordeal of fire. New Westminster has a brand new look. Like Vancouver, it is fast substituting brick and stone for weatherboard; it is growing rapidly; its broad business streets have an active commercial look about them; deep-water shipping lies along its wharves; its great sawmills rip into planks, boards, etc., the massive softwood tree-trunks that are rafted to them down the Fraser, and they are sent to Australia, New Zealand, and other ends of the earth; and it is the market centre for the great and fast-growing agricultural interests of the rich delta-lands that border Western Canada's greatest salmon-river.

To Tennyson fifty years of Europe 'are better than a cycle of unchanging Cathay. But in these new western lands things move at a merry pace. A generation ago is

Ancient History,

and a pioneer of New Westminster speaks of 'the early days' and 'the old times' with the air of one who displays his book-lore rather than of one who is himself a part of his story. At the Bishop's residence we met and conversed with a French Oblate missionary who was, we believe, the first white man to settle in those mountain wilds. He came there to bring the Tidings of the Great Joy of Salvation to the scattered Indian tribes. He lived to see the bronzed children of the forest Christianised and civilised and gathered together in the quaint and pretty villages that you see around about the waters of the Sound and away in the distant mountains and up the valleys of the arrowy Fraser. And now, after fifty years of heavy toil among the red men, he passes the twilight of a long life of self-sacrifice among his brethren. He is the patriarch of the Oblate missionaries, an octogenarian and more, thin, spare, ascetical, with hair and beard of snow. When, in his native tongue, he speaks of 'the early times,' it is with the air of one who steps out of another epoch and, like a disembodied spirit, tells of the taming of the wild red man and the fevered era of gold as of things that belong to the dim days of old. He was there in the 'remote' times of 1865, when New Westminster was created a Vicariate-Apostolic. Since 1890 it has been an episcopal see. At the time of our visit, its prelate (Dr. Donteville) was absent on his arduous episcopal forneys through his vast diocese, which stretches over the mountains and far away to the borders of Alaska. Those vast British Columbian missions are entrusted to the care of the Oblate Fathers. Their genial and affectionate hospitality is the pleasantest memory of our visit to New Westminster. Through the kindly offices of one of their number (a young Irish priest, Father O'Neill) we were enabled to see the sights of the place, including the boarding and day schools, the college, the seminary, the orphanage, the hospital, the pro-cathedral, and the other religious edifices in