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Vancouver the Halfway House of the Empire

H. B.

VANCOUVER, B. C.
1929

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"VIA VANCOUVER"

A HALFWAY HOUSE

"Your harbour is indeed a halfway house between the New World and the Old."—Lord Burnham, at Vancouver Canadian Club.

You've read of the Inn of the coaching days
With its welcoming door flung wide
As the travellers left the cold and the rain
For the warmth of the fire inside,
And cramped and wearied limbs relaxed
In the glow of a great content,
While the rattle and roar of the coach gave way
To the sob of the horses spent.

They've called me a "Western Sentinel,"
And "The Gateway of the West,"
And "The Mistress of the Western Seas"—
But the name I like the best
Is "The Halfway House of the Empire,"
And straight to my heart it went,
As it fell from the lips of a guest of mine—
My thanks for the compliment.

If you're homeward bound from the Ancient East,
Or South to the Southern Cross,
And you want a rest from the rattling rails,
Or the Ocean's pitch and toss,
My place of call on the All Red Route
At the end of a Continent,
Stands ever ready with open door
For the guests my luck has sent.

Halfway House: An inn or place of call midway on a journey.—Webster's Dictionary.

CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER, R.N.
1757—1798

"Which I called after the seat of my ancestors, Point Couverden."—Vancouver's Journal, Vol. V. (edition of 1801), page 429.

"Vancouver's ancestors were either Dutch or Flemish, and came from the little town of Coervorden, in Holland. The name Vancouver was evidently adopted to preserve the name of the family's ancestral home, the 'Van' meaning 'from' and the 'den' was presumably dropped for the sake of brevity, although the Vancouver family seems to be extinct, it is interesting to note that the name 'Vancouverden' appears in the London Post Office Directory at the present day."—Charles Bradbury, Sunday Province, 19-6-27.

John Gasper Vancouver,
And Bridget, his wife,
At King's Lynn, in Norfolk,
Lived most of their life;
He collected the Customs
On goods o'er the waters,
She brought up her children,
Three sons and two daughters.

There was Sarah and Mary—
Giving place to the dames—
There was John, Charles and George,
All quite good English names,
And save for the surname,
So skilfully blent,
There was nothing to show
Of their foreign descent.

Now George was the youngest,
The last, not the least
Of his line, which, on searching,
Would seem to have ceased,
But the name, by his brief years
Of crowded endeavour,
Will live in our Annals
For ever and ever.

EULOGY WRITTEN BY A KINDLY CAPTAIN

"Captain Wm. J. Looe (pronounced Low) of the ship Chelsea, writes under date 31st July, 1868, "We were 14 days from San Francisco to Victoria, and three days thence to Burrard's Inlet. The crews here are free from the temptation of a grog-shop and no idlers are allowed about this place." "

From "Stevens on Stowage," quoted by J. H. Hamilton.

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way."
—Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.—
T. Gray.

At last we learn how false the lurid glow
That lights the lives of men of early days;
Come listen to the lore of Captain Looe
And love them for their sober, thrifty ways!

To Burrard's Inlet—runs the Captain's tale—
Aboard his ship, the Chelsea, he was bound
In from Victoria, 'twas a three days' sail
Some sixty years ago—hear what he found.

He tied up at the Saw Mill to secure
His load of lumber, this was stowed apace,
For there no garish grog-shops did allure,
No idlers were allowed about the place.

The Captain's picture of a perfect day,
Brought smiles like ripples on a summer sea;
That simple seaman long has sailed away
And left his log to laughter and to me!

A TRIBUTE AND A TRUST

"I feel confident that as time goes on the people will appreciate more and more the wonderful services of Sir William Van Horne and recognize in some tangible memorial the part he has played in the founding of the city."—C. A. Cotterell, 9-12-27.

Hark to a tale of Van Horne,
Railway builder and seer,
How a city was born,
How it comes to be here.

Once on a gentle rise
Up from a log-strewn shore,
Gazing with eager eyes,
Seeing what lay before,

Not the tangle of brush,
Fallen and standing tree,
Rather the roar and rush
Of the city that was to be,

Stood there the Man whose sight
Led him to up and do,
Never quitting a fight
Till what he sought was through.

Now in some forty years
See what the time has brought,
As to the World appears
Wondering, a mighty port.

On us, it's future laid—
Solemn a trust it is—
That we be not afraid,
Give us a faith like his!

What of the debt we owe,
Must we be held to scorn
Having nothing to show
Nought to honour Van Horne?

INARTICULATE

"We have in Canada a strong British trait of not "Blowing our own horn."—K. J. Burns.

Wake up, and be spectacular,
Adopt in the vernacular,
A motto most ejacular,
And fly your flag unfurled;
Don't say in meek and puny verse,
"I will inform the Universe,"
But shout—(to tinkling tune averse)—
"I'll tell the cock-eyed World!"

And wouldn't it be just as well
Your friends across the seas to tell
That you have other goods to sell
Besides your wheat and corn;
Although you never have been known
To syncopate a saxophone
You might in no uncertain tone
Commence to blow your horn.

Picture how sad and sick a fate
Remaining inarticulate
Refusing to gesticulate
And vocally afraid,
Shake off this dumb oppressiveness
And cultivate agressiveness,
And thus insure progressiveness
In future Foreign Trade.

SHIPS' MANIFESTS

"Age cannot wither, nor custom stale her
infinite variety."

Antony and Cleopatra II-2.

If variety is charming,
Then this Port of Many Cargoes
That attribute possesses in a very high degree,
And if "infinite," you fancy
As an adjective too far goes,
A pretty wide assortment in this little list you'll see.

Rice and peanuts come from China,
Silk and oranges from Nippon,
And—this entry keeps us guessing—Oriental Merchandise,
Then there's hardwood from Australia,
Making floors for rugs to slip on,
Gorgeous rugs of glowing colour from the East so old and wise.

Don't forget the shipments outward—
Many million feet of lumber,
Golden grain from fertile prairies to the Orient and U. K.,
Fish and apples, pulp and paper—
But we can't begin to number
Half the things we are exporting, so we have the right to say,

That variety is descriptive
Of our multifarious cargo,
And "infinite" an adjective not wholly out of place,
For you know poetic license
Would permit of no embargo
When these words described for Shakespeare,
Cleopatra's matchless grace.

PRIDE OF PORT

"Vancouver as a port need give place to none in the matter of natural advantages. In the matter of port administration, Vancouver need make no apologies, and it only requires the whole-hearted co-operation of the citizens to place the port of Vancouver amongst the leading shipping centres of the world."

—K. J. Burns, 8th October, 1926.

When other ships and other ports
Their tales of tonnage tell,
And great statistical reports
Show how their records swell,
You murmur as you read each book,
"Where can such traffic be?"
You won't have very far to look
If you'll remember me.

While other folk build ocean docks
Far from the ocean side,
Unhindered, steam and sail in flocks
Come in on every tide,
Think not in boasting I engage,
Your blessings you must see
In this, your natural heritage,
When you remember me!

Though other ports were old in years
Ere I had got a start,
Yet for the future have no fears,
I'll be a world-wide mart,
I only ask you, that your aim
Co-operation be,
And then you'll need to feel no shame
When you remember me.

TWO HARBOURS

Eight and forty moorings
Out in Hong-Kong harbour,
Eight and forty moorings
  Where the big ships lie and wait;
The sampans and the lighters
Are the bees that suck their honey,
The sampans and the lighters
  To and fro with men and freight.

Ninety miles of water-front
In Vancouver Harbour,
Ninety miles of water-front
  Where the deep-sea vessels tie;
The longshoremen and derricks
Lift the cargoes through the hatchways,
The longshoremen and derricks,
  As the vessels 'longside lie.

STEP THIS WAY

"Am retiring from farming. I want to live in a large city where everything is handy, and life worth living."

—From a letter received this week.

Though its size is not plethoric,
We, most jubilantly choric,
Sing the praises of our city as a
place of residence,
Man and Nature both conspiring,
To provide a man retiring,
With the maximum of comfort, at
a minimum expense.

Yes! Here "everything is handy,"
No Sahara, dry and sandy,
But with Capilano water at the
turning of a tap,
While we need no weird Aladdin,
To supply the light that's had in
Those mysterious wires and cables
that pulsate with mystic sap.

You can bet that "life's worth living,"
Everything combines in giving
Us the will to emulate the patriarch
of Holy Writ,
So we venture the suggestion
That the answer to the question,
Is the place of its receiving,—you will
find Vancouver's IT.

"VIA VANCOUVER"

Wheat of the prairie, and wealth of the mine,
Wood of the forest and fish of the brine,
Ship eastward, or westward, or south of the line—
Via Vancouver.

Fruit of the orchard, and hay in the bale,
Stock of the ranges—by road or by rail,
By liner, by freighter, by steam or by sail,
Via Vancouver.

Wood pulp and paper, wrapping or boards,
Cedar bolts, spruce bolts, fir-ricks or cords,
Steam coal and house coal from underground hoards.
Via Vancouver.

In from the Orient here at our door,
Up from Australia, cargoes galore,
On to the Old Land, still more and more,
Via Vancouver.

(Arranged as a song by Clare Sumner—
At all music stores).

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