

FROM SHETLAND TO VANCOUVER ISLAND



CCB

ERIC DUNCAN

School for pioneers and settlers—so the highlands and islands of Scotland might have been called in the latter part of last century.

Eric Duncan describes the life as he lived it, simply, happily and bravely. It was very much a family life, and these God-fearing fishermen and crofters kept it so when they emigrated to the comparatively untouched land of British Columbia.

How they opened stores, constructed sawmills, cleared forests, bought land, which later was to become valuable when towns grew up, is all well told.

This book is full of the fine, real things of life; poverty without sordidness, material advancement which did not spoil the character of the men and women, and deep religious feeling without narrow sectarian views.



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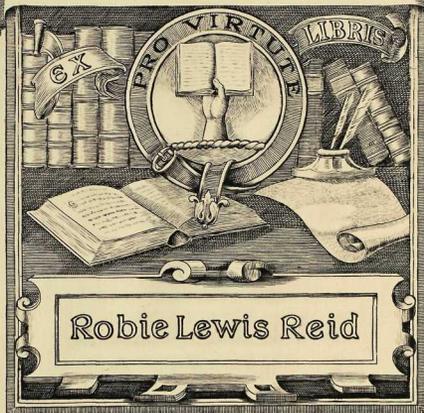
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For him was lever have at hys beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and hys philogophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sauntrye.

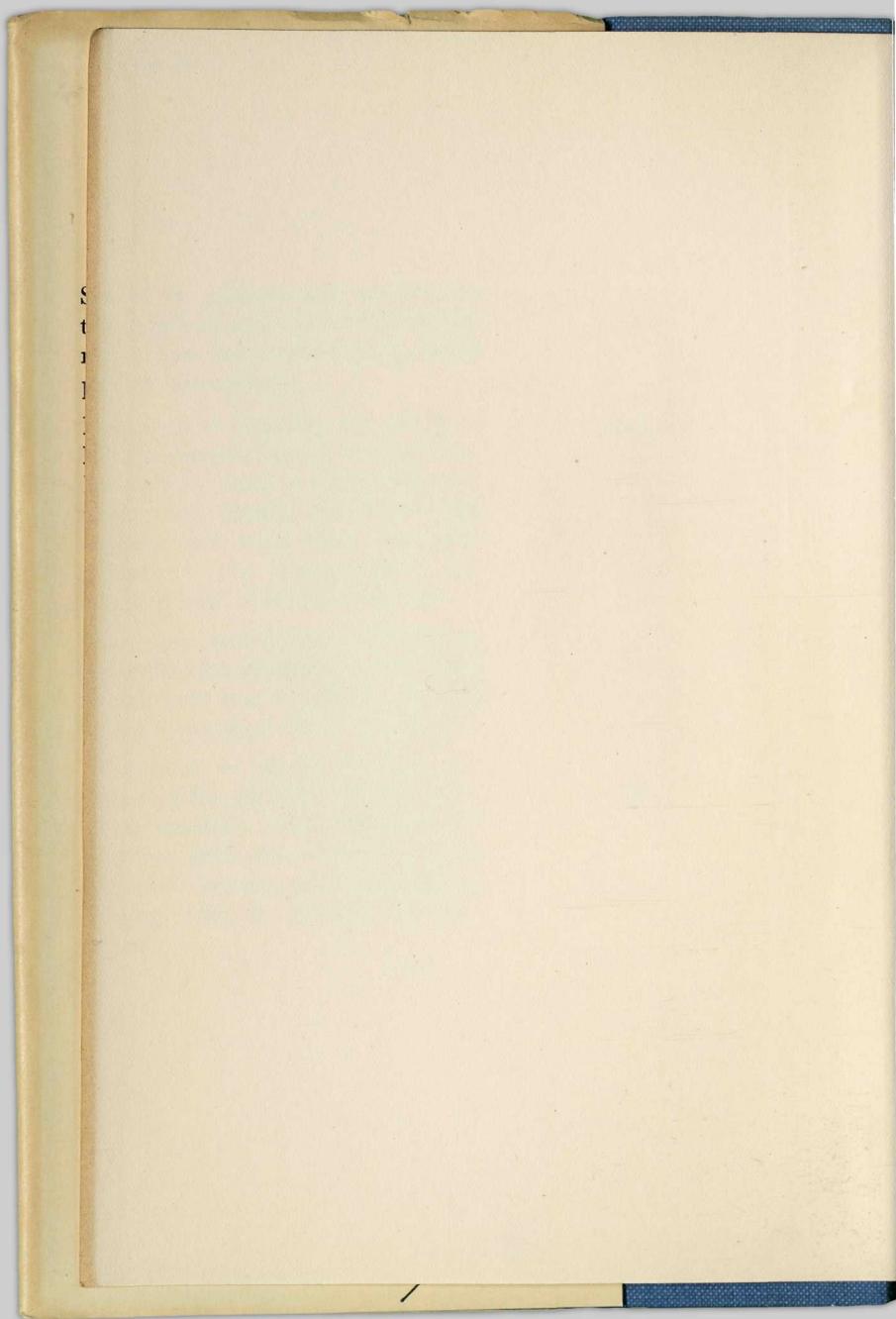


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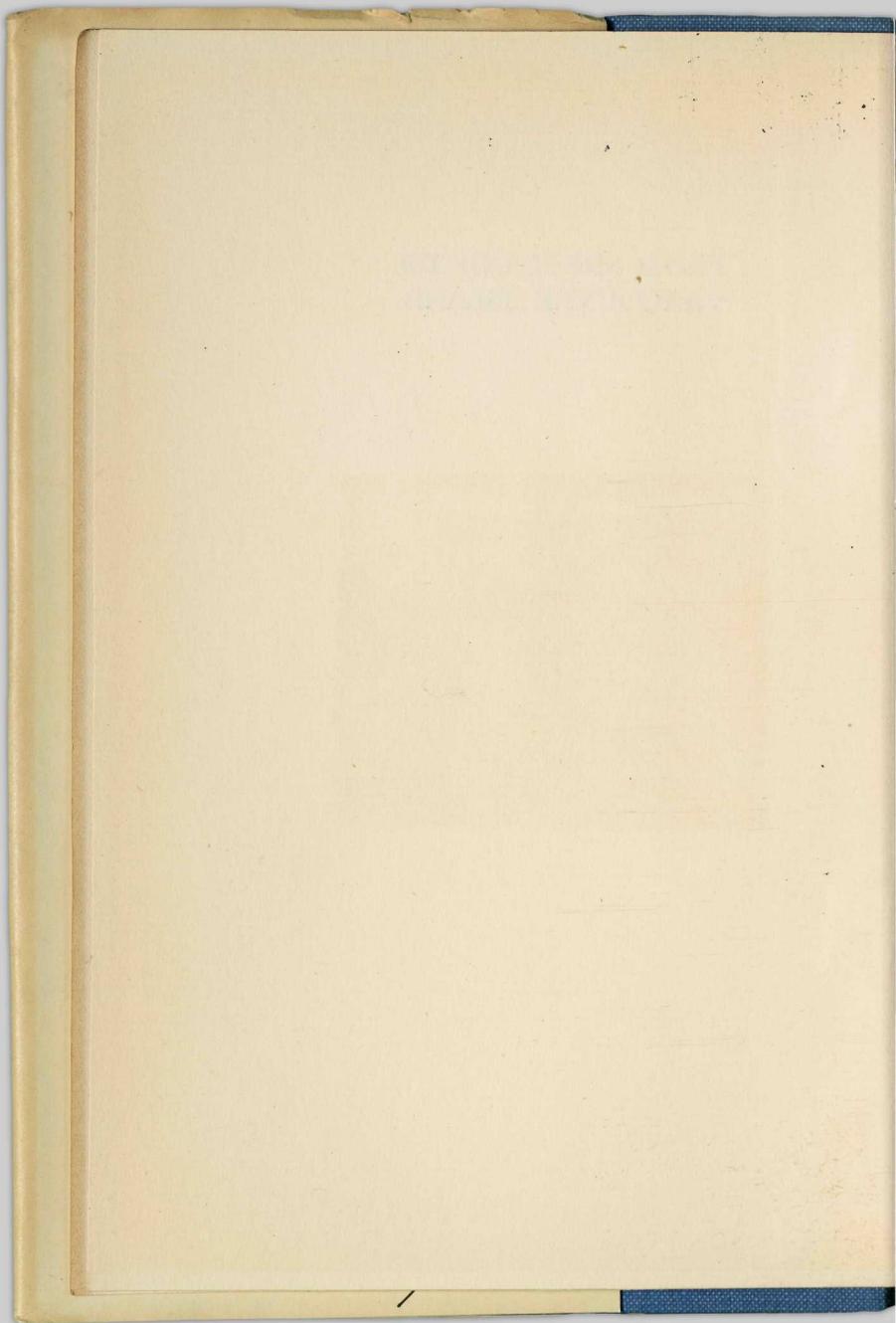
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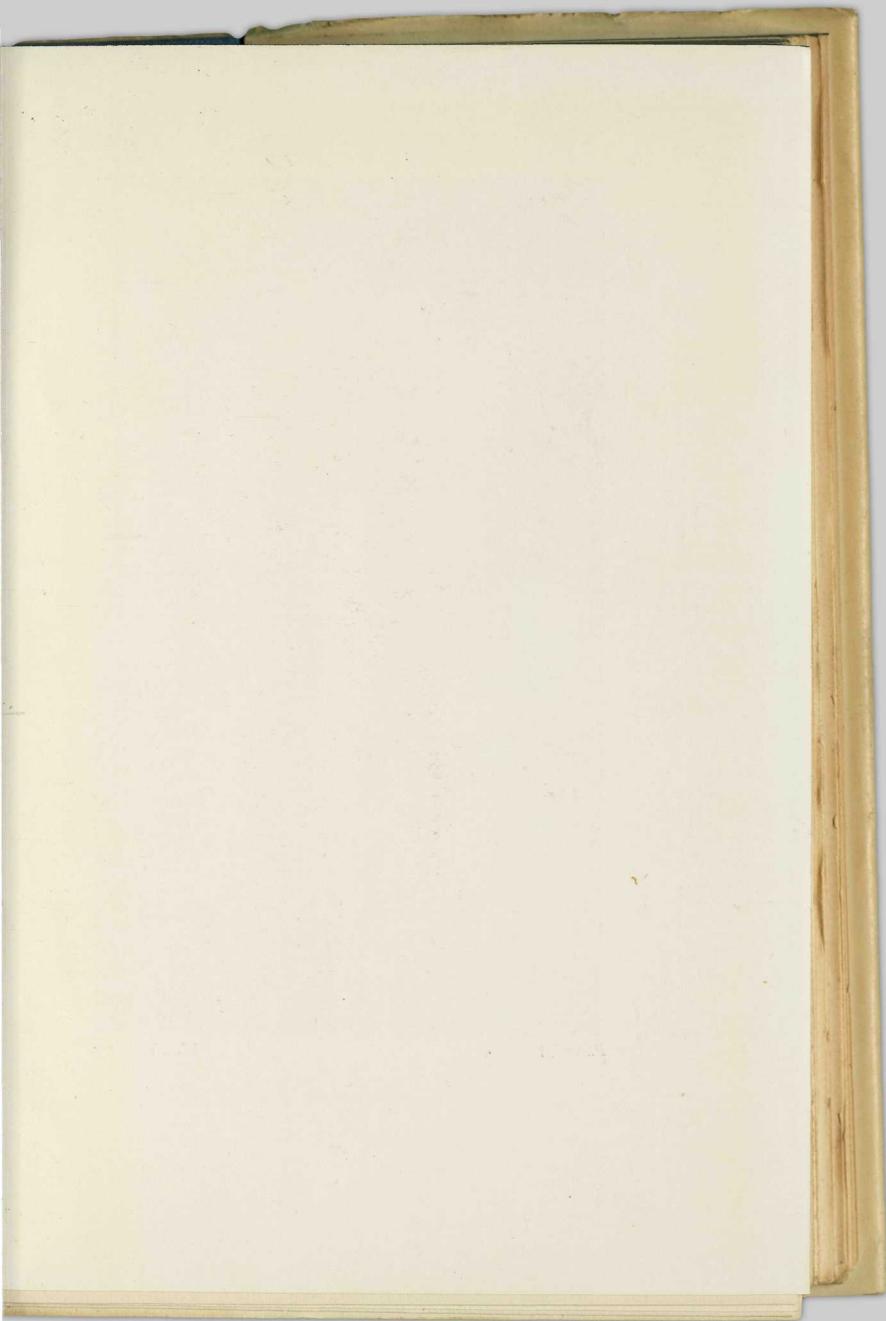
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FROM SHETLAND TO
VANCOUVER ISLAND





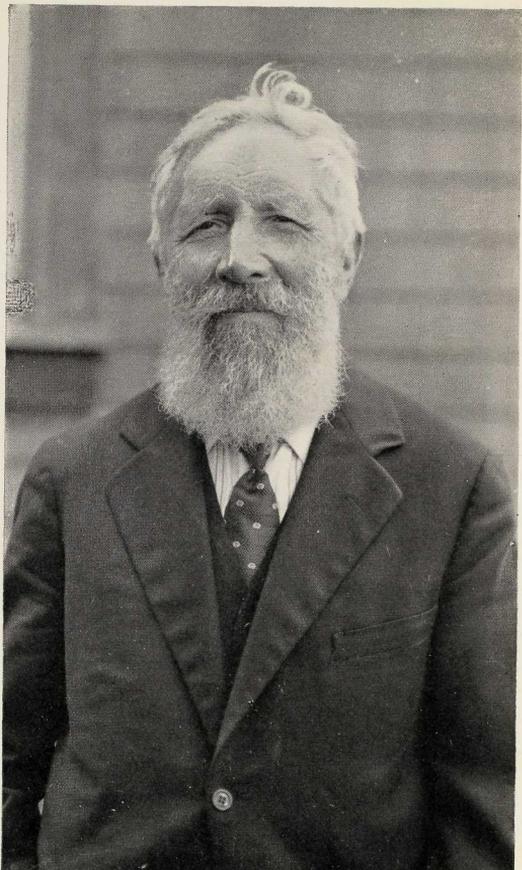


Photo by]

[C. W. Sillence

The Writer at Seventy-eight

FROM SHETLAND TO VANCOUVER ISLAND

RECOLLECTIONS OF SEVENTY-FIVE
YEARS

BY
ERIC DUNCAN
AUTHOR OF "THE RICH FISHERMAN"

One Course Meals

Proseman 7-1941
Sir: Re the "one-course meal order" in Britain—I have proved it on myself for the last 20 years—and I have found no weakening of bodily ability, except what naturally comes with age (I am over 82), and it will certainly remove all fear of appendicitis.

Since 1898 I have had trouble with varicose veins in my legs and feet (an hereditary affair) but they have never burst, and I still get around and look after myself in every way. I live alone.

Sandwich, B. C. E. DUNCAN.

OLIVER AND BOYD
EDINBURGH: TWEEDDALE COURT
LONDON: 33 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1937

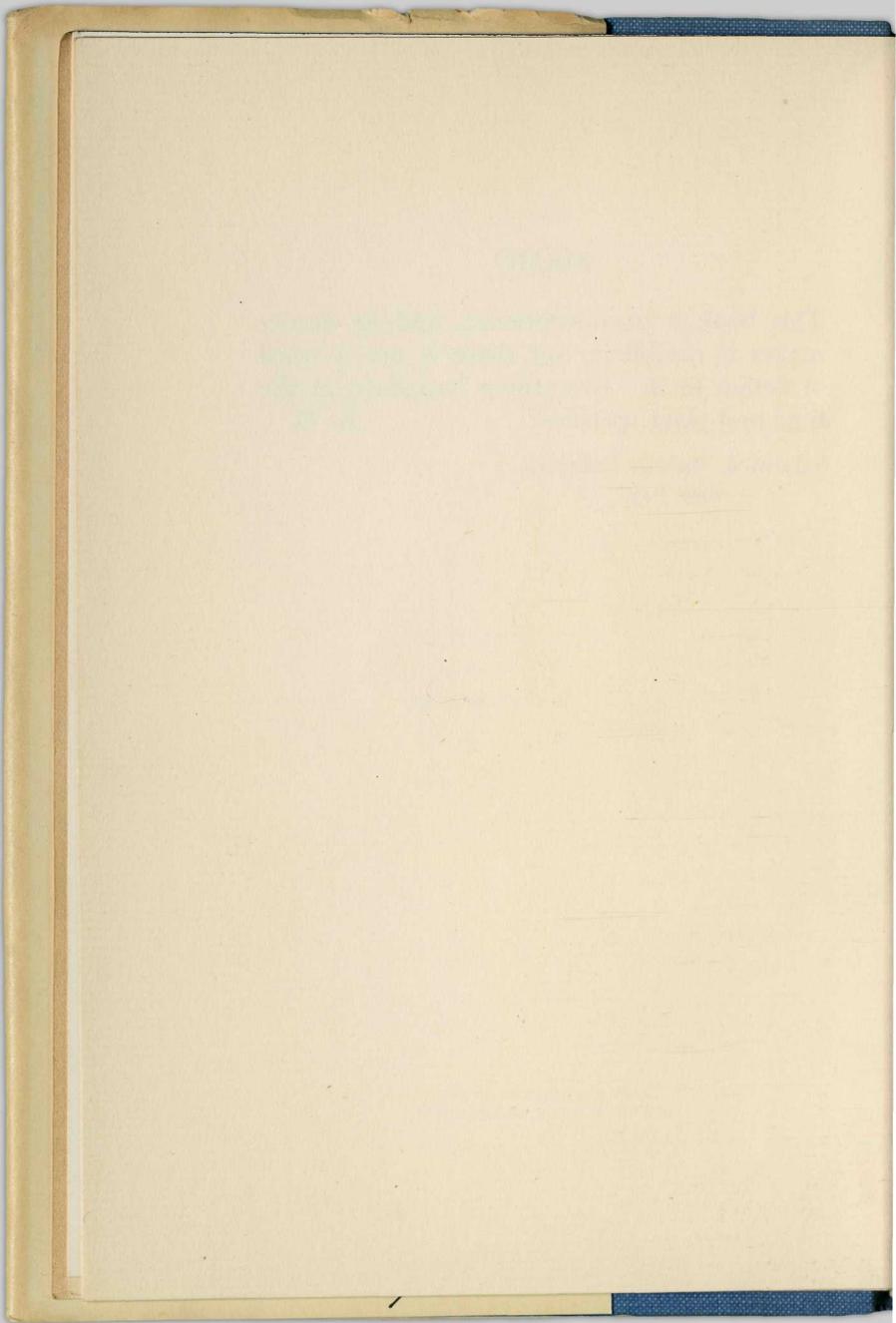
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MEMO

This book is unconventional, and its nature makes it rambling, but there is not a word of fiction in it. Everything happened at the time and place specified. E. D.

SANDWICK, BRITISH COLUMBIA,
May 1937.



CONTENTS

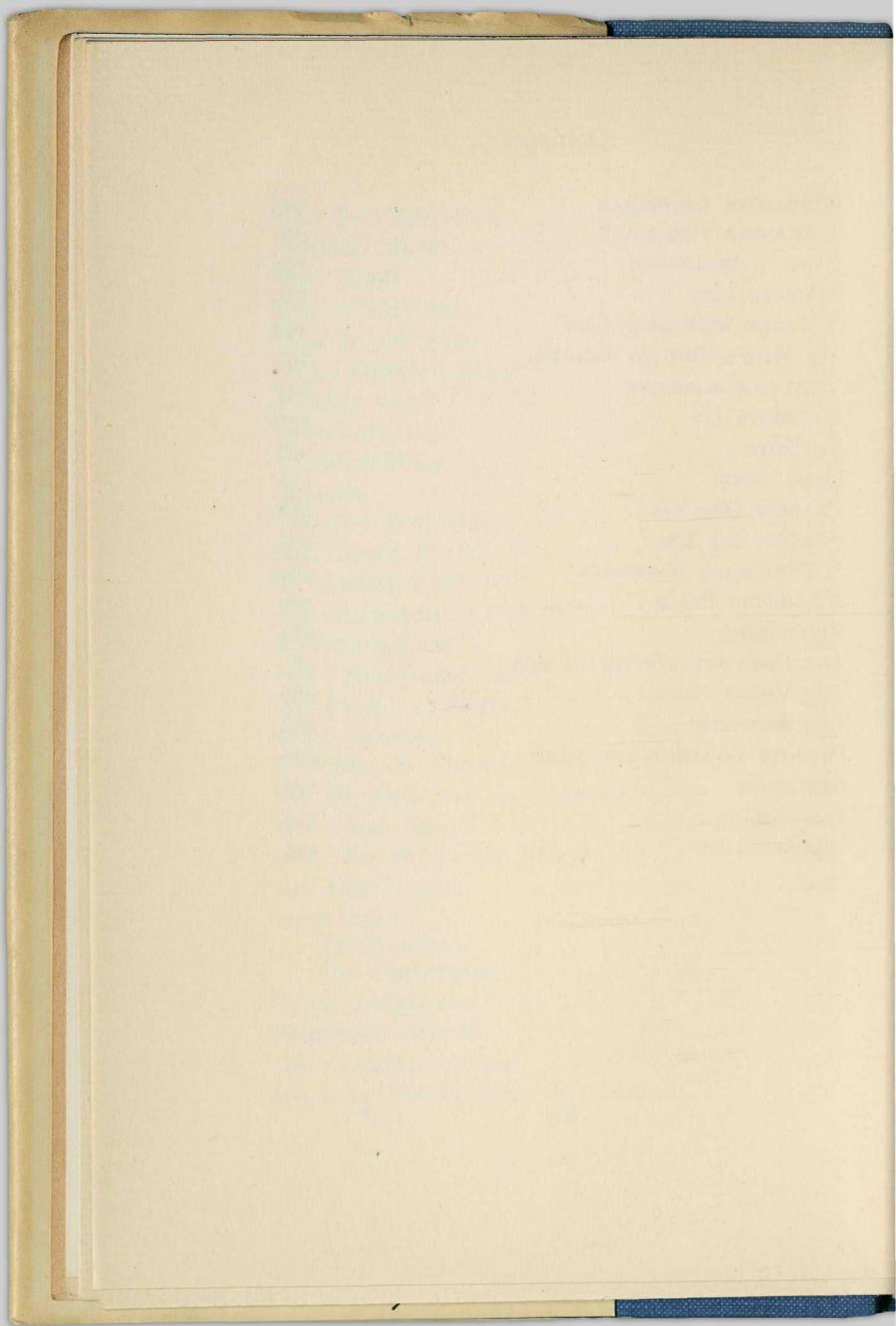
	PAGE
PREFATORY	11
A CROFTER GRANDMOTHER	17
A CROFTER-FISHERMAN GRANDFATHER	23
SOME ODD CHARACTERS	31
LIFE IN SHETLAND SIXTY YEARS AGO—	
The Land	37
The Sea	41
Cliff Fishing	44
SOUTHERN SHETLAND	46
YOUTHFUL REMINISCENCES	62
THE SAILOR	69
THE BROTHERS	71
HOUSE-BUILDING	73
VANCOUVER ISLAND—	
The Coast	77
The Interior	82
THE PIONEERS OF COMOX VALLEY	86
SKETCHES OF SOME PIONEERS AND OLD-TIMERS	99
THE FIRST CATTLE	110
BIOGRAPHY OF A COW	112
THE FIRST HIGHWAYS	114
DENMAN ISLAND	118
LEAVING HOME	120
THE VOYAGE	122
COMOX LANDING	128
SCATTERED SETTLERS AND OTHER THINGS	132

Contents

	PAGE
SOME OUTSIDE NOTES	135
PERSONAL NOTES	138
DULL TIMES	143
FIRE AT NANAIMO	145
BACK TO THE FARM	148
“THE SEASIDE LIBRARY”	158
A CLOSE SHAVE	162
TROUBLOUS TIMES	164
“UNREASONABLE”	168
CHANGES	169
SANDWICK POST OFFICE	173
THE CENSUS OF 1891	177
MY FATHER PASSES	179
THE BEGINNINGS OF COURTENAY	181
A STRANGE CASE	184
THE “REMITTANCE MAN”	191
THE PASSING OF OLIVER	192
MORE CHANGES	195
A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE	197
THE WEATHER AND ITS VAGARIES	200
THE GREAT SNOW	203
SOME SEMI-PUBLIC MATTERS	208
THE FIRST SCHOOL	209
CHURCHES—	
The Anglicans	211
The Presbyterians	215
COMOX LEGISLATORS	221
HUMPHREYS APPEARS	224
THE CUMBERLAND SIDE	226
MERVILLE, THE SOLDIERS’ SETTLEMENT	228

Contents

	PAGE
ALEXANDER LEDINGHAM	229
ALEXANDER URQUHART	231
BACK TO BEGINNINGS	235
MARRIED LIFE	237
A GREAT MOTHER-IN-LAW	243
MY WIFE'S VISIT TO SWEDEN	245
VISIT TO CALIFORNIA	247
WE MOVE ON	250
SAN DIEGO	253
HOME AGAIN	256
CHARLES GOES ON	258
NEARING THE END	259
A TEMPORARY FAREWELL	261
A CAMPING PLACE	263
REFLECTIONS	264
THE GREATEST MATTER OF ALL	265
THE VIRGIN BIRTH	267
THE ASCENSION	268
DEFINITE LOCATION AND FORM	270
ASPIRATION	273
PROGRESSION	274
"RETROSPECTION"	275



PREFATORY

THE tradition is that, during the Jacobite troubles which culminated in the Battle of Culloden, a peace-seeking Scot named Duncan made his way to the quiet of Shetland, and settled in Sandwick parish.

One of his descendants, my great-grandfather, William Duncan, was born there, about 1760. He lived in the hamlet of Cullister, on the eastern side of Hoswick Bay—a young and skilful fisherman.

It so happened that on one of his trips to the usual fishing-ground some thirty miles south-east of the bay, a strong gale from that quarter drove him west of Sumburgh Head, and he landed on the Isle of Havera, where he met and married a native Shetlander, named Osla (or Ursula) Smith, and brought her home to Cullister.

Their family consisted of a daughter and four sons, who were left orphans with their mother when the father died at thirty.

The widow had to leave the comparatively fertile land of Cullister for one of the bleak

Prefatory

crofts of Noness, where, amid much hardship, she contrived to bring up her family. The daughter, Marion, married John White, a stone-cutter, and emigrated with him in the 'fifties of last century to Ontario, where they settled in the village of Warwick, Lambton County. They had a large family, one of whom, Thomas White, was a schoolmaster in Sarnia, and later, head of Oronhyatekha's Order of Oddfellows, in which capacity he travelled all over the Dominion of Canada in the 'eighties.

The widow's oldest son, George, became a famous builder of Shetland fishing-boats at the village of Hoswick, in his native parish. He died at sixty-eight, leaving a large family, one of whom, named Sinclair Thomson Duncan (after a famous Shetland Baptist preacher), became a commercial traveller, and after wandering all over the world, died in the Hoswick cottage in which he was born, within one month of his hundredth birthday (1828-1928). He left two books behind him, both printed by Oliver & Boyd of Edinburgh, one being the *Journal of a Trip to and from Australia in the 'Seventies by Sailing Vessel*, in which he circumnavigated the globe; and the other *Notes of a Visit to the Pacific Coast of North*

Prefatory

America in 1907-10. His descendants are nearly all in British Columbia.

The widow's second son, William, became a blacksmith, and died at Aberdeen, Scotland, in early middle age. His eldest son, John, was a well-known Methodist minister in Shetland, and the second, William, was a long-established merchant in Lerwick.

The widow's third son, Oliver, my own grandfather, never set foot out of his native Isles, but was known all over the stretch between Lerwick and Sumburgh Head as one of the most expert and daring fishermen of his day. The original widow, Osla Smith, died at his home, and he himself died in 1879 at the age of eighty-six. He had four sons, William, Eric, Oliver and Robert (who was my father). William and Eric went off to be sailors in 1844, Eric dying two years later in Bristol, England. Oliver and Robert stayed at home and became crofter-fishermen like their father, but they and William all eventually settled in Vancouver Island.

The widow's fourth son, Eric, was a ship's carpenter in Sunderland, England. He married a widow with son and daughter, but had no children of his own. When about sixty-five, he came back to his native parish

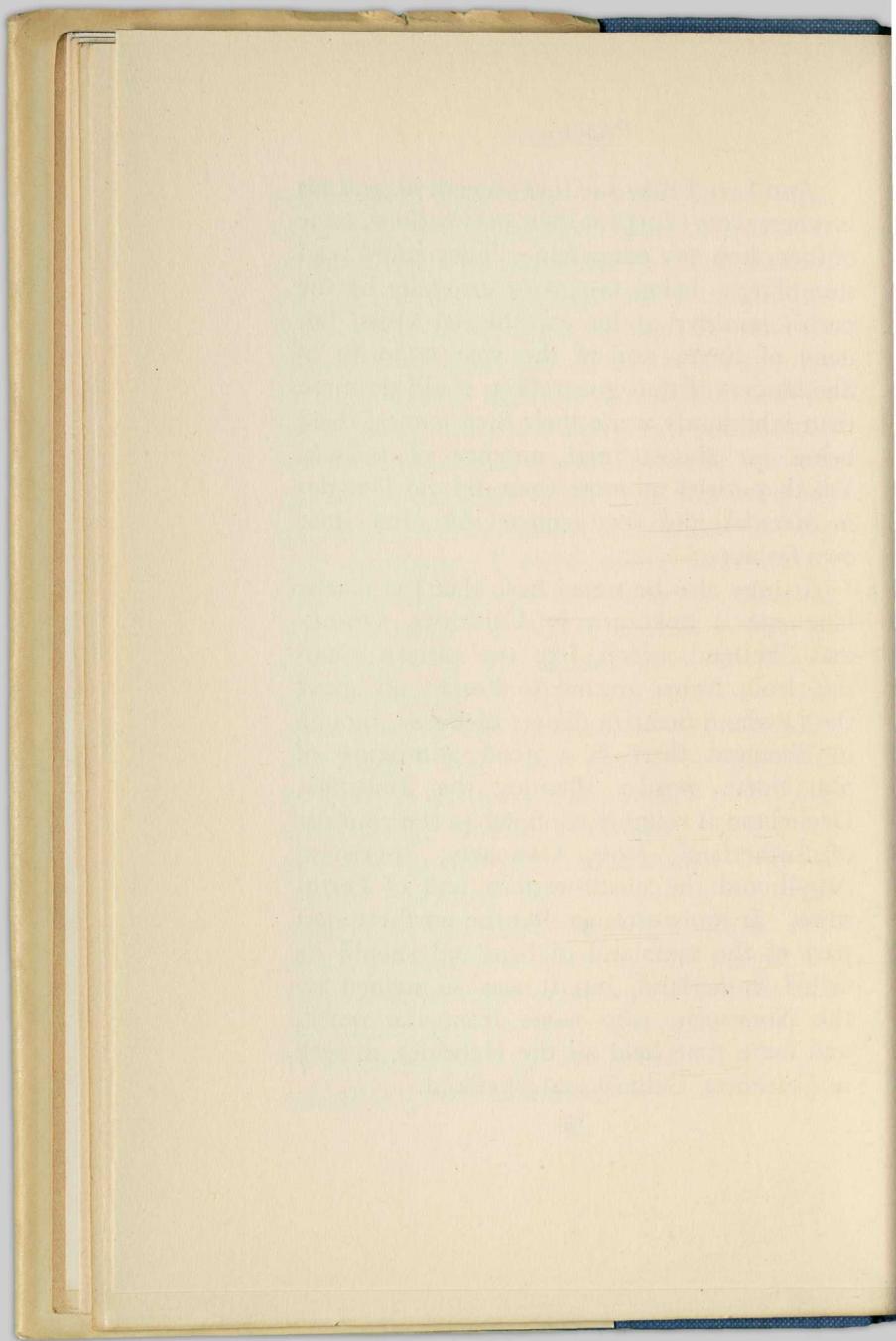
Prefatory

and rented a house and garden. He was often in trouble with schoolboys from the east side of the parish, who in passing his place climbed the garden wall and stole his rhubarb, just as boys in more favoured regions rob orchards. His stepson, who was master of a brig, the *Caroline*, trading between Sunderland and the Dutch coast, often sent him small remittances, but as the old man could not write, I always had to acknowledge them. I had to bring my school pen and ink-bottle and he had foolscap and envelopes. I knew pretty well what I had to write, though he insisted on dictating word by word. I had to express a hope for the welfare of the captain and his family, and especially of the brig *Caroline*; but sometimes the old man would vary it a little, and when I said I had already written that, he (having learned to talk English at Sunderland) would exclaim wrathfully, "Boy! you give me no time for consideration." I was usually rewarded with a stalk of rhubarb. After his wife died his stepdaughter kept house for him, and when she too passed, my father and his other nephews had to take their old Uncle Eric to their homes in turn, till he finally dropped off at eighty-four. But this was after I had emigrated.

Prefatory

And here I may say that though he and his brothers were expert at their occupations, none of them had any education. They could read stumbingly, being taught occasionally by the parish minister at his catechismal visits, but none of them, nor of the vast majority of Shetlanders of that generation, could do more than laboriously write their own names, there being an almost total absence of schools. Yet they cared no more than did old Douglas in *Marmion*, and they enjoyed life after their own fashion.

It may also be noted here that the Gaelic language is unknown in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland, which, like the eastern counties, from Nairn around to Forfar, all speak the Lowland Scottish dialect of Burns, though in Shetland there is a good admixture of old Norse words. Besides the Hebrides, Gaelicland is roughly confined to the counties of Sutherland, Ross, Cromarty, Inverness, Argyll and the north-western half of Perthshire. It seems strange that the northernmost part of the mainland of Scotland should be called Sutherland, but it was so named by the Norsemen, who came from the north, and for a time held all the Hebrides, as well as Caithness, Orkney and Shetland.



A CROFTER GRANDMOTHER

I was born (July 1858) in Houlland (*i.e.* Highland), the inland centre of Sandwick parish. This ancient hamlet is built on the southern slope of an eminence commanding a wide view, and the top of this eminence shows lines of old fortifications now buried under earth and grass. The hill is too stony for cultivation, and from time immemorial has been the pasture of tethered cows, so that it is always green, though in April and May this is varied by an infinitude of tiny daisies, and then the hill seems snow-capped.

My earliest remembrance begins at the age of three, when I followed my grandmother, then over seventy, as she went to milk the cows at noon (in that country they are milked three times a day), or when she went to a nearby field to dig potatoes for dinner. Owing to their extremely plain living and outdoor activities, there is almost always a grandmother in the crofter-fisherman's cottage, and often a grandfather too, if he has escaped the perils of the deep. These, supposed to be past work, stay by the house, and have really more to do

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

with the upbringing of the children than their own parents—the mothers being busy on the land, and the fathers on the sea.

Putting in the crops in spring engages both men and women, then, after cutting the peats, the husband goes off to the fishing, while the wife's summer is fully occupied with the hoeing of vegetables, the curing of peats, and the constant care of two or three cows, which the men never touch except to butcher them. Children over ten take part in the mother's work, but under that age they are the charge of the old people at home. One old grandfather, whom I remember, was so anxious to keep the mother in the fields, that, rather than summon her, he rocked the yelling youngster in the cradle into unconsciousness.

My grandmother, though careful and anxious enough about the work, never went to such extremes. She had been a powerful woman in her time, with square masculine shoulders, and with her husband, my grandfather, had dug over acres of wild land, formerly covered with peat, and had brought them under cultivation to oats, barley and vegetables. They had worked so well that when there came a vacancy in the tenantship

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of one of the fertile Houlland crofts, the laird was eager for them to take it up, which they did, though they had to pay a higher rent, and so they moved to my birthplace.

And there it was my grandmother's pride that they never had to buy anything they lived on except a little tea and sugar. Tea was bought by the ounce and sugar by the pound, and the hens settled the bill with their eggs at eightpence a dozen. She brought home the peats on her back, and with two ponies tandem, she leading the foremost ; and her own basket was as heavy as the load of either pony. The Gospels speak of two women grinding at the mill, but she ground alone, and sifted as well, her sieve being made of sheepskin stretched on a wooden hoop and then dried, and perforated with a red-hot knitting-needle stuck in a cabbage stalk. They kept a few sheep, so that most of their clothing and bedding was home-made. The usual summer footwear was a sort of moccasin made of untanned cowhide, and home-made wooden-soled clogs in winter.

Her long agricultural experience was always at the service of the younger people, and if her advice was not followed and things went wrong, she was not above saying, " Weel,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ye widna tak' my coonsel." The old proverb, "Make hay while the sun shines," does not apply to Shetland. Even in the almost endless summer days the sun is never strong enough to do much drying. So, in that country, it is "Make hay while the dry wind blows," and the hay is thrown up against it. In the spring, dry north-east winds are prevalent, called "yarbands," from defensive bandages tied over people's ears, and their lips crack and peel as they work in the fields. The summer is always breezy and a calm day extremely rare, and if at any time the shadow of the hill is seen in the wick (or bay) it is usually the precursor of a violent storm. In autumn, westerly gales from the Atlantic, or south-easters from the German Ocean, sweep the fields, and if grain is left till fully ripe the oats are often thrashed from the straw as if with flails, and the barley neck-broken. Therefore my grandmother always advised to shear the crops on the green side and let them ripen in the sheaf. And when we were through, we were often rushed by her to help a nephew of hers who was incurably slow, and often lost half his crop by the gales. In winter the roar of the sea is practically continuous, and huge banks of seaweed are thrown

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

up and divided among the different hamlets for fertiliser, and many a dripping basketful we carried on our backs to the top of the beach. Yet, in spite of it all, the Shetland climate is not unhealthy, and octogenarians are common.

There were no schools in the Isles in my grandmother's youth, and she could read but haltingly, and write not at all, but she had a most retentive memory, and as her husband was a fluent reader (though his pronunciation would surprise many people nowadays) and always had family worship, she could repeat long passages from the Gospels and the Epistle of James, and she tried hard to impress these upon our childish minds, which, I fear, were not very receptive at the time, though the words came back in after years. She had better success with hymns, of which she had also good store. Like most people of her class, she did not believe in too much levity, and when at times we got uproarious, she would say, "I'm feared ye'll be greetin' ere lang," and then she would give us Newton's hymn :—

Joy is a fruit that will not grow in Nature's barren
soil,
All we can boast, till Christ we know, is vanity and
toil,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

But where the Lord has planted grace, and made His
Glory known,
There fruits of lasting joy and peace are found, and
there alone,
A bleeding Saviour, seen by faith, a sense of pardoning
love,
A hope that triumphs over death, give joys like those
above,
To take a glimpse within the veil, to know that God is
mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail, unspeakable, divine,
These are the joys that satisfy and sanctify the mind,
That make the spirit mount on high and leave the
world behind.

For the last two or three years of her life she was just able to help herself between bed and fireside ; and she got a shaking palsy in her hands which stopped her knitting and bothered her cup of tea. She changed her own old wooden chair for a big high one which could hold cushions, and from which she could rise easier. She occasionally dozed in her chair, and we could always tell when she was asleep, because then her hands were still, but immediately on waking they began to jump again. Sometimes we tried to hold them still, and then she would laugh and say, "Na, my bairns, ye're no strong enuech." Final and welcome rest came to her in 1874, at the age of eighty-five.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A CROFTER-FISHERMAN GRANDFATHER

When a crofter-fisherman reaches the age of sixty-three, he becomes what is called "a failed auld man," and is no longer considered able to do his part on the sea; and my grandfather, though still strong and active, was long past that age before I was old enough to know him. However, he could not be prevented from using his small boat along the coast after haddocks and coalfish, and this reconciled him to life on the land, which his neighbours had supposed would quickly put an end to him, for the sea was thought to be as necessary to "Auld Olie" as to a fish. He became "Auld Olie" rather early in life, as one of his sons had the same name, and so became "Young Olie." He was shorter than my grandmother, who was unusually tall for a woman, but he had an enormous sweep of arms, and the hands of a giant.

The old man was known all over and beyond his native parish as the most skilful and daring fisherman of his generation, and if Auld Olie was in the stern of the boat with the helm over his shoulder in one hand, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

the sheet in the other, his crew held themselves safe, no matter what the weather was. The boat was the old "six-ern," a large open craft, home-built, after the model of the Norway yawl, thirty feet of keel, and stem and stern shaped alike. It was rowed by six men, had a single large square sail, and could get through very rough seas when well handled. The codbank being forty miles off shore and the weather extremely precarious, there were many stressful days. One story, that we children never tired of hearing, told of how he was driven twenty miles out of his course to the back of the Isle of Bressa, and given up for lost at home. Old William Brown, the parish blacksmith, was out with him once, and a sudden storm coming on, William became frightened, and called out, "Olie! did ye ever see the like of this?" "Yes, William, worse." "And," said my grandfather, "I could see his face just lighting up."

Though often with him in his small boat fishing, I was only once in a six-ern when he was there, and this was at a fruitless whale-chase. The law was, that anyone in a boat, from the youngest boy to the oldest man, had a share in the profits if the whales were driven ashore. I suppose the reason for this

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

was that anyone could make a noise, which apparently was the chief thing wanted to scare the big mammals. Another regulation provided that any boat that was afloat before the first whale grounded shared equally with the rest. And this was our undoing.

The alarm came in the spring, before the bigger boats were launched, and my grandfather and I, running together, tumbled on board a six-ern just as she was sent into the water by a crowd of men. Immediately the six oars were out, but with the haphazard crew, strong and weak, the boat went zigzag, and made little headway. "Ye fules!" cried one of the men, "put Auld Olie in the stern," and the crowd making way for him, he was soon in his accustomed place. "Now men," he shouted, "pull as ye like, I'll give you a straught coorse." And so he did, and we were quickly among the score or so of boats lined up outside the bay to seaward of the blowing cetaceans. Then began a pandemonium of yelling, shouting, screaming and hammering on boards and tin cans, and the monsters were headed up the bay. But now trouble began.

A ramshackle, unseaworthy boat, the only one left, had been launched by a band of late-comers, who hoped she would at

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

least carry them beyond whale-depth ; and although they rowed very quietly, yet the unavoidable disturbance made by half-a-dozen balers meeting the whales, now congested in the narrowing bay, faced them right about seaward against all the clamour. One desperate man drove his lance into a big fellow's back as he passed under our line, but all in vain. The culprits put back to the beach, and we hurried out past the whales again, but there was no second rounding of them. Off they went to the open sea, with the lance ever and anon turning up like a flagstaff.

My grandfather was great at making straw-baskets, the coarser grades of which were used for peats and potatoes, and the finer kind for grain. This was his usual occupation in the long winter evenings, and that was our time to set on him for stories. And many a graphic narrative he gave us "of his strange ventures happ'd by land and sea," and none the worse were they for being twice or thrice told, so that we knew every word that was coming. Ah, those were happy times !

A frequent visitor was an old relative who had been his sea-companion for many years, and it was fine to hear them recounting their experiences, each reminding the other of items

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

forgotten as to weather, location and quantities of fish caught on their various voyages. Then the two old men would go outside in the dusk, and, leaning against the sloping peat-stack, have long talks on spiritual matters.

Both my grandparents had good voices which never went flat, but their singing was wholly confined to psalms and hymns. Of Scots songs they knew nothing whatever. This may have been owing to their Norse ancestry. Unlike many of their neighbours, they were entirely free from superstition and did not believe in ghosts. They always said they "never saw anything worse than themselves."

The nearest that my grandfather ever came to this subject was, that in his youth old people had told him that in their youth, the trolls, or "gudfolk," were so plentiful in the winter nights that the women told them to "stand out of their way" as they went to milk the cows. "But," said he, "When the light of Christ's Gospel broke over the Isles, all those beings of darkness fled for ever."

Among the few books that he had besides his Bible and the Congregational hymn-book, were the missionary adventures of John

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Williams in Polynesia and of Robert Moffat in South Africa, which, being a rough cobbler, he had sewed together and put in covers of sheepskin ; and these were my first introduction to the outer world. His only periodical was the Scottish Congregational monthly magazine. To show the paucity of books in those days : as a reward for some special doing of mine, my father gave me a coverless tattered volume with a most wonderful story of a man landing from a wreck on a desert island, and his adventures there till he was frightened by a footprint on the sandy beach ; and I never saw the complete work till I was twenty.

In the early 'seventies of last century, Adam and Charles Black of Edinburgh, having bought the Scott copyright, determined to put a stop to pirating by issuing an edition of the poems, with complete notes, in yellow paper covers like *Chambers's Journal*, and the same size of page, at sixpence per volume. Our schoolmaster got some of these for prizes and I managed to secure one. It contained the *Lady of the Lake* and *Rokeby* ; but to my intense chagrin, when I came to read it, I found that, through a binder's blunder, the middle canto of *Rokeby*, with the burning of the castle, had been left out, and its place

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

supplied by the same number of pages repeated from the *Lady of the Lake*. I took the book to the master, but he could do nothing, and remarked that I still had the notes; small consolation to me at thirteen, when I wanted the ringing lines. Knowing my hunger for reading matter, my father thought I should be a teacher, but I was no talker, never had the knack of imparting information, and never wanted to rule anybody but myself.

Though my grandfather lived with his son, he was not dependent on him, for he had been a successful fisherman, and, owing to his wife's land management, they had little monetary expense beyond croft rent and church and missionary collections; so they had accumulated a small capital which served them to the end. They also retained a quarter interest in the croft, and although my grandmother was now feeble, he did their full share of the work, contenting himself with buttermilk like us children, while his wife had tea. I may add that strong liquors were utterly unknown in our family.

Speaking of his independent means brings up a small incident that I could never forget. Our schoolmaster tried to supplement his

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

salary of £60 a year by selling us school supplies, on which he had a small commission, and one day he exhibited to our admiring eyes an atlas with coloured maps, priced at a shilling. As soon as I got home I set on my father for this shilling, but as I was costing him three shillings a quarter for fees, and he had already furnished me with a geography, he absolutely refused, saying I could study the big wall maps at school. This put me in the dumps for the rest of the evening, but at bedtime my grandfather took me outside, and putting a shilling into my hand, said, "Get doo dy book o' maps."

When the time came for my emigration he accompanied me to Lerwick and remarked at parting, "Wi' little ado I wad set my fit i' da steamer an' gang alang wi' dee."

The loss of my grandmother had been a sad blow to him, but he stood it bravely. Two years her junior, he was active nearly to the last. He rejoined her in 1879, at the age of eighty-six.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

SOME ODD CHARACTERS

My grandfather's tales were not wholly confined to fishing adventures. It was from him that I heard the story of John Young, commonly known as "Mad Jack." This man was a native of the peninsula of Northmaven, the north-west corner of the mainland of Shetland, but he roamed all over the Isles and as far down as Dunrossness. He had been a fisherman to begin with, but as he grew up, being ambitious, he went South to be a sailor, and before going he engaged himself to a young woman of his native place, to whom he sent his pay regularly to accumulate till they should have enough to marry and settle down. But when the time arrived and he came back, he found that his sweetheart had gone off with another man, taking all his money with her. And this unsettled his reason. He lived about the beginning of last century and was still a fine figure of a man when my grandfather knew him. Scott made a short visit to Shetland in 1814, and it is believed that the story of John Young gave him the hint for his poem, "Farewell to Northmaven" in the romance of the *Pirate*.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“Mad Jack” was noted for his dislike to women, but he never harmed a living thing, and was a great favourite with boys, whom he taught to make all sorts of intricate sailor knots. He was, however, subject to occasional fits of apparent rage, when he would hurl stones and peats high into the air, and then start off in a wild race over hill and dale till fatigue stopped him.

“Tammie Robbie” was another queer individual known to my grandfather. He also came from the North, but was quiet, and religiously inclined, never taking food of any kind without uncovering his head and asking a blessing. Yet he was rather bellicose in one way. Living as he did in the days of Napoleon, he heard much of the French, and conceived a great hatred for them. He built a “ship” to fight them, and hid her in the hills in a place where he said neither wind nor water could hurt her. He also had a song on the subject as follows :—

Some fight about pots of porridge, and some about
bannocks of bread,
But I fight with a hazel staff to break the Frenchman's
head.

Whenever he was given a dish of porridge and a bowl of milk, he first drank up all the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

milk and then ate the porridge, saying both had to go into the same stomach. On one occasion he and Jack Young chanced to meet at a house in Sandwick parish, and were sent to sleep in the same room. During the night Jack had one of his paroxysms, and tore around the room to the terror of Tammie, who tried to escape through a small window. He got his head and shoulders through and then stuck, while Jack, after driving a sheath knife clear through the stave of an oak barrel in the room, took his departure by the door. Tammie said afterwards, "It wis da Lord dat keepit da madman aff o' me." And so much for my grandfather's narrations.

I come now to oddities of my own remembrance, and the earliest of these was "Dummy." He was a tall slim man, clad from head to foot in grey moleskin, and he could not articulate a word. All the sound he made was "Wa-wa-wa-wa," sometimes quietly and sometimes furiously, and when excited, as he often seemed to be, he snarled like an angry dog. His name was Mouat, and he came from the Levenwick side of our parish. All we children were afraid of him, and even grown-ups were not at ease in his company. The only person who never objected

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

to him was my grandmother, who called him "Dumb Walter." Whenever he entered our house he went straight to her, and taking her hand in both of his, began stroking it. Then he would drop it, and, like Milton's Death, "grin horribly, a ghastly smile," and pat her on the shoulder. Some said that he drew shapes of coffins on people's hands, and those so treated would die the same year; but it had no effect on my grandmother, who gave him food and meal as she did to the other wanderers. Possibly the poor fellow was tongue-tied, and might have been helped if he had lived now. He was said to be clever at tailoring, and, unlike most of the others, he was neat in his attire. He died when I was pretty small.

Those roaming alms-people were not confined to the male sex, in fact the great majority were women, but naturally they did not have the outstanding peculiarities of the men. There was Eppie "Yuleday," so called because she was said to wash her face only on that day, and truly she looked as yellow as a Mongolian. When we youngsters asked as to her place of abode, she said it was "a mean hoose" at the south dykes of Levenwick. She generally came around when the winter pig was killed,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and got his feet as well as the usual supply of meal.

Then there was Jennie Leask, who came from the North, and who carried the female urge to be in style so far as to wear six bonnets at once. Another woman was so luckless as to have a growth of hair on her chin, and she was called a witch. "I am neither witch nor warlock," she said, "but no one ever throve who went against me." So, although she did not beg, many who would not have helped her otherwise, did so through fear.

Gideon Brown belonged to Delting, a large northern parish, and the most landlocked in Shetland. He used to come around in the winter, and always passed one night in our "resting-chair," and sometimes two or three if the weather was rough, and he had wonderful stories to tell of the jolly times at the "lodges" of the northern fishermen.

That part of the mainland lying north of Lerwick and Scalloway comprises three-quarters of the land area of Shetland, and, whereas in our quarter the fishermen walk directly from their homes to their boats, the distances in the north are too great for inland residents to do this. So "lodges" were constructed on the beaches to accommodate

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

them during the fishing season, and as they were thus away from the restraints of wives and home, and strong liquors were not debarred, they often had wild carousals, which Gideon, the gaberlunzie, evidently enjoyed along with them. But in our parish he had to get along on nothing stronger than buttermilk.

He always carried two large bags over his shoulders, one in front and one behind, in which he stowed oatmeal and beremeal respectively, and when they got too heavy, he sold the contents at the nearest shop or store and started on again, retailing gossip as he went.

On one occasion a young Houlland woman whom he had admired on former visits happened to be present, and he stared at her so persistently that my grandmother remarked, "Gideon, kens doo she's married?" Gideon's eyes opened wide, "Is she?" he said, "Weel, she's just as bonnie as ever." Eppie "Yuleday" might well have been paired with him, they were both equally dusky and dishevelled.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

LIFE IN SHETLAND SIXTY YEARS AGO

THE LAND

There may be some superficial changes now, but the climate and soil are the same. Wheat does not grow in Shetland, and the only cereals are oats and bere—the latter being a small rough species of barley. No fruit grows there, nor was any ever used in my time, and the only vegetables were potatoes, coarse cabbage and Aberdeen turnips. Our croft comprised about eight acres, with stone cottage and out-buildings all straw-thatched, and the rent was four pounds a year. We kept three milking cows and two or three head of young stock. The cows averaged about 400 lbs. in weight, and their milk was rich but limited in quantity. The whole milk was churned, after being soured in a stone crock by the fire, and sometimes we youngsters were allowed a taste of the thick milk after the top part had been dumped into the churn, but oftener the crock went bottom up and we got nothing. We heard of a country where thick sour milk was fed to swine, and we thought, “O happy swine!” I have never

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

lost my relish for it yet. Of course, all the buttermilk was saved, and we had it with our porridge every morning.

The oats, after being flail-thrashed, winnowed, and kiln-dried, were ground by hand, coarse for porridge and fine for cakes. The bere was ground fine by water-power for bannocks, which were baked in front of the fireplace on gridirons placed on hot peat coals raked out on the hearth-stone. Stoves were unknown, and porridge and potatoes were cooked in pots hung by a chain over the fire. When fish and the rare supply of meat were not boiled, they were cooked in frying-pans over the hot coals. We always had plenty of porridge and potatoes, but oatcakes were limited, as also was butter. We were allowed to help ourselves at any time to beremeal bannocks, but if we wanted anything with them, we were told to take the sweet side of our tongues.

We kept a few hens, but eggs were valuable at eightpence a dozen, so we only had them once a year, at Easter. We generally bought a pig for a shilling in February, and kept him over until November, when he was killed for winter meat. We also had a few sheep, which roamed the heathery hills in

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

common with those of other crofters, each earmarked by its owner. These earmarks were registered and used for young cattle as well as sheep.

We had woollen blanket underwear, very necessary in that damp and stormy climate of 60° North. Women and children's outer garments were usually wincey, and men's grey moleskin or canvas, with rough blue woollen overcoats and oilskins for the fishing. All these things were home-made, men as well as women using the needle in the winter months; and older people's clothes were made over for the children. Two imported black cloth Sunday suits would serve a man's lifetime, which commonly reached over the threescore and ten.

There were two or three shoemakers and wool-weavers in the parish, and their work was solid. Summer footwear was a sort of moccasin of untanned cowhide called a "rivlin," but we children often went bare-foot and preferred it, though we got bloody toes through stubbing them on stones. There being no bushes, there were no thorns sharper than heather. In winter, we well-off ones had wooden-soled, iron-shod shoes, very useful for sliding on frozen ponds; but some children

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

were not so lucky, and I remember one boy who skated barefoot. This boy emigrated to the Antipodes, and went through the Great War with three of his sons.

The parish school of Sandwick is about the centre of a mile's radius, and in my time the average attendance was seventy. Each child had to bring a full-length peat under its arm every morning, so there was always a good fire. Peat burns slowly and tenaciously with little flame, but a good deal of heat. It was rarely lighted with matches, which were scarce in those days ; and it was considered a disgrace to let the fires got out in the homes either summer or winter. The peat-brands were "rested" at bedtime by being covered up in the ashes, and fresh fuel was all that was needed to start them in the morning. Churches were fireless at all seasons. At night services one candle was lighted with a match, and that candle lighted all the others. Men lighted their pipes with firebrands, so they only started a smoke at home. Peat-brands were used as torches on stormy winter nights, as the wind kept them alight. At school we children were sent by the master every morning to fetch brands with the tongs from the nearest house.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

School hours were from 8.30 A.M. to 3.30 P.M., with a noon play hour, and every weekday was a schoolday, but only the forenoon on Saturday. The holidays were three weeks in spring and the same in autumn, so that the children could help in the spring work and harvesting. There were no summer or winter holidays.

The master (who had no assistant) was a married man with a large family, and a graduate of Aberdeen University. His salary was sixty pounds a year, with free house and garden, and in addition each child had to pay him a quarterly fee of two or three shillings according to grade, and, of course, all had to furnish their own books and supplies. He kept a large bottle of black ink and filled the ink-stands at a halfpenny each. He also had pens, pencils, slates and copy-books made up from foolscap in which he wrote the top lines himself, and his writing was like copperplate. He was a good teacher.

THE SEA

As to shore labour, wages were two shillings a day of twelve hours on the roads; but sea-fishing was the mainstay, and practi-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

cally every able-bodied man was a fisherman. As soon as the spring crops were in the ground and the peats cut, the men left the weeding and peat-curing to the women, and ranged the sea in open boats, thirty feet of keel, which often went forty miles offshore.

We always had enough of blackfish (coal-fish), either fresh or dried, but of the whitefish (cod and ling) we got only the heads and livers, the rest being carefully cured and sold to pay the rent and other cash expenses. But the livers were valuable, though not then marketable, and many an old man appreciated them as what had given him his lasting stamina. The livers of blackfish and dogfish were refined for use in lamps, there being no paraffin or kerosene there at that time. Dogfish and all fish offal was carefully composted with peat mould for fertiliser on the crofts, as also was seaweed, which was torn up and driven ashore in huge quantities by the winter gales.

As a child I often stood by my grandfather as he boiled those livers in a great black kettle on a peat fire outside, stirring and skimming till the oil was clear on the top, when it was run off into tubs which were covered with heavy stone slabs and kept in an

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

outhouse. The grounds, called "gruit," were the best of fertilisers when mixed with earth. The oil, like other necessities, was shared with poor people who had none, and who brought empty bottles to get them filled. Our lamp, or "colley," was a peculiar affair made by the blacksmith. It consisted of two iron saucers as thick as frying-pans, and each had a spout like that of a frying-pan on one side. The outer and larger saucer had a long upright shank on the side opposite the spout, and this shank was bent over at the top to form a hook to hang on the edge of a board. There was another hook projecting from the middle of this shank, and the smaller and inner saucer had also a shorter shank with a hole in it which fitted the hook on the long shank, so that the two saucers hung the one above the other. The smaller saucer was used to dip up the oil from the tub, and it held the oil and wick, which was a piece of twisted cotton the size and shape of a cigar, and which lay in the spout, and the larger saucer and its spout caught the drippings. The lamp was quite open, but as fish oil is non-explosive, it was perfectly safe ; it burned with a large and smoky flame which would go out if it got too close to the oil, so the wick had to be

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

pushed out with a bodkin occasionally, and then it would flare up brightly.

CLIFF FISHING

Burland, now deserted, was a fine little hamlet on the east side of Sandwick parish, right opposite the Isle of Mousa. The coasts of its Hoaga, a small peninsula with a ruined castle, were noted for the shoals of sillocks which set in close to the rocks, and many a heavy basketful was carried home by me. Those sillocks were the smallest usable size of the coalfish—from four to six inches long—and my father would often fill a basket with two lifts of his pock-net. He distributed among poor people what we did not need for ourselves, and the cats would meet us, mewing in the fields a long way from home. What were not eaten fresh were pickled for a day or two, and then strung up to dry in the wind, when they were called “sour sillocks,” and used in various stages of preservation and decay. Scott in the *Pirate* speaks of eating “sour sillocks that Sathan might choke upon,” and they sometimes got wormy. One old fellow whom I knew cooked and ate them, worms and all, saying it was “all fish.” I

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

never heard of ptomaine poisoning in connection with them, but they were never canned. They were always eaten along with potatoes, and were splendid when fresh.

The next larger size of coalfish, called "Piltocks," were caught with rods from the rocks, but oftener in small boats rowed slowly along the shore. They were from eight to fifteen inches long, and after being salted lightly and smoke-dried were called "hard piltocks," and would keep indefinitely. "Saithe," the largest size of coalfish, often over two feet in length, were caught on long lines at sea, split open, salted and dried like cod and ling, and, like them, shipped abroad, but at a lower price.

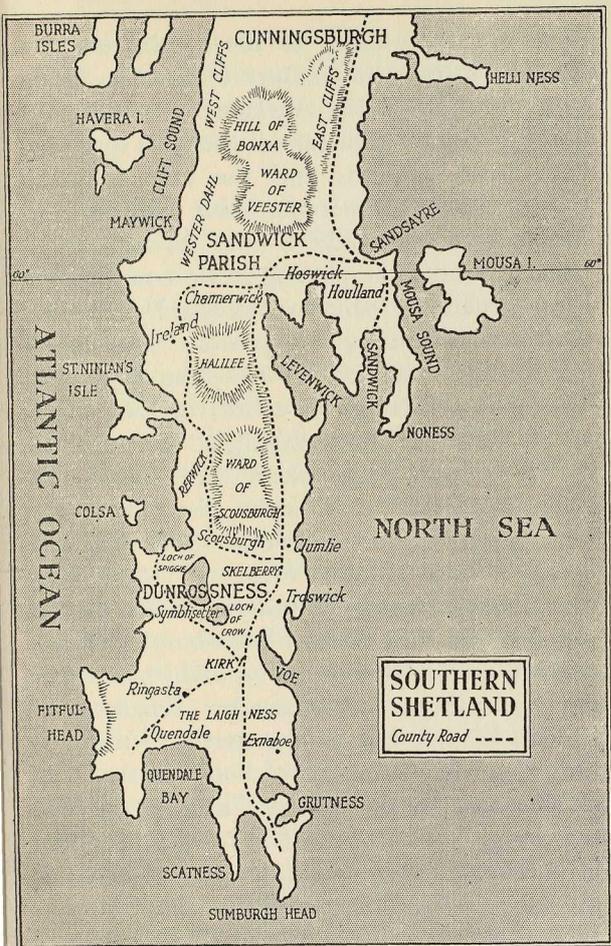
Speaking of fishing from the rocks, my father and I were perched one afternoon on the outside of the "Muckle gio," south of the hamlet of Cumblewick. A ledge there gave good seathold, but there was very slim foothold. I was not satisfied with my position and rose to change it. On my feet were a pair of new "rivlins" (the moccasins before spoken of) and the unworn hair on the soles made them slippery. In an instant the roar of water was in my ears, as I went down, like McGinty, to the bottom of the sea, but I did

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

not quite reach the bottom, for it was over six fathoms. The rock sloped considerably, so that when I rose I was a good way off, and I lay stupidly (as I was told afterwards) like a log on the water. Neither of us could swim, but my father had an extra long rod, the point of which could just reach me. He poked me with it and told me to take hold, but I had not sense enough to do so. Then he tangled me in the line and pulled me in, and, looking well to his footing, his huge hand yanked me from the water, and I was sent home dripping. I had frightened the fish. And many a night in after-life I have wakened with that roar of water in my ears, and been glad to find myself in bed.

SOUTHERN SHETLAND

I will now give something of the configuration of Southern Shetland, the only part of the group with which I had first-hand acquaintance. Beginning with the "taing" or point of Helli Ness, owned by the Heddell's, a legal family of Lerwick, who have a country residence there, we pass west into the district of Cunningsburgh, the people of which are



From Shetland to Vancouver Island

swarthier than those to the south, and are thought to carry a mixture of Spanish blood from the time of the Armada. Their dialect also is peculiar. The land is good, all sprinkled with little hamlets, and the chief physical characteristic is the remarkable inlet of Aith Voe, which winds like a river through fertile fields. Soon after passing it we come to the county road between Lerwick and Dunrossness which curves through the pleasant countryside and brings us under the frowning heights of Torafjeld and Hoofjeld, called the East Cliffs, or the cliffs of Cunningsburgh. The road is cut into their steep sides, and from their summits there is a wide view over the Norwegian channel. Behind them rises the middle Ward Hill, or Wart of Veester, the crowning eminence of Southern Shetland, overtopping even the Wart of Scousburgh. There are two queer lakes on its top, which must be fed by springs, and the view ranges from brown, billowy hills in the north, to the pale blue cloud-like ramparts of Foula in the west, and thence south around Fitful Head and Sumburgh. Eastward it takes in the bold promontory of Noness (now, I understand, the site of a lighthouse) and the Isle of Mousa, and reaches up to the Isle of Bressa and the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

town of Lerwick in the distance. The whole parish of Sandwick spreads out from its base, and its easy slopes have furnished for generations an apparently inexhaustible supply of peat.

Emerging from the East Cliffs, the road strikes the fields of Setter, one of the largest hamlets in Sandwick parish, and my grandmother's birthplace. Setter has the largest hay-meadow in the parish, and also a dam that collects the water from the south-western slopes of Hoofjeld and is the source of the parish burn, which, after receiving two tributary streams from the middle Ward Hill, drives four or five little mills before discharging into Hoswick Bay. The old county road turns west at Setter, and crossing the two aforesaid tributaries (one of them by an ancient and powerful stone arch) mounts the steep hill of Hoswick and thence descends into the gorge of Channerwick.

But about eighty years ago the influence of the Bruces of Sumburgh, who own nearly all Cunningsburgh, Sandwick and Eastern Dunrossness, turned the main road down along the east side of Sandwick parish to the port of Sandsayre, and their many-gabled, turreted residence of Sandlodge. A little farther south,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

below the hamlet of Sand, it divides, one branch continuing south to the ancient village of Sandwick with its wide-open sandy bay, where we got our seaweed, and at the head of which stands the Church of Scotland and the old churchyard, with the manse in the near neighbourhood. On the right hand of this branch is a large peaty swamp called Halla, where ancient logs and tree roots were often dug up. The people of Nones dammed this swamp, and built a mill with an undershot upright wheel to grind their grain. But after some fifteen years a progressive resident of Sandwick village, wishing to enlarge his holding, broke down this dam, drained the swamp and brought it under cultivation. So the poor Nones men had to carry their grain a couple of miles farther, to the parish mills, and one of them—Magnus Tait—said in my hearing, “That man would wrong his neighbour of a pound to gain himself a farthing.”

The other branch of the main road turned west at Sand and went down into the valley of the burn. Thence rising to the north-west over the slopes of the Ward Hill, it avoided the hill of Hoswick altogether, kept out of the bottom of the gorge of Channerwick, and got around to Levenwick above the pass of the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Moull. By taking this course it was a valuable asset to Sandwich parish, giving access, as it did, to wide stretches of fresh peat moor along the Ward Hill. But the large village of Hoswick was left out in the cold, and as it was the chief location of the little landowners, there were not wanting insinuations that the Bruces had purposely engineered the whole affair in a way inimical to them. However, the hill of Hoswick was a real problem, and since those days—and mainly through the activities of Sinclair Thomson Duncan—the village has now much better communication. In fact, I understand the whole parish is now a network of roads.

The county road, having thus negotiated the pass into Levenwick, kept on south along the precipitous hill, which, like that of Hoswick, shelters the little village below from the Atlantic gales. This hill, called Halilee, is an offshoot to the east from the Wart of Scousburgh. There is quite an extent of good land at its base, where the upper and nether "toons" of Levenwick are situated near a deep harbour with a fine sandy beach protected from the only dangerous side, the south-east, by a rugged "taing." Near this "taing" is the graveyard, on a round,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

unfenced sandy knoll where countless generations have been buried, and which still serves its original purpose.

The harbour of Levenwick and the bays of Channerwick, Hoswick, Cullister and Cumblewick are all contiguous, and have the common name of "the South Wicks," and many a summer day as a child in inland Houlland, I have looked across and seen the broad expanse crowded with Dutch and Hanoverian herring busses of every size and shape and colour and rig, bartering and trading with the shore people, and not very particular about the customs.

My grandfather did not approve of this, and our family did not do much of it, so I was only once on board of one of them when my father exchanged some eggs for their bread, called "rusk," which came in chunks, and was certainly tough enough, but quite a change from beremeal bannocks. It was the biggest "ship" I had ever set foot on, and I was much interested in the men, as they clamped around the deck in their solid wooden clogs, and with brown canvas pants two sizes too big for them.

Years after this, I, with a number of other boys and girls, had been carrying ashore salt

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

in baskets on our backs, from a sloop at the port of Sandsayre, at twopence an hour. This sloop had also to discharge salt at Levenwick, and as they were not sure of getting the required help there, the skipper offered to take us there and back free if we would come. Of course we jumped at the chance, but as there was a stiff south wind blowing, the sea was pretty rough at Noness Head and I got sick—but not sufficiently so to vomit before reaching Levenwick. I went on carrying salt to the end, but I never spent a more miserable day, and when the sloop went back in the evening, she went without me. I took the land road of three miles along the front of Halilee, down into the gorge of Channerwick, up and down the breath-taking hill of Hoswick, and so home to Houlland ; and it was several days before my stomach felt right again. I was told that if I had vomited before I got to Levenwick, I would have been all right, but I do not know. I have never been proof against that misery at any period of my life, and neither was my father. My grandfather never knew it.

Passing south from Levenwick, the road enters the moors of Clumlie, a desolate stretch that always reminded me of Eppie “ Yuleday,”

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

although I never saw her there. Levenwick is the southern limit of Sandwick parish, once past it, you are in Dunrossness. The whole east coast, from Clumlie down to Grutness, had a bleak look to me, but I had very little acquaintance with it. The only time I was off the road there was when I fetched a spotted cow which my father had bought from a man named Robert Flaws, who emigrated from Clumlie to New Zealand in 1874.

Beyond the "Ness" Kirk—which is almost a duplicate of the Auld Kirk of Sandwick—the county road has a downward slope all the way to Sumburgh, with the so-called "Wart Hill" on the right hand, and this region is the "Laigh" (or low) Ness. It has many hamlets and some good land both on the east and west sides of the road down to the isthmus of Sumburgh and out along to the low point of Scatness, which divides the West Voe of Sumburgh from the bay of Quendale. The people there used to have a hard time getting their peats, the nearest source of supply being the southern slopes of Halilee, some eight miles north. The advent of the motor truck must be a godsend to them.

I was only once at Sumburgh—about 1875—being sent there by my father in connection

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

with some horse transaction between him and the laird's "grieve," or farm manager, John Leslie ; and of course it was a pedestrian trip of twelve miles each way. I could see that Sumburgh Head was a peninsula, almost cut off from the mainland by the West Voe and that of Grutness on the east. The connecting link is a strip of sand, along the highest part of which the highway runs, but in winter storms the waves sometimes meet from the east and west sides. A coarse bent grass helps to hold the isthmus in place, and the want of this has probably hastened the destruction of a wide area of valuable land west of the Wart ridge, by the wind-driven sands from the wide and shallow bay of Quendale.

At the time I was at Sumburgh, the last of the Bruces in the regular succession of the male line—a tall gentleman of commanding presence—was just completing, at almost ruinous cost, the construction of a great mansion on the ancestral location. His father, a much-respected proprietor of quiet tastes, had contented himself with the smaller residence at Sandlodge. And now the massive building at Sumburgh is a tourist hotel ! *Sic transit gloria mundi.* The Bruces claim descent

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

from King Robert of Bannockburn, and I saw a family tree on the wall in their library at Sandlodge to prove it ; but it is a fearfully long and involved affair.

The ancient ruins close by, to which Scott gave the name of Jarlshof, are shown by late exploration to be far older and more extensive than either he or anyone else ever imagined, being long antecedent to the Jarls. The home farm of Sumburgh, which surrounds both the ruins and the mansion, is excellent land well cultivated. Grutness Voe, close by to the east, is a great fish-curing station, and has a substantial stone quay built for the use of the lighthouse, where its supplies are landed and stored. The lighthouse itself, a mile away up a steep green slope, has surmounted Sumburgh Head from shortly after the time of Scott. From it is seen very clearly that remarkable conflict of tides—the famous “Roust” of Sumburgh—caused by the meeting of the German and Atlantic Oceans from the east and west sides of Shetland. It is about three miles wide, stretching away to the south, and even in calm weather it roars like a waterfall, but in storm the noise is deafening, and the largest ships are tossed heavily ; and yet the Dunrossness fishermen in their small boats

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

work fearlessly along the edges of it. In my time these men planned their fishing differently from the men of Sandwick parish, and while the latter went forty miles south-east into the German Ocean with long lines after cod and ling, and with nets for herring, the Dunrossness men, with expert knowledge of tides and currents, bought herring for bait from the Sandwick men, kept close along the shore, and, using only handlines, filled their four-oared boats with great "saithe," pulled from the very racing "Roust."

Before reaching the "Ness" Kirk, the county road branches at the manse and glebe of Skelbrae, occupied in 1875 by the Rev. William Brand, M.A., a good minister and a good farmer, whom I had known previously at Sandwick, where he built a dam which drove a thrashing machine for the Sandwick glebe.

The "Ness" Kirk is surrounded by the kirkyard, which presents the rare instance of a Shetland cemetery away from the sandy sea-shore. Another road breaks off from the county road here, turning south-west, and after passing the Free Church and Baptist Chapel, goes down to Ringasta and Quendale. The land here is a deep sandy loam and raises

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

excellent potatoes. In 1875 the Quendale estate, long passed from its original owners, the Sinclairs, belonged to the Grierson family, who had built a modern overshot mill, the power for which was furnished by a dam at the base of the magnificent sea-cliff mountain of Fitful Head. This natural wonder dominates a wide extent of the archipelago. Forty miles north the premier peak of Shetland, Rona's Hill in Northmaven, stands blue over intervening hills, voes and isles. Westward stretches the vast ocean, with the cloudlands of Foula on its horizon. Southward the precipitous cliffs of the Fair Isle seem nearer than they are. Right below is the wide open bay of Quendale, with its self-created sandy desert to the east. Sumburgh, with its 300 feet of altitude five miles off, looks small. The isle of Mousa shows in the far east, and the Wart of Scousburgh, with hills to the north, completes the circle.

That branch of the county road which turns west at Skelbrae, runs along the southwest slopes of the Wart of Scousburgh, and above the large freshwater Loch of Spiggie, past the village of Scousburgh, through the cliffs of that name, a precipitous part of the Wart, and on through a valley to the fine farm

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of Bigton which is part of the estate of the Bruces of Symbister, but has been connected for generations with the farming family of Budge. The western slanting country from Skelbrae around to Bigton is a peculiarly beautiful part of Shetland. The grand bulk of Fitful is full in view, and in mid-ocean north of it is the little isle of Colsa, where we got our millstones. Still farther north, and right opposite Bigton, is the ecclesiastical isle of St Ringan, which, like Sumburgh Head, is not an isle, but a peninsula, being connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus of white sand, across which I have taken horses and beef cattle to the fine grass of the isle on payment of a certain fee to Farmer Budge, who holds the lease. St Ringan's Isle has an ancient churchyard on its sandy front, where I have seen human bones exposed; and in Scott's time there were the remains of a church, now obliterated by the shifting sands. The isle is well bulwarked by cliffs on the west side.

In my time, when the county road passed Bigton and fronted the hamlet of Ireland, it turned round to the east, and passing along the side of a dark moorland valley with the Red Burn running west through its bottom,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

joined the county road again above the gorge of Channerwick, with Halilee rising on the south. The last time I saw that road was in the spring of 1877, when I tramped it to the shop of Gavin Henderson, near Scousburgh, to pay twelve shillings for a pair of strong boots when I was outfitting for emigration. There were then two poor habitations, occupied, on the steep slope rising on the north side of the Red Burn, and as far as I remember, there were no others east of Ireland ; and north of Ireland there were no roads. A "gaet" or footpath wandered over rough country to the small hamlet of Maywick in a deep cove facing north-west and looking up the long Cliff Sound. Farther up through the pathless heathery wilderness, which was well-named by Scott "The Wastes of Dunrossness," one comes on the lonely steading of Deepdale, and still farther on you strike a wide open grassy space free of heather, called "The House of Sinabister," from a tradition that a large house once stood there, but there is no other trace of it.

You are now close to the West Cliffs, a series of majestic heights overlooking Cliff Sound. They are on a far grander scale than the East Cliffs, but there is no road through

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

them, only a narrow and dangerous sheep-path along their base. From their tops the view is vast, over the isles of Havera and Burra spread out below, with the blue ramparts of Foula, now looming clearer, high above them. The prospect takes in the far-stretching land of Walls in the north-west, and ranges down to Fitful, fading blue in the south. When a child I was one day with my father hunting a pony along the heights, and he unloosed an earth-fast boulder weighing about 150 lbs. and started it down from the top. At first it moved slowly, but as it gathered momentum it rose from the ground higher and higher till finally it bounded fifty feet in the air, before it crashed over the cliff into the ocean.

One of these heights—Bonxa—is nearly a thousand feet, and it brings us as far north as Cunningsburgh, on the east coast, the limit of my personal knowledge of the topography of Shetland.

The total area of the archipelago is about 550 square miles, less than one-third of which is arable, the rest being rocks, peat-moss and heathery hills. Yet it has a present population of 21,421, and this is a decrease of over 10,000 from sixty years ago, when women outnumbered the men by more than 2000.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

There was then no lack of housekeepers, male bodily disablement was no bar to banns, and bachelors were limited to cranks. The same disparity between the sexes still continues, and no doubt emigration fosters it.

YOUTHFUL REMINISCENCES

Contrary to the children of most countries we youngsters preferred the restful winter season to the summer, as the whole family could gather around the bright peat fire and tell or listen to stories. The days were short, only about six hours, but the nights were proportionately long, and we visited from house to house on moonlight nights, or, when the moon was absent, carrying peat torches. We could also sleep all we wanted, whereas in the practically nightless days of summer, when a small print Bible could be read outside at midnight, we had to work from dawn till dark. Many a time I was pulled out of bed before 4 A.M. with my eyelashes glued to my cheeks, to drive the peat-laden ponies for some three hours before school-time. Then after school-hours came the hoeing of vegetables and various other jobs.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

But we had one holiday in summer—mid-summer day—which we called “Johnsmas.” On that day we were given porridge boiled with sweet milk, and we made a great fire on the hill which rose to the south of Houlland, and the smoke of it could be seen all over the parish. And the boys and girls of other hamlets had fires too on their nearest hills, and great was the competition as to who could raise the biggest smoke. For this purpose we carried baskets of seaweed from the shore, and burdens of damp white moss from the sides of the Wart of Veester.

The Knowe of Houlland was a great viewpoint for the parish, and one old inhabitant, the “rocking” grandfather before referred to, mounted it every morning, and traversed the top with his hands behind his back, and the tassel of his red woollen knitted cap nodding on his head. Northward lay the long slopes of the Wart of Veister, with the hamlets of Setter, Crooster, Veister, Farnsgarth and Swinister all scattered over them. Westward half a mile was the parish school, with the Congregational and Methodist Chapels a little below, near the hamlet of Stove, while beyond and across the burn was the large village of Hoswick under its steep protecting hill. South-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ward came Cullister, and Levenwick Harbour under Halilee, and then our bonfire hill, beyond which my grandparents broke up new land in their early married life. Eastward was the ancient village of Sandwick with its open bay, and the large Established Church near the old churchyard, also the manse. Still farther east lay the isle of Mousa, a mile and a half long, by half that width (or about twice the size of St Ringan's). Some 130 years ago Mousa was owned by a gentleman named Piper, and, as a servant girl, my grandmother looked after his cows. His mansion, called the Ha' of Mousa, with slate roof and wooden floors and staircase, was still intact in my time, standing on a slope a little east of the castle, facing north. He had one or two tenants besides the land he used himself. I saw the remains of a homestead and the furrows of cultivated land.

After Piper died, Mousa fell into the hands of the Bruces, who removed the people, replacing them with sheep and cattle. The isle has a small lake, and on the east side there is a curious desert stretch, called "the Swarf," thickly covered with grey rocks, where hosts of sea-birds raise their families. One spring morning my father took us in a

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

small boat from the port of Sandsayre to Mousa, and we gathered gull's eggs by the dozen, which gave us an Easter feast for once.

But the most attractive feature of the isle is its castle or "broch," the builders of which—and even the race responsible—are lost in the mists of antiquity. It stands full in view on the west coast, looks like a Martello tower, and is the most perfect specimen of its kind in existence. Built of small, hard, slaty stone in regular courses, without lime or cement of any kind, it seems as impervious to time as the rocks and cliffs around it. There is only one outside door opening, and the walls are so thick that it looks like a tunnel. Coming inside, there is nothing but the sky overhead and a well in the middle of the earthen floor, in which I saw a dead weasel floating. Turning to the left there is a dark hole in the inside of the wall letting you into a kind of staircase which winds spirally upward in the thickness of the wall to the top, some forty-five feet from the ground. Along this stair there are dark holes or cells here and there, also in the thickness of the wall. There does not seem ever to have been any roof to the structure. The ground floor is twenty feet across and there are also some dark holes or cells around it.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A band of foolish tourists from the South once started a fire on the top of the tower. This naturally angered the Bruces, who there-upon barred all entrance to the isle for several years, and I understand it is still necessary for strangers to get a permit at Sandlodge.

The view from the Knowe of Houlland takes in also the whole valley of the burn running south-westerly from Setter to the bay of Hoswick, with all the little mills on it. One of these mills, partly owned by my father, stood below Swinister, something over half a mile from home. It was a stone-built hut, with floor of stone flags, and a straw-thatched roof. The burn was too weak to drive it except during winter freshets, and then the stream was turned on through a wooden trough. The water from this trough struck the flanges of a horizontal wheel under the mill floor, and the spindle, or iron shaft, of this wheel went up through the floor and the nether millstone above, to be firmly fixed into the upper millstone, which consequently revolved at the same speed as the wheel. Of course such machinery needs a very strong force of water, so it is useless except in the black tempestuous winter when streams are high, hence heavy rains in Shetland are called

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“ mill-waters.” The bottom end of the spindle under the wheel stood in a heavy oak plank to one end of which was fitted an upright timber called the “lightening tree,” which also rose through the floor of the mill and was connected with a cross-bar above. A wedge driven between this cross-bar and the floor raised or lowered the wheel and the upper millstone, thus grinding either fine or coarse as wanted.

Entering the mill, the inner part of the floor which contained the millstones was sunk a foot below the rest, with a space two feet wide around the stones into which the ground grain fell. A wooden grain hopper like an inverted pyramid was suspended from the roof by cowhide straps, right over the mill. The opening in the narrow end of the hopper let the grain into the “shoe,” a square box hung by thongs directly under it. This shoe had a hole at one end just above the “eye” of the mill through which the grain dropped as needed, its movement accelerated by the “clapper,” a block of wood thong-tied to the side of the shoe and resting on the mill, whose motion kept it tapping the side of the shoe. It was a cold and eerie business to sit through a long black winter night, as I

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

did, lighted by a dim "colley," listening to the drone of the mill and the rattle of the clapper; afraid to sleep lest the ground grist should rise and choke the mill, or else some obstruction stop the flow of grain, leaving the millstones bare to grind out sand into the meal. Glad was I of the first streaks of dawn, even though I might be driven out by a neighbour, for each owner of the mill had his own day of the week to grind. Ours was Thursday, so the Friday man could turn us out if he wanted to. It is said that mills of this same construction are still in use among the Balkan peasantry.

During my time the port of Sandsayre, being the nearest shipping point to Lerwick, was the business centre for the parish; and the two merchants there, who were also fishcurers, served practically the whole district. One of them, James Smith, was a native of Burland, and started his mercantile life on a £1 note in the "ben" end of his father's cottage. He soon got ahead and had fishing-smacks of his own, and he traded as far as Dunrossness and Fair Isle, but there he met opposition from the last John Bruce, whose heavy outlay at Sumburgh obliged him to try and raise money as a merchant and fish-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

dealer. Smith's one failing was liquor, which, strangely enough, did not incapacitate him from being an expert steersman, as my father saw, when he made several rough trips to Fair Isle along with him. The other merchant, Thomas Tulloch, was of a different stamp, solid and slow-moving. His wife, who was a niece of my grandmother, was said to be superior to him in business acumen, and as a firm they certainly got on and did well. My father, who was never in debt to anyone, dealt as he pleased, with either of the two Sandsayre merchants.

THE SAILOR

As before mentioned, my grandfather's two older sons, William and Eric, left home in their early twenties to be sailors. They had to take different ships, and Eric's time was short (he died at Bristol, England) and I, who by right should have been my grandfather's namesake, was by him named after his dead son. William never came back; like Noah's raven he went to and fro over the waters. He was not clever at writing, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

he wrote at long intervals, knowing that each recipient of a letter in Shetland had to pay a shilling for it in those days, and his father's shillings were scarce. He wrote to his mother from New Orleans when the people there were dying of yellow fever "at the rate of sixty in a day," and he quoted the old verse she had taught him :—

Plagues and deaths around me fly, till He bids, I cannot
die ;
Not a single shaft can hit till the Lord of life sees fit.

From Boston he sent her, by a returning sailor friend, a wooden American clock of the famous "Sam Slick" construction, which, being fitted into an ornamental case by his Uncle Eric, became the standard timekeeper for the hamlet of Houlland all my time there. He "ran" from his ship in Australia and tried gold-digging there without profit, and finally he settled at what Shetlanders called "the backside of America," in the Comox Valley, on Vancouver Island. He took up what was known as Section XVI, containing 150 acres, and in 1863 he wrote home for one of his brothers, either Oliver or Robert, to come out and work it along with him, and the brother should be half-owner of the land.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Robert, my father, wanted to go, as he had a family of two boys and a girl (of which I was the oldest), while Oliver had only one girl ; but Oliver said he was determined to go whether Robert went or not. So, as one of them had to stay with their parents, Robert stayed, and Oliver went out by the brig *Kinnaird* around Cape Horn, a voyage of five months, landing at Victoria in the spring of 1864.

THE BROTHERS

William and Oliver worked together for two years, and then Oliver, who was always a very hard worker, began to grumble that William spent too much time over the newspapers. William held that he had a right to do this, as it was owing to him that they had the land, but Oliver retorted that the land would not keep them unless they worked it, and they should never stay inside in fine weather. Then, as they had difficulty in selling their livestock and produce profitably, William proposed that he should go to Victoria in the fall, rent a house of some kind, and stay over the winter, selling the produce

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

which Oliver should ship down to him. Oliver agreed to this, and took up the care of things at home, shipping down as William ordered. But when spring came and William returned, he brought no money, for all profits had gone in defraying expenses, and he said that, after all, farm life was best, as things grew while you slept.

This enraged Oliver, who wanted to make some money to go back to Shetland for his wife and daughter. At last he managed it somehow. I believe he borrowed a little from a neighbour—but, like most Shetlanders, he could travel at a minimum of cost. He came home by way of Panama in 1868, and stayed a year along with us and the old people, making a little money at the herring fishing; but all the time he was shivering, the damp wind went through him, he said. His wife and daughter, who, during his absence, had lived along with us, were very unwilling to leave, but he finally persuaded them by promising to take them back to Shetland in five years if they then wished him to do so. So they left in 1870. His wife told me afterwards that she had put the limit of their American stay at ten years, as she knew they could not make enough in five to carry them

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

both ways. However, before the five years were up, they had so changed in their outlook that Oliver told me he could not have moved them back if he had tried to. They came out by the American railways to San Francisco and thence up to Victoria, so Oliver had trial of the three routes to Vancouver Island. Two hired Indians brought them up in a canoe from Nanaimo, and when they arrived William said to Oliver, "You have got your own people with you now, and I will get out."

HOUSE-BUILDING

Neither William nor Oliver (both now in their late thirties) had ever handled an axe before coming to Vancouver Island, and they never learned. To the last they cut their trees beaver-like, all round about, and William's first cabin, in 1862, of which I saw the remains, had been made of alder sticks chinked with moss and mud, and with a thatch of fern, held in place by logs. After Oliver came they set about the erection of a decent habitation, and they planned it after the stone-built cottage in which they

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

had been brought up. They employed a wandering Shetland carpenter, named Gideon Halcrow, to build it, with a "but" and a "ben" on the ground floor and two rooms upstairs, but all the rooms were much larger than in the Shetland cottage. Also, its floors were all wooden, whereas in Shetland the ground floor in the "ben" end was stone flags; and in the "but" end, which was kitchen and living-room combined, part flags and part hard-beaten earth. (I was born in that cottage, and I remember every crack and line and furrow in the rough hearth-stone where the peat-coals were raked out for the bread-baking.) This new Comox cottage had fir sills hewn straight on two sides; round trimmed fir poles for studding, joists and rafters; and was weather boarded on the outside with split spruce boards and roofed with spruce shingles. It was lined inside and floored with six-inch tongue and groove lumber brought up from Victoria. My grandmother tried to console her daughter-in-law at parting by reminding her that she would have a wooden floor to walk on. That fine residence is long gone from the earth, while its Shetland original still stands, though, alas! it is now a cow byre.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

As compared with his first shelter the new house was a mansion for William, and when he thus separated himself from Oliver, he simply moved to the "ben" end, downstairs and up, while Oliver kept the "but" end living-room, with room above to which he had to build a staircase, as the original staircase was in William's end. Oliver also soon after added a lean-to of rough boards at the back, one-half of which was a bedroom and the other a dairy. William also added a lean-to which he used as bedroom and kitchen, and he got a small second-hand stove, while Oliver contented himself with the old fireplace, to which his wife had always been accustomed; but he had a big camp-oven instead of a gridiron for bread, to the use of which he very quickly initiated her, for he had had the good sense, during his years of bachelorhood to learn the art of wheat-flour baking from a neighbour-settler, and he could make excellent bread. William was too opinionated to learn.

With Halcrow's help they had also built two large connected barns, one of logs, and one with bents, with cattle sheds: William took the bent barn, and Oliver the log affair, and they divided the cattle and swine, but

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

not the land—each worked as much of it as he pleased. Section XVI was nearly all good land ; compared with a Shetland croft it was an estate. It was naturally open except for berry and rose bushes and a heavy growth of fern, and there was enough timber and large alder on it to last their lifetime for firewood. Yet Oliver, looking to the future, had pre-empted 150 acres adjoining it on the back. This land was a hilly ridge of almost pure gravel, the soil having been eaten out by prehistoric fires, and it was covered with old rotting mossy logs thrown criss-cross, and a sparse growth of scrubby fir. Oliver thought it might come in handy for pasture and firewood later on ; but all his time it was merely a maze for his milk cows to get lost in, and it is so still, and not worth the taxes paid on it.

And this was the situation when I came on the scene in 1877.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

VANCOUVER ISLAND

THE COAST

Vancouver Island must not be confused with Vancouver City, which is on the mainland of British Columbia, and is the Pacific metropolis of Canada. It was originally Hastings Village, the site of a large exporting saw-mill; and it is only about fifty years since it borrowed the name of Vancouver. But it is one hundred and fifty years since Vancouver Island took its name from George Vancouver, who circumnavigated it, and found it was separate from the Continent. It has no more connection with Vancouver City than the Isle of Wight has with Southampton.

This Island, by far the largest on the whole long coast from Cape Horn to Behring Sea, has been called "the England of the Pacific" because of its harbours and minerals. It lies, roughly, between the latitudes of Exeter and Paris, and covers as many degrees of longitude as would a line connecting these two cities. Approximately, it is 280 miles long by 75 miles wide, with an area of 16,400 square miles. It has a very extensive coast-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

line, owing to its numerous bays and fjords, many of which are safe and commodious enough for the largest ships.

The southern third of the Island is almost severed from the rest by the deep inlet of Barkley Sound coming in from the west, and its continuation, the Alberni "canal," a natural channel like a wide river cutting in through the land. The small town of Alberni at its head has a large exporting saw-mill and is also one of the chief fishing stations scattered up and down the west coast. The climate of southern Vancouver Island is dry, the average yearly rainfall at the city of Victoria being only 28 inches, or little more than half that of Vancouver City. The northern part of the east coast is moister, precipitation in Comox Valley averaging over 40 inches; and the west coast of the Island facing the open Pacific is extremely wet, and at one point reaches 200 inches. The temperature, however, rarely gets down to zero in any inhabited part of the Island, and the snowfall is very capricious.

Victoria, at the south end, is the provincial capital, and originally was a Hudson Bay fort, dating from the early 'forties of last century. It tried to keep up with the growth

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of Vancouver City in the 'eighties, but soon had to drop out of the race. It tried also to get the Provincial University but failed, and had to content itself with having secured the Parliament buildings and the seat of government. It is said to be the finest residential city in Canada, and, taking climate and everything else into consideration, it probably is. Esquimalt, in the near vicinity, with a large dry dock, was long the fortified station of the British Navy in the North Pacific, and is still used as such by the little Canadian fleet.

The city of Nanaimo, on the east coast and some 70 miles north-west of Victoria, dates from the early 'fifties, and is the centre of the coal-mining industry of the province. Comox Valley, 60 miles farther up the coast, was first settled in 1862. Campbell River, 30 miles above Comox, is a logging centre, and has continental fame as an angling resort, and the home of the "Tyee" (big) salmon, many of which weigh over 50 lbs. Beyond this, and above the rushing current of Seymour Narrows, is Alert Bay, and still farther, Port Hardy, where a road crosses the Island to the west coast, and at the extreme north end of the Island is the Scandinavian settlement of Holberg.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Turning down the west side of the Island, we come first to the wide inlet of Quatsino Sound, where there is a large pulp-mill. Several smaller inlets follow, till, about the middle of the coast, we enter the historic Nootka Sound, the only point of British Columbia visited by Captain Cook, and he thought he was anchoring in a bay of the mainland. And Nootka still remains almost as wild and primitive as when he saw it in 1778. The native tribes on the west coast are far hardier and more adventurous than those on the east side, their rough seas and rougher land tend to maintain them both in numbers and virility. If a band of the old Shetland crofter-fishermen had been suddenly set down with their boats on the west coast of Vancouver Island, they would have thought themselves in Paradise. Plenty of croft room there, and far less inhospitable seas. Following Cook, British traders from the China side of the Pacific came over in search of furs, and ten years later Americans came around Cape Horn on the same errand, but the Indians did not like the "Boston men," as they called them, so well as the "King George men," who treated them with more civility.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

In those days Spanish possessions on the Pacific included California, and from there they put forward the extravagant claim of jurisdiction over the whole coast right up to the Russian territory of Alaska. British traders disputed this, and the Home Government backed them up, till finally in 1792 the Spanish governor, Quadra, met Vancouver at Nootka and arranged to turn over the Island to British ownership. His name was then bracketed with Vancouver's, and I have seen maps of a hundred years ago which recorded the transferred possession as "Quadra and Vancouver Island."

Other inlets dent the coast from Nootka down to Barkley Sound, and the town of Alberni there is connected by motor road and also by railway, with all east coast points, up as far as Comox Valley; the road continuing on to Campbell River. Below Barkley Sound is Cape Beale, the location of the Canadian end of the Pacific telegraph cable to Australia; and so we get around to Victoria again.

The long sheltered passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland—called at various points the Gulf of Georgia, Seymour Narrows and Johnstone Strait—is full of small

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

islands named after the old Spanish and British navigators. They are mostly inhabited, and many of them of almost tropical beauty.

THE INTERIOR

When I first came to the Island its huge pine forests—the heaviest in the world—were practically intact, and it was easy to understand that the whole region looked dark, damp and forbidding to the Spaniards who, coming as they did, from the sunny South, were the less disposed to make trouble about giving it up. But since this century came in, the machine style of logging, brought over from the American side, has made devastating inroads, and, if there is no let-up, it is said that another thirty years will see the country denuded of all its original growth. Having exhausted the nearer and lower levels, the railways and trucks are beginning to climb the mountain sides after the sparser plunder there. There is need of some such system of forest conservation and management as is practised in the Scandinavian countries if timber is to be—as it should be—a permanent asset of the Island.

Unfortunately for agriculture, a rugged

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

range of snow-capped mountains runs nearly from end to end of the Island, keeping closest, however, to the Pacific coast. On that side, therefore, there is small chance for farming, and the streams are mere mountain torrents. On the east side there is in some places a fairly wide stretch of level land, and the streams can be ascended by canoes and small boats. It is in the valleys of these small rivers that good soil is found, and, admittedly, the Comox district (where the writer has spent the last fifty-eight years, and where he hopes to end his days) is the best of these. Here the Island is near its widest, and the mountains, which here reach their highest in the glacier peak of Albert Edward (7000 feet), stand far back from the coast. Beyond Campbell River the range gets lower as it approaches the northern end of the Island.

In the foothills, overlooking Comox Valley, there is a provincial reserve called Strathcona Park, full of fine Alpine scenery, and the southern part of it, known as "the Forbidden Plateau," from an Indian tradition that it is the home of evil spirits, has lately drawn considerable attention from tourists, being full of small lakes, grass meadows, and clumps of trees—a beautiful natural park.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Near by is Comox Lake, a fine, large and deep body of water fed by streams from the Great Glacier. It is the source of one of the Comox Valley rivers and is well stocked with fish, which are caught from boats. Farther north on the Strathcona reserve is Buttle's Lake, one of the largest on the Island, and named after its discoverer. Campbell River is its outlet to the sea. It is only within the last twenty years that this upland country has been known, the early Comox settlers being too busy making a living from the soil to do much exploration. Though they always lifted up their eyes to the hills, their way there was barred by the dense and heavy undergrowth in the huge forests surrounding the valley, a hindrance now in great measure removed, whether for weal or ill, by the big logging companies.

There was no natural grass in Comox Valley, and the unwooded part was covered with a dense growth of fern, and a tangle of wild rose and berry bushes. The fern grew to a height of five feet, and its roots were a mass of underground ropes, much heavier than those of hops or nettles, making ploughing very difficult, though, as they kept the soil loose and porous, enormous crops of splendid

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

potatoes were raised in early days, and even now it is claimed that Vancouver Island can beat the world in that line. The fern was the only weed then, but those of civilisation soon appeared with the importation of grass seed from the East. The so-called "Canada" thistle (which was a forage plant in England in the time of Elizabeth) created some alarm at first, as it grew and spread tremendously, but it soon abated its first vigour, and now makes excellent ensilage. The only really troublesome weed so far is wild mustard, and it needs careful watching and picking when it flaunts its yellow flag.

Everything that grows in England grows here with less care, and while atmospheric conditions are not ideal for the weak-lunged and rheumatic, to people in good health they are very agreeable. The bitter east winds so prevalent in the English spring are here shut off by the mainland mountains. Sunstroke is unknown, and thunderstorms extremely rare. As regards wild animals, the largest is the elk, and there is abundance of deer, and, as a consequence, black bears, cougars and wolves are common, but never attack people, and the Island is entirely destitute of poisonous reptiles.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE PIONEERS OF COMOX VALLEY

As already noted, this Valley was first settled by white people in the summer of 1862. There were two bands, one of gold miners and sailors which came up from Australia, and another of emigrants from the British Isles which sailed around Cape Horn. The whole numbered about sixty, and all, except one Eastern Canadian named Bridges, were natives of the United Kingdom.

Their attraction had been the Cariboo gold strike of 1858, but that excitement had died down, and Attorney-General Carey of Victoria advised them to try farming at Comox.

They were all single men but two—James Robb, fifty, from Aberdeenshire, with wife and grown-up family of one son and three daughters; and William Harmston, thirty-eight, from Lincolnshire, with wife and two small children, son and daughter. The Robbs left no descendants in the Valley, but the Plantas of Nanaimo are kin. Harmston lived only four years after his arrival, but his son got a wife from Eastern Canada and left a large family, one of whom fell in France; and the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

daughter, before she was well grown up, married an Englishman from Nanaimo, and became the mother of the mighty household of the Cliffe's, living to a good old age.

Of the single pioneers, the most notable were Reginald Pidcock, clergyman's son, from London, who built the first sawmill ; Reginald Carwithen, also a clergyman's son, from Devonshire, who held a large tract of land, fetched a wife from Newfoundland, and left a large family ; and George Fawcett Drabble, middle-aged civil engineer from Derbyshire, who became Government Agent, laid out all the main roads and surveyed the farm lines. In addition to his public offices, Drabble had a farm in the middle of the Valley, adjoining that of Harmston, on the lower road. It was of rolling quality, and had a large creek running through it, tributary to the Tsolum, the main river of the Valley. On this creek he built a little grist-mill, and then, as he was chronically short of cash, he sold the whole thing to William Rennison, a foundry man from Yorkshire, who operated the mill for a while, but it gradually fell into disuse as dealers brought in feed from outside. Rennison's descendants still hold half the farm, including the mill site.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Drabble's antecedents were doubtful. He was said to be a married man with a family, but his only link with the Old Land was his mother, who wrote and sent him money occasionally. Some one in my hearing once asked him what he thought of the Bible, "It will be well for most of us," he replied, "if there is no truth in it." I remember giving him a copy of *John Ploughman's Pictures* (ten cents in the Seaside Library) and it seemed to interest him. Like many of the old-timers he was much bothered by liquor, and yet he must have been around seventy when he died in the Cumberland hospital. In appearance he reminded me strongly of portraits of Anthony Trollope. He was a very neat penman and draughtsman.

Carwithen's land lay next above Drabble, and beyond him was John Bailey, from Somersetshire, with 300 acres. About 1865 he got up a barn building "bee," to which most of his neighbours gathered, and Drabble, being the oldest man, was appointed cook for the occasion. At night the crowd congratulated him on his culinary ability, and especially on a splendid cake he had made. "Yes," he said, "it ought to be good when I put two large eggs into it." But he con-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

fessed later, that, unknown to Bailey, he had added ten eggs more. Bailey returned to England a few years after, and took up the management of a large flour mill inherited from his father. About 1880 he was Mayor of Glastonbury. In 1886 I tried to buy part of his land, but he would not sell, and to the end of his life he held on to it, being obsessed with the idea of sometime coming back. About 1915 his son, a lawyer, disposed of it.

Above him, and beyond the cross-road, lies the farm of Charles Bridges, the only Canadian among the pioneers. He went back to Toronto in the early 'eighties and brought out a wife, who, with his sons, still holds the place.

Beyond him was Patrick Moore, Irishman, who sold out in the 'eighties, and whose place has changed hands many times since ; and above him, and the last of the pioneers on that lower road, was the location of John Brown, carpenter, now owned by Captain Bates.

The lowest pioneer on what is called the upper road was William Beech, from Staffordshire, on what is now the Halliday farm. Next above him was George Ford, from Gloucestershire, on what was afterwards the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Finley farm. Then came William Musters, Englishman, whose possessions extended nearly to what is now the Sandwich golf course. Between him and it, was Andrew Rogers, who soon left. On the future golf course was John Fitzgerald, Irishman, who later brought up his Scots wife and son from Australia.

Beyond Fitzgerald was Henry Wilson Ross, ship's mate from Liverpool, little over five feet, with a long white beard, and noted for his love of animals. He used to ride four miles to the landing for mail and supplies, perched on the back of a huge ox, and when he wanted bulky stuff, he hitched him to a home-made two-wheeled cart. He was the first in the Valley to raise poultry on a large scale. Above him was Robert Ritchie, Glasgow baker, whose farm contacted Bailey's on the lower road; and beyond him and the cross-road was William Machin, Midland Englishman, who adjoined Bridges below; and the last open place on the upper road was taken by David William Gordon, Nanaimo builder and contractor, who never lived on it permanently. He married one of Robb's daughters, and went into politics, representing at Ottawa for many years the whole of Vancouver Island outside the city of Victoria.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

The Tsolum River, which has its sources in the north, around Alexandra Peak, comes down the open Valley, bounding the lower road farms on their lower ends. Six of the pioneers located on its western bank, as follows : Henry Maude, Englishman, on what is now the Rees farm, and above him in succession were William Cameron and William McCord, Scotsmen, Adam McKelvey and James Clarke, Irishmen, and Robert Thomas, Welshman. Cameron and McCord soon left, and their places were taken over by McKelvey, who thus became owner of 300 acres of the very best land in the Valley. All the rest of the land west of the Tsolum was then heavily timbered.

The Tsolum, after passing the Rees farm, keeps on through low swampy forest till it bounds on the east the bottom of the Duncan farm (Section XVI). Here it is joined by the Puntledge River from the west, a larger stream, but much steeper and more rapid as it comes down the hills from Comox Lake. After its junction with the Tsolum, the united stream is called the Courtenay River, from an English officer who never saw it, and it soon after enters Comox Bay, where it winds through the silt with which it has shallowed

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

it for centuries, and is navigable by canoes and small boats, and at high tide by small sloops up above the junction of the two rivers. Within the last ten years, however, the Ottawa Government has done considerable dredging here, so that steamers of light draught now ascend the river half a mile to the little town of Courtenay, which, since the War, has taken the place of the old village of Comox as the business centre of the Valley.

We will now go back to Comox Landing, where the Robb family settled and stayed, and where the village afterwards grew up. It was the only possible location in the Valley for a wharf at which steamers could tie up, as it was sheltered by a long sand spit from the prevailing south-easterly winds, and had good depth of water at all stages of tide (though needing a long stretch of trestle-work to get to it), whereas the shallow bay farther up, into which the river discharged, was completely exposed to all winds.

James Robb and his son took hold of all the land for a long distance on both sides of the expected wharf. It was all solid timber, and not only so, but it was covered with stones except about an acre of sandy delta down on the beach where they raised vege-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

tables to begin with. As the old gentleman himself told me, they could have had good open land in the Valley, but they let themselves into a lifetime of hard labour among trees and stones in the hope of selling town lots. But they were disappointed ; events did not move so quickly.

The next settler to them was an ancient Scotsman from Nairn, named Alexander Brown, the oldest in years of the Australians, and indeed of all the pioneers. He owned all the land now occupied by Mr James Carthew * and the Roman Catholic Church, then unbroken forest, and he cleared about an acre where the Carthew homestead now stands, built a cabin, and planted a small orchard. He bothered little with livestock, and probably had some private means. He had a few books about him, and I have a pearl type New Testament of his, older than the Battle of Waterloo, with notes, and with the names of the authors of the Scottish paraphrases. He usually wore a flat Glengarry cap, and he wanted to be buried in his own orchard, but was persuaded at last to take a lot in the Presbyterian graveyard. After he

* Mr Carthew, a most kindly man, died suddenly in June 1936.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

died his place was bought by Patrick Murphy, another pioneer, who had first located in the open Valley, but sold out from there.

Nobody else settled between Brown and the Indian reserve, though a man named McCutcheon hung around for a time, and gave his name to the point below. The Indians were much more numerous on the reserve then than now ; they had large barn-like structures of split cedar, each of which housed half a dozen families, having a large fire in the middle of the earthen floor, and raised platforms all around the walls, covered with mats made by the women from cedar bark, and skins and blankets, on which they sat or slept. The smoke from the fire found its way through roof or walls as it pleased, yellowing in its passage salmon and venison strung on sticks hanging from the roof. There were also broad platforms of cedar out in front, where they lay in their blankets through the long summer days, basking in the sun. The beach alongside of them was always crowded with logs and driftwood brought down by the rivers and thrown up by the sea, so that there was no lack of firewood. Salmon and deer were plentiful, and they had good potato land on their

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

reserves, but they preferred to buy from white men.

From physical appearance it is easy to see that the Japanese and the coast Indian are of the same race ; but oh, how different in temperament ! The former sharp, active, enterprising ; the latter dull, phlegmatic, lazy. Probably it is all owing to their opposite environment. The Japanese, confined to narrow limits, had to make the best of both land and sea, or starve ; the Indian, with his vast range, and with salmon throwing themselves at his head, could take it easy and live on the natural resources of the country ; and though such a life may have added to his bodily stature, it has dwarfed his mind.

Wandering traders of all kinds in small sailing craft passed up and down the coast, and always called at the Indian village after furs and skins, so that the natives were often richer in cash than the whites. But these itinerants did not always stay within the law, and one of them, called Jack Hart, put up a shack on the waterfront near the reserve, in which he retailed whisky as well as groceries. A more respectable pair, the Burrage Brothers, looking ahead, as they thought, took up forty acres of land adjoining the reserve on the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

west, and erected a rough lumber store-building. But they had not the sagacity of James Robb, else they would have seen that the close proximity of the Indians, and the shallow, shelterless bay, fit only for canoes, precluded all possibility of a port. They aimed at a business, dealing with both settlers and Indians, but it did not take long for the whisky peddlers to freeze them out.

Next to them, up the Valley, was the large swamp farm of James Thomson, Irishman, which included all the frontage now occupied by the Dyke village, and shingle and sawmill. Above Thomson was John Marwick, Orcadian, who later sold out to Thomas Cairns, Scotsman from Fife, who had been a colliery boss at Wellington, near Nanaimo. He built a three-storey hexagonal residence which looked like a fort, and was the first building in the Valley with a concrete foundation. He also planted a fine orchard; but he left no descendants, and the place was sold to Arthur Smith, Englishman, from the prairies. Next above was Patrick Murphy, Irishman, and then came McNeish and Fletcher, Scots. Murphy, McNeish and Fletcher were all bought out by Macfarlane, a young Scotsman, who married one of Robb's daughters, and then his next

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

neighbour above, Charles Green, said he had got so much land that all he had time for was to look at it. Macfarlane's wife did not long survive her marriage, and then he left, and his land was afterwards divided and sold to Alexander Urquhart, Scotsman, and Richard Hurford, Englishman.

Charles Green, Berkshire Englishman, and old gold-hunter, came next, on the first farm above the reach of tides and overflows. After working it for fifteen years, he sold out in 1877 to William Lewis, Welshman, who had made money in the Cariboo country. Green then took up a section of bush-land on what was later called the Little River road, where he made a small clearing, built a cabin, and planted an orchard. Then he left it to his nephew, Thomas Beckensell, and went back to England. Beckensell put in a lifetime of hard work on it, turning it into a fine farm, which he finally sold to new arrivals from England, and is now living in retirement on the proceeds.

Above Green, in the Valley, was William Duncan, Shetlander and sailor, who had come up with Green from Australia; and beyond him, on Section XVII, was Reginald Pidcock from London, who soon sold out to

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Bishop Hills, and moved across the Courtenay River, into the bush. Above Pidcock was John Wilson, from the Scottish border and from Australia, who held some three hundred acres of excellent land, which he afterwards sold to become a travelling trader on the steamers between Comox, Nanaimo and Victoria. Though a very poor penman, he had a good head for business, and for many years he handled the produce and livestock of his Comox neighbours with a good measure of satisfaction to all. He was a lifelong bachelor, and his whole religion came from Robert Burns. It was through him that the well-known old-timers Alexander Urquhart and Joseph McPhee first came to the Valley ; Wilson employing the former as farm manager and the latter as working partner in road and bridge contracts.

Above Wilson was Olaf Gunderson, Norwegian and Australian, who was soon after drowned in the Skeena River on his way to the Omineca gold-fields to try and raise some cash. His place was bought by Archibald Milligan, Irishman, whose son now holds it. And next above is the Harmston farm, from which we started.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

SKETCHES OF SOME PIONEERS AND OLD-TIMERS

When the Burrages left their place by the Indian village in 1866, they leased it to the Hudson's Bay Company, who sent up an agent of theirs from Nanaimo—Adam Grant Horne, an Orcadian, as were many of their employees at that time. They built him a dwelling-house, with a large fireplace and chimney of English brick brought around Cape Horn. The house is still standing, but the bricks were lately removed. Horne was well acquainted with the language and habits of the Indians, but he found the location rather quiet. When I came, he owned the only buggy in the district, and the business was very small. I remember him saying, "My son and myself have stood a whole day behind that counter for one dime." * One peculiarity about Horne, which I never saw in anyone else, was, that though he wrote like copperplate he blundered in spelling the commonest words. When the Company dropped the business as unprofitable, he

* A dime is a ten cent. silver piece, smaller than a sixpence.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

moved back to Nanaimo and kept a grocery store on Victoria Crescent for a long time, where he also handled farm produce from Comox. His son was postmaster of Nanaimo for fifty years.

George Ford, from Gloucestershire, sailor and Australian, was original owner of the Finley farm, the best place on the upper road. A year after he came his potatoes were cut down by frost in August, which so disgusted him that he deserted the place, and made an arrangement with Henry Maude, west of the Tsolum River, to go with him to Hornby Island and raise sheep, there being a wide stretch of open land there and no wild animals. Both these men married Indian wives, and stuck by them. Ford's holding included all the open land of agricultural value on the island, and it was on his place that I first saw the mis-named "Canada" thistle, which old manor-house records show to have been a fodder plant in England more than three hundred years ago. Besides sheep, Ford raised a crowd of lusty boys, the famous Ford brothers.

Maude had no family, but his estate encircled the whole of Tribune Bay, and is now a summer resort. He complained to me of

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

the prowess of his sheep, saying they were too strong for him to handle. Unlike Ford, who was uneducated, he was of good lineage, a connection of the late General Maude of Mesopotamia, and he had a set of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, besides other books. His friends in England sent him the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and I then tried to buy his Chambers', but he would not sell. He always had an unhealthy look, as of a man who had got old before his time. Being at Victoria in the spring of 1888, I heard that he was passing away at the old St Joseph's Hospital, and called, but he was in a comatose condition.

There were no settlers on Denman Island when Ford and Maude went to Hornby. It was the naturally open land that attracted them, and Denman being heavily timbered had to wait for the Eastern Canadian axemen, who came some ten years later.

Robert Ritchie, Glasgow baker and Australian, had that large farm on the upper road, the north half of which is now occupied by the Ball family. Most bakers are shrunken and pale through the inhalation of flour dust, but he was a big florid man, and helpful to his bachelor neighbours with hints on baking,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

though most of them did not profit thereby, but ruined their health with saleratus concoctions. He sold out for \$3000.00 in 1884, and, leaving most of the cash in the Dominion Savings Bank at Victoria, went on to San Francisco, where he disappeared and was never heard from again. He had been thought single, but in 1934 a daughter-in-law turned up in Melbourne, and she got the money, which had been in charge of the Canadian Government for fifty years. One of Ritchie's late successors on the farm was Markham Ball, a good and highly intelligent young Englishman from Nottinghamshire, who, I believe, shortened his life by hard work.

The south half of this same farm reminds me of a rather queer episode. During the Great War it was bought by the Soldier Settlement Board for the use of returned men, and a young fellow named Hal Symons was the first to be located on it. He had been used to farming and was no dunce in other ways, being a good performer on the piano and organist for some time at the local Presbyterian Church. I had heard he was from Dorsetshire, and meeting him on the road one day, the following colloquy ensued: "You are from Dorsetshire?" "Yes, born and brought up

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

in Dorchester." "What do you think of Thomas Hardy?" "Thomas Hardy—Thomas Hardy—I don't think I know the name." "But you have heard of him? He lives in your town." "No, I don't believe I have. What business was he in?" "Well, I gave up then. Probably the only world-figure that the little place has ever produced, and he never heard of him! Such is fame.

Adam McKelvey, Irishman and Australian, was an outstanding figure among the pioneers, having one of the middle sections of fine bottom land west of the Tsolum River. Cameron and McCord, his neighbours to the south, did not stay long, and he took over their holdings, thus securing 300 acres of the best land in the Valley, where he grew potatoes "as big as yer fut." He was long thought to be single, but at length brought out a wife and grown-up son from Ireland. His wife was a good dairy woman, and James Harvey, Nanaimo grocer, "subtracted" to take all the butter she could make, so McKelvey soon became a moneyed man. Before the Canadian Pacific Railway got across, the only paper currency in general circulation through the Province were the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

notes of the Banks of British North America and of British Columbia, both of which institutions were later absorbed by Eastern banks, but by some means McKelvey had come into possession of a ten-dollar bill of the Bank of Ottawa which he wanted to change. As several ten-dollar bills of the Confederate States (which were worthless) had been passed around, the local dealer to whom he applied was a little dubious of the strange bill. "Oh, but," said McKelvey, "that's the Bank of oor country. If that Bank is no good, then oor counthry is gone in." At that time there was a boom in Port Moody lots, as the supposed railway terminus, and McKelvey bought one. But when he went to see it, he said he could not stand on it, as it was measured from top to bottom of a cliff overhanging the sea.

In his younger days McKelvey worked hard and well, but growing older he took more leisure and became an adept angler. He always fished alone, and brought home many a good string, and when asked how he did it, he said he pulled a grey woollen thread from his sock and knotted it around the hook. He was not a bad fellow when sober, but when liquor was in him he became vicious. Samuel

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Cliffe of the Lorne Hotel had a big black beard, of which he was proud, and on one occasion when he had a row with McKelvey, the latter tore a big handful out of one side of it. Poor Sam had a weary time trimming it before it regained its original symmetry.

McKelvey's wife was considerably older than himself, and after she died he took a trip back to Ireland and married the younger sister of his daughter-in-law, bringing her out along with him. His life in Australia was a favourite topic, where "a drink o' wather an' a drink o' whusky cost a shilling apiece, an' ye'd ruther take the wather." It would have been well for him if he had followed this maxim in British Columbia, for, as the years grew on him, the liquor habit grew also, and finally finished him.

The story of his opulence brought out a whole crowd of young Ulstermen to the district. There were three McQuillans, three Gilmours, two Crocketts, two Surgenors, two Steeles, a Johnson and a Morrison. Some of them stayed and some went elsewhere, but they were all good workers.

North of McKelvey, on a compact and open little farm of 110 acres, was another Irishman and Australian, James Clarke, whose

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

bright bushy hair and white freckled skin reminded one of "Life-in-Death" in the *Ancient Mariner*. He lived in a log hut sunk to the roof in a hillside, and his only table tools were a big spoon and butcher knife. When he got tired of oxen, he worked a pair of speckled cayuses with harness made from strips of green cowhide. In the middle 'nineties a nephew of his, a man of thirty-five, named Patrick Byrne, came over from the States and stayed awhile with him, but finally left. He had got his mail at Sandwick, his nearest post-office, and he told me, as postmaster, on leaving, that he had put in six months trying to induce Clarke to build a decent house and "live civilised," but he had failed and was never coming back again. Some eighteen months later Clarke told me he was dead. Clarke himself ended up in the provincial mental hospital. A brother, Daniel, and two sisters, named O'Grady and O'Rooke, all in County Louth, Ireland, were the nearest heirs, and, like all Old Country people of that generation, they thought their relative in "Americkay" must be rich. Daniel, in particular, wrote insisting that his brother had "walth," and that either it was hidden, or "Pat" Byrne had got it. Drake and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Jackson, Victoria lawyers, managed the estate, and I understand it took all the livestock and cash to pay Clarke's expenses at the asylum. The farm was sold to a hard-working Scots family named Vass, from the coal-mines of Cumberland (who are still on it), for \$2500.00 and the money divided among the heirs.

And now we come to the last of note among the pioneers, William Beech, who outlived all his companions, and died in 1931 at the age of ninety-eight. He was a small, spare man from Staffordshire, and a sailor before locating here. In 1870 he sold one of the best farms to raise funds to go back to his native place for a wife—a wife who stuck by him faithfully through all his long after-life and now survives him. Returning with her in 1872 he took up a section of good alderbottom land, and in over half a century did not sleep five nights off it.

Beech had none of the modern fear of large families. "Children are wealth," he told the writer more than forty years ago, and just as soon as ever they were able he set them to work on the land, and thenceforward did little himself but supervise. Year after year he could be seen seated on his verandah, pipe in mouth, watching his boys

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and girls busy in the fields below. They married early and cleared out ; but as fast as the older ones went, younger ones took their place, and even grandchildren came back under the yoke.

In early days huge droves of swine helped with the ploughing, and Beech never forgot that. He advised new-comers to get all the land they possibly could under crop, no matter how roughly : " Scratch, or burn, or blacken the surface somehow, and throw in your seed." His tools and machinery were primitive, he lived substantially on what he raised, he held fast to the maxim of old Polonius—" Neither a borrower nor a lender be"—and so he kept a carefree mind. Spry nearly to the last, he left a host of descendants.

Joseph Rodello, an English-speaking Italian, who had been one of Garibaldi's soldiers, was the first and chief customer for the Robb town lots. He bought the ground on both sides of the road at the head of the wharf, and built on the east side a large rambling store, and on the west the old original Elk Hotel. For a good many years he was storekeeper, hotel-man, constable, tax collector and postmaster ; but he had the help of Drabble in the two latter offices, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

about the time that I came, he rented out the hotel.

John Fitzpatrick was an American carpenter and builder, who erected many of the early dwellings and barns, and he did good substantial work. He and his wife leased the Elk Hotel from Rodello and conducted it for several years. Then Fitzpatrick bought a large lot from the Robbs on the top of the hill which slopes down to the wharf, and there he built the Lorne Hotel—so long connected with the house of Cliffe. The Marquis of Lorne being then Governor-General of Canada accounts for the name. After running it a few years Fitzpatrick sold it to Cliffe and went back to the States.

So much for the pioneers and old-timers of 1862.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE FIRST CATTLE

In January 1863 the settlers collectively petitioned the Government to send them some cattle. The Petition reads as follows :—

“Petition to His Excellency the Governor and Commander - in - Chief of British Columbia and Vancouver’s Island.

“We, the undersigned inhabitants of the Comox Valley, having located here late last season, not having time to get stock or prepare food for them for the coming winter, barely having time to build houses for ourselves, are desirous of obtaining working cattle and seeds for the coming season. As the road which is now in progress will not be completed in time for forwarding cattle for the coming spring—[*Note.*—It was not completed till 1910]—the only means which is left us is conveyance by water. Therefore, the subject of this humble petition is to seek your Excellency’s aid in the transportation of cattle to this place next spring. We beg also to inform you that a road through the settlement is very much required, and bridges made over several large creeks which interest it. As a voyage to this place in the springtime of the year is very precarious, as well as expensive, and as most of the settlers here are of limited means, having only enough to make a humble beginning, if they had a cheap and safe method of obtaining a yoke of oxen, a plough, and a few seeds, they may become cultivators of the soil instead of wanderers in the Gold regions of Cariboo.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“Trusting that we have not anticipated too much in thus far seeking your aid that you will not only confer a great boon upon the settlers of Comox, but the country at large, and as the future of a new settlement greatly depends upon its commencement with a little assistance to our means with a goodwill, the land Comox, which but shortly ago was a wild waste undisturbed by aught but the howl of the wild beasts, or the formal tread of the deer and elk, ere a twelve-month passeth over, may become a fertile Valley teeming with gladness, the permanent and happy home of the sturdy farmer.”

This document was signed by a whole crowd, most of them personally known to the writer, though not the man who drew it up.

That spring the schooner *Douglas* was sent with a load of Durham cattle from the Tolmie farm near Victoria. She came in as close as possible to the Indian village, and then dumped them overboard to be steered to the beach by canoes. They were the foundation of good stock in the district long years before the advent of the Jerseys, and many have been the valuable grades between the breeds. I had the honour of an acquaintance with one of these first arrivals, when I landed, fourteen years afterwards.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

BIOGRAPHY OF A COW

She was getting well through her teens in 1877, but she still bore the name of "Young," probably given because she looked the youngest of the bunch that fell to my employer. The breed was heavy, yet the bulls, who went with the herds as they pleased, unornamented by nose-rings, were quite harmless compared with the succeeding Jerseys, and it is my belief that confinement has much to do with the viciousness of the latter. Having no young to defend, these Durham bulls were less truculent than the cows, and some were even yoked to the plough, but all the same they were masters of their kind, and it was amusing to see how a pair of elephantine work-oxen would clear out at the approach of a comparatively small bull.

The three Tolmie cows that my employer got were all good milkers, but "Jumping Jenny" (so-called from an inveterate fence-breaking habit) developed "red water," the only cattle disease then known, and passed away in her 'teens. "Maggie," always on the defensive for her babies, and quiet enough with grown-up persons, could never distinguish between small children and big cougars, so

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

eventually the butcher got her. "Young" remained, a dark-brown cow with a neck like a bull, and wide-spreading horns which seemed to add an inch to their length every year, but with a sober, sedate temper which nothing very much disturbed. She had the best teats, both in size and shape, that I ever handled, neither tough nor so soft as to leak; in short, she was a bucket-filler, and handsome in everything but appearance.

Her vast posterity—besides nameless sons—included Red Young, Yellow Young, White Young, Black Young, Brindled Young, Grey Young, and Young Young; the last being half Jersey through her father. All these were a strong and valuable strain in that herd, which exists to the present day.

As long as the old cow lived none could dislodge her from the leadership, though she was tackled by many an ambitious youngster. Often I have seen the bold assailant get her horns inside the matriarch's spreading ones, so that the pressure was directly on her broad brows. Then the massive neck of old Young came into play, and she stood like an oak, till the discouraged aggressor bounced off, to get the usual sidelong rip from the sharp points of the ancient.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Nobody ever thought of her in connection with the butcher, but one April morning in the late 'eighties she walked out and lay down under a well-remembered tree in the pasture, and never rose again. And there her bones lie buried. Good old Young !

THE FIRST HIGHWAYS

The petitioners had asked for a road through the settlement, a necessity, of course. James Robb, old and far-sighted, had taken hold of the only location in the district suitable for a wharf ; a hard farm, which he had hoped to sell in town lots. The road, accordingly, had to start from there, and it went straight up from the proposed wharf some 250 yards to the top of the slope. Then turning west, it wound among huge trees past where the Consolidated School now stands, and so on to the hill-top, where it fell into the present back road, following it around to the bridge beyond Mr Russell's. Here a branch road from the Indian village came up and joined it, and it held on along the back of the hill, past the site of the Vigor buildings,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and gradually rising up to the crest of the ridge that crosses the Smith, Hurford and Urquhart farms, which crest was then covered with huge solid red-fir timber. The road twined through the mighty boles (whose posterity are now vigorous on the Hurford section and a credit to their fore-thoughted owner) and then slipped down into its present location along the Lewis and Duncan fields. It united, above the present Anglican parsonage, with the upper and lower prairie roads, which converged there, though not definitely surveyed. There were no fences on the Church land, and so people made short cuts as they pleased. None of the roads were graded then, even surveyed highways were mere tracks in the open and trails in the woods. As late as 1877 grading had hardly begun anywhere.

At that time there was no road from Sandwick Corner, down the river was the bottom fence of the Duncan farm. No wharf had yet been built at Comox, the steamer anchored inside the spit. However, small sailing vessels worked their way up the river to where the float is now, and took on loads of produce. But "Green's Slough," as it was then called, could not be got to by the bulk of the settlers without invading the best land

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of the two men nearest it, and these objected. So another petition was forwarded to Victoria, and a road was opened from Sandwick Corner to Green's Slough.

But there was still no road across the flats, where the dyke is now, and it was not till ten years later that the stretch of trestle work called the "Long Bridge" was erected there. As soon as the wharf was built at Comox, there was no more shipping from Green's Slough. Of course, at this date there was no bridge across the river, and no one dreamed of living in the solid timber on the west bank. The only bridges thought of in those days were the Tsolum River bridge, giving access to McKelvey's country, and the small bridge over the creek beyond Harmston's.

The construction of the long trestle over the tide flats about 1875 let the settlers out by the lower road to the Hudson's Bay store, and to communication with the steamer by boat and canoe from the Indian beach, and the back road fell gradually into disuse, except on rainy days when the long bridge was too slippery for oxen. But the wharf was built shortly after, and now there was an agitation that the lower road should never leave the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

beach, but continue on around McCutcheon's Point to the wharf. But the main street of the Robb town-site ran straight up from the wharf and was designed to connect with the original road to the Valley. There was a provincial statute to the effect that though one-twentieth of a man's land could be taken without compensation for public highways, his buildings and his orchard were inviolable, and Robb had both across the line of the wished-for road. So Drabble had to do the best he could, and many a weary team of oxen struggled up the Siwash hill with their loads of pigs and potatoes, and then skidded down the steep slope to the wharf (vastly steeper then than now) with the yokes rattling on their horns.

The early settlers were all afraid to build on the flats, and although Charles Green had his first cabin on the site of the Courtenay Hotel, he was often cut off from his neighbours, and when he built permanently, he moved up to what is now the Lewis farm steading. Nearly every winter the Tsolum crossed the road directly below the old Duncan barns, as well as lower down, and the whole reach from there to the dyke became a lake. At the beginning of the present century the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

breaking of an ancient log-jam returned the Puntledge to its original bed opposite what is now Lewis Park, and that made a great difference.

DENMAN ISLAND

As before mentioned, Denman Island, though nearer the coast, was settled later than Hornby. Both these islands and the straits dividing them carry the names of British officers who visited the coast after Vancouver. They lie off the mouth of Comox Bay, and logs and driftwood brought down by the rivers usually lodge on them. Their climate is milder and drier than that of the Valley, and besides general farming they raise excellent apples and pears. The best land of Denman is on the west side fronting Baynes' Sound.

In the early 'seventies some Victoria men started a coal-mine on the Vancouver Island side of the Sound. It was afterwards abandoned, but it drew a number of Eastern Canadians to Denman Island as a handy location to raise produce for sale to the miners. It was heavily timbered, but the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

soil generally was better than that of Hornby. These pioneers were personally known to me, and their names were as follows : On the west coast, Andrew McDonald, Thomas Pickard, John Piket, John Holmes, Peter Berry, Robert Swan, Michael Watt, Thomas Piercy and Alexander McMillan. In the centre were David and Abram Pickles and Robert Yates ; and on the hard, dry east coast overlooking Lambert Channel and Hornby Island were old John Graham the shingle maker, and his three brothers-in-law the Macfarlanes, who were called "The Woodpeckers." Besides durable shingles, Graham supplied good wives for at least three pioneers—Harmston and Hawkins of Comox, and Heatherbell of Hornby. He maintained that split cedar shingles (unlike spruce) never rotted, but simply wore out ; and this was true, for I had a squarepitch roof of his shingles which stood weatherproof for forty years without repairs. Sawn shingles are inferior, being often cross-grained, and so hold water. Another thing—never paint a shingle roof, because the paint collects at the foot of the shingle, thus damming the water, whereas in the unpainted shingle it runs free, and the shingle dries.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

On Hornby Island, besides Ford and Maude before mentioned, the bush pioneers were George and John Howe, David Murray, George Heatherbell and Wallace Peavy.

LEAVING HOME

My father, Robert Duncan, though the youngest, was much bigger and more muscularly strong than any of his brothers. He was rather slow, and, unlike his father, he preferred land work, when he could get it, to the fishing. So when other men started to the sea in May, he often went to Lerwick to cut peats for the townspeople at Rova Head, and he could always command three shillings a day at that work when other men could only get two and sixpence. He also did what was called "flit-boat" work, transferring fish and salt between schooners and the shore, and when the copper-mine at Sandlodge was working, he transferred coal and ore. All the Duncans who married got good wives, and he was no exception, for my mother (who, by the way, was my grandmother's niece) besides being active on the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

croft, took splendid care of all that he earned, so that at the end of each year he was usually better off in cash than the most fortunate of the fishermen, and I believe that all his life he could command more ready money than his brothers. I may add that he was a good man, and, like his father before him, precentor in the local Congregational Church.

I was pretty good on the croft, having my grandmother's hankering for the land, and never liked the sea or the fishing, and as Oliver kept up correspondence with us and we knew that he and William did not get on together, my father decided that I should go and see what I could do along with William ; so being now big enough to look after myself, he gave me £19 to pay my expenses to Vancouver Island, and as was the custom then, the whole family came to Lerwick to see me off.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE VOYAGE

It was early May 1877 when I left Shetland for Vancouver Island. I had never been out of the Isles before, but my travelling companion, a few years older, had been as far as Edinburgh. Leaving Lerwick we went down past Helli Ness and the Isle of Mousa. My companion could see the place of his birth, but mine was hidden behind a hill, and the historic promontories of Sumburgh Head and Fitful were the last that we saw, or ever will see, of the Isles of our nativity.

We passed through Leith and Edinburgh, and left Glasgow for Quebec on the Allan liner *Manitoban*, having a very moderate passage of twelve days. As steerage passengers, we had been told to furnish ourselves each with a tin plate, billy can, knife, fork and spoon, and we were very well fed. At breakfast we formed in line and a steward came along with a large kettle of oatmeal porridge, ladling a good supply on each plate. He was followed by another with a big jug of treacle, with which he blackened the porridge. For other meals we had meat and potatoes, as well as good bread and butter, or what looked like butter, though, as we got plenty of it

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and put some by in our cans for the overland trip, we found a good deal of it to be suet. The rooms had four wooden bunks, two on each side of a porthole, about the size of those in Pullman cars, and each had a sack of straw and a blanket. After the first two days if we stayed in them later than nine o'clock we were ordered out on the forward deck. There were only three in our room, the third being an East India sea captain, whose ship was under repairs, on a visit to friends in St Thomas, Ontario, and who, Scotsman-like, had taken a steerage passage for economy. Having considerable luggage, he monopolised two bunks, and watched jealously to see that no one but ourselves came in. I noticed that all the other rooms were fully occupied, and some of them crowded with children and very messy. During the passage one of the ship's officers came to our room-mate for lessons in the art of navigation.

From Quebec we went *via* Chicago to Sacramento in thirteen days. The trip was monotonous, except for a furious thunderstorm at Omaha. We had to sleep in our seats, which were slatted like those of street cars, and we had to buy what food we wanted during momentary halts at stations, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

sometimes nearly got left in that way. The approach to the Rocky Mountains was tame, but in the Sierra Nevada we met some wild scenery. We passed through a long succession of tunnel-like snow-sheds, and at one place, when running south along one side of a tremendous gorge, we saw a line of cars running north along the opposite escarpment, and could hardly believe the fact that it was the end of our own train.

At Sacramento we boarded a boat which took us down the river to San Francisco, a miserable trip under a broiling sun, with a hogshead of yellow river water furnished with a tin dipper to drink from. At one point a man stood on the bank working a force pump which sent the water up above his head and down through a wooden trough on to the land, irrigating a field ; the most fitting use, I thought, to which such water could be put ; and, on reaching San Francisco, we were met by a cold, damp, shivering wind. Fortunately the steamer for Victoria was leaving the following morning, so we got on board that night.

Getting outside the harbour next morning we faced a strong westerly breeze. The *City of Panama* was the narrowest boat for her

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

length that I ever saw, and turning broadside on soon began to roll. A stout fellow in a rough overcoat strode along the deck, waving a big black bottle which he took from his pocket, and shouting, "Here is brandy; here is the sure preventive of sea-sickness; I am an Englishman and I know." We paid no attention to him, but we had lost our Atlantic sea-legs, and soon began to feel queer. The sky was dark, and the coast east of us looked bleak and misty. We had no private rooms, our only place was the open deck, with benches or boxes to sit on, and there was quite a crowd of us.

After an hour or so of this I slid down to the lee bulwark to relieve myself, and there lay the self-styled Englishman, flat on his back in the scuppers, bawling like a calf, with vomit all over him, and the bottle rolling and dancing beside him.

The four-day trip to Victoria was a most disagreeable experience. The first day we had some good pea-soup, but ever after it was so hot with pepper that we could not use it. All the meat and vegetables were low grade, there was no attempt at butter, and our only bread was broken hard-tack. While eating we had to stand at a sort of long swinging

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

table suspended from the top deck, and when the boat lurched, this table was often grabbed by some unlucky staggerer, to the great disarrangement of provisions. Our beds were hammocks stretched between stanchions which were set up every night and knocked down every morning, and anyone who failed to rise by 7 o'clock was simply tumbled out upon the deck.

When we got to Victoria the fortnightly boat to Comox had been gone two days. As we were not overburdened with cash, we very fortunately met some fellows who had engaged a small tug, the *Emma*, to take them to Nanaimo (where we had acquaintances), and we went in with them. The chief member of our party was a real "coloured gentleman," whom we called "Senor." He was elderly, probably about sixty, with regular, pleasing features, but unmistakably thick lips, and everything about him tended to yellow. His hat, face, clothes, shoes, ear-rings, finger rings, watch, chain and valise, all had the golden hue, and his frizzled white hair was scarcely out of harmony. He was an incessant talker, and his English was as good as that of any clergyman. The captain and his two of a crew kept apart, and the dozen of us

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

passengers crowded the small cabin full, and as we sat on benches around the table which filled the centre, the "Senor" entertained us with tales of travel all over the West Indies and the adjacent coast of South America. When, years afterwards, I got hold of *Tom Cringle's Log*, it seemed as if the author, that second Scott, had listened to this raconteur's narrations.

The weather was fine, but the little tug was slow, and, though starting in the morning, night fell as we reached the south end of Gabriola Island, and we had to lie there several hours waiting the turn of the tide to help our vessel to stem the rapids. Under these circumstances the "Senor" proposed that every one of the party should give a song. So, between Burns, Dibdin, Foster and Sankey, each one did his best and was duly applauded, the "Senor" making characteristic remarks. Then, resting our heads on our arms on the table, each elbowing his neighbour, we got what sleep we could, and early dawn found us in the yet sleeping town of Nanaimo. I saw the old gentleman afterwards, sitting in front of one of the hotels holding forth to a group of miners, and he recognised me by lifting his hat with a dignified bow. I never knew his name or calling.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

COMOX LANDING

My companion stayed at Nanaimo, and when the boat came around again I went on to Comox, landing in the middle of June when everything was a tangle of green. I had never seen such growth before, and shall never forget my first sight of it—I can shut my eyes and see it now.

The first settlers had been only fifteen years ahead of me, and of course had only hand tools to work with, and the huge trees crowded each other almost to the head of the wharf, which was new, and much narrower than at present—barely wide enough for one vehicle, and with a turn-off in the middle of the long approach. There was neither sidewalk nor freight-shed, and the hill at the head was then a regular bluff. Away to the east and right down on the beach was a naturally open field fenced with driftwood where the Robb's raised their vegetables and roots for their cattle. The rising ground above was unbroken bush ; the only buildings visible were Rodello's store under tall ragged firs east of the wharf, the Elk Hotel down on the beach on the west side, and Robb's low,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

wide-spreading barn on the slope above, surrounded by cattle-sheds, one of which had a hatchway in the roof through which they threw in turnips, and another was utilised by William Robb—lately married—as a dwelling. Farther west, and hidden behind a screen of maples, was James Robb's small rough log residence and orchard.

On the top of the slope—where later rose the Lorne Hotel—the road turned west, having on the upper side the “forest-primeval” where cow-bells tinkled, and on the lower a fifteen-acre stump-dotted field where the Robb's were cutting their hay with scythes, and this field was fenced from the road by a barricade of fire-blackened logs. Farther along, all the way to the Siwash Hill, and right down to the Indian village, the road was simply a lane through tall timber on both sides. Looking at that timber, and considering that the Robb's were Old Country men, who, like myself, had never handled an axe before they came, I thought they had done well.

I remarked before that Rodello was tax collector, and travellers being few in those days, he had noted my arrival, so two weeks later he called on me for the Provincial

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Revenue tax of \$3.00. Well, I was only nineteen and not entitled to vote, but he said that eighteen was the taxable age. I had only eight shillings left of the nineteen pounds given me by my father, so my employer had to advance the balance, and from that date to the year that it was abolished, I never once escaped that tax. However, when the hay was in, I was let off for a few days' work on the roads at \$2.00 for ten hours, and as in Shetland my wages had been 50 cents for twelve hours, I thought I had struck El Dorado.

I may have mentioned before that the fortnightly visit of the steamer brought the whole Valley to the Landing, but on other days it was practically deserted. Some three years after my arrival my employer and I, on bringing down a load of produce for shipment, found that Rodello's store had burned down the day before, and nothing was left on the site but a battered and blackened safe. The Robb's also had been put to much trouble to save their barn, as the sparks had flown there, and few people were around to help. The old gentleman was quite exasperated, and I heard him shouting to the arriving settlers, "Joe Rodello should be taken and lynched."

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

That site lay vacant for a long time. Rodello built a smaller store higher up, and J. B. Holmes came from London and joined him, later taking over the business when Rodello left the Landing. In the late 'nineties Holmes made a deep excavation covering all the burnt site, and built there the first granite walls in the district, forming a great basement, on which he raised the massive Port Augusta Hotel. He ran this building both as store and hotel for quite a number of years and then sold it, and, after shivering through many a south-easter on Comox Wharf, he retired to a fine little sheltered place under Nob Hill, where he now lives. The man who bought the hotel acquired also the Elk, and ran both for a time, as tourists began to find out the attractions of the district ; but in 1927 there was a far more spectacular blaze when the great Port Augusta went up. Truly an unlucky site ! holding as it did the only buildings in that village ever destroyed by fire.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

SCATTERED SETTLERS AND OTHER THINGS

When I came, settlement was confined to the Tsolum Valley and the vicinity of the wharf, with the following exceptions: eastward of the wharf were David Williams, Welshman, original owner of the entire Higgins farm; Michael Donahue, Irishman, who held "Donahue's Bluff"; and John Hardy, Englishman, who lived in the bottom at the far end of the Long Beach. These men reached the Landing by a romantic trail skirting the beach and winding among the sandhills, on which trail Hardy, the last of them, was found dead some twenty years ago.

The west bank of the Courtenay River, and the whole country down to Union Bay and beyond, was heavily timbered down to the water's edge save for a few openings along the beach, occupied as follows: Thomas Rabson, Kent, Englishman, pioneer on the Campbell farm, who has left several descendants in the Valley; old Robert Scott at Millard's Beach; Peter Lindbergh, the Swede, whose water-front is now the dumping place

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of the Comox Logging Co. ; and George Gartley of Gartley's Point, who soon removed to Nanaimo. When the Courtenay Bridge was built to get to the sawmill, which was jammed into the bush on the bank a little below, a rough trail was cut as far as Gartley's Point, but it was rarely used, and quickly blocked by trees. So these men communicated with the wharf by row-boat.

Up the Valley, where much of the land was naturally open, though heavily covered with fern and thorn bushes, there were rail fences ; but posts, with boards or wire, were utterly unknown. There were only two horse teams in the Valley, the rest being huge oxen. There were a few wagons and one buggy owned by the Hudson's Bay storekeeper ; but most of the vehicles were home-made carts, and sleighs, or drags. Ploughs were the wooden ox-ploughs with wheels, long beams and short stilts, and all the harrows were home-made except the teeth. Bears were often seen in the Valley, and wolves howled and played with the settlers' dogs. Cougars killed calves and carried off small pigs, but they could only do this in the absence of the parents, for both cows and sows could be trusted to defend their progeny. I have

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

already spoken of the cattle, and will now give a little space to the swine.

These were mostly Yorkshires, and whole droves of them ran at large, marked like cattle (the law being that they must be fenced out), rooting up the roadsides, eating salmon along the rivers, and camping in the woods under trees, where they carried heaps of fern in their mouths to make their beds. Sometimes a herd of them would be penned on a patch of rough, stony land which they would turn over so effectively to get the fern roots that it only needed harrowing to be fit for the seed. When they were about a year old, several of them would be captured and fed for a month or so on milk, and with peas and potatoes boiled and mashed together. They were then ready for the market, which was entirely dependent on colliery Chinamen at Nanaimo, to whom they were shipped on foot and sold at six or seven cents a pound.

One day my aunt, hoeing potatoes in a field, was puzzled by the persistent squealing of a small pig in the bush alongside. Climbing the fence, she went towards the sound, and saw a cougar sitting on his haunches holding up the pig to his mouth like a squirrel

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

with a fir cone. She advanced, waving her hoe and calling out, as she would have done to a fence-breaking cow, and the surprised brute dropped his prey and slunk off. The pig, though badly mauled, survived.

SOME OUTSIDE NOTES

I may here mention that in 1877, Nanaimo was a small colliery town just incorporated, New Westminster about the same size, Seattle smaller than either, Vancouver not even a name, and Victoria the only city on the coast. Nanaimo had a fortnightly paper, *The Free Press*; New Westminster two weeklies, *The British Columbian* and *The Mainland Guardian*; and Victoria two dailies, *The Colonist*, edited by D. W. Higgins, and *The Standard*, conducted by C. McK. Smith, a brother of the eccentric De Cosmos.

In these days heavy rain was no hindrance to walking in dry comfort from end to end of Government Street under the store verandahs. At the Angel Hotel, on Langley Street, Fred Carne gave good board and lodging for a dollar a day, and he knew practically

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

every traveller between Cariboo and Comox. There the old fellow stood, chopping away at his tobacco, as he personally greeted each newcomer, asking after the welfare of Bob this and Bill that. Right opposite were the Law Courts, and, in a shack in the middle of the thoroughfare, rough but kindly Dr Helmcken had his office and surgery, a queer place, crammed with old copies of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Many of the old Victoria business firms had foreign names, and could scarcely have been English to begin with. There were Neufelder & Co., Van Volkenburg & Co., De Weiderhold & Co., the Weiler Brothers, the Leiser Brothers, Gustav, Simon and Max; Moses Lenz, Jacob Sehl, Joseph Boscowitz. Henry Brackman was a German, and Dr Helmcken a Belgian. They probably all had connections with San Francisco, with which city and Portland all the trading was done. There was not then a foot of railway in the Province except mining tracks—no flour mill—Henry Brackman was just starting his little oatmeal mill at North Saanich. The bulk of the flour and feed came from Oregon by sea—often by the schooner *Michigan*—and all other grain stuffs from San Francisco.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

There was no such thing as rolled oats, nor any fancy cereal, and Deming, Palmer and Company's 10 lb. bags of oatmeal looked funny to me, who had been used to 112 lb. sacks.

The only regular outside communication then that the Valley had was the fortnightly Wednesday visit of Joseph Spratt's side-wheeler, the "Cariboo-Fly," from Victoria *via* Nanaimo to Comox. There were no doctors; victims of accident—fortunately few—were taken sixty miles by canoe to Nanaimo; and women did the best they could, helping one another.

As early as 1863 James Robb had petitioned the Government for a resident magistrate, but none had ever been appointed. So he, with Drabble and Pidcock were acting justices of the peace when I came. He was a man of masterful character, tall and bony, with work-bent shoulders and feet of thirteen inches, and, as senior, was said to dominate the bench, but I never found him either unfair or unreasonable. He had none of the famous Aberdonian penuriousness, for he was very hospitable, and, living so close to the wharf, he was often put to the test in that line.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

PERSONAL NOTES

My friends could not be sure about the date of my arrival, there being nothing swifter than letters reaching Comox in those days, and Oliver never left his work even for steamer - days unless business called him. William, however, like the bulk of the settlers, had the "steamer-day habit," and he had come down, though of course we were utterly unknown to each other. But the captain, who was also purser, pointed me out to him ; and, as he had no conveyance of his own to carry my belongings, he sent me the four miles up the Valley on the ox-cart of a neighbour, who let me off at Section XVI.

Oliver and my aunt could hardly recognise me after seven years' growth, but my speech soon betrayed me. When William got home he told them he had found me among the Indians on the cargo deck, which was true enough, as, having come all the rest of the voyage third-class, I thought the upper deck cabins were no place for me.

I started immediately to work for William, weeding turnips. He had plenty of work, and plenty of room to lodge me, but was

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

deficient in everything else. Before he left Shetland his mother had provided his food, and as—unlike trappers and prospectors—sailors have their cooking done for them, William thought it very simple. So his meat, fish and potatoes were fried, or boiled to rags, but his bread was the crowning atrocity. All he used was fine flour and saleratus, his loaves were the size and shape of half a brick, and pretty nearly as solid. Even my strong young teeth got stuck in them. They were like hard rubber on the outside, and the inside soft and raw. A common jingle of those days went as follows : “ He quickly gulps his coffee down, and bolts a piece of pie ; he gets the in-di-gestion, and then he wonders why.” William had no pie, but his bread was worse. The way he managed was to soak it in tea, which was the same as eating dough. (And by the way, I have never been able to understand why a farmer with plenty of good milk should ever bother with tea or coffee or any other man-made concoction.)

Old Charlie Payne, the lame trapper, who worked among the farms when he felt inclined, was the only man who would help William in his haying, and he would only do so on condition that he did the cooking. “ William

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Duncan is no cook," he said ; " makes poor bread—very poor bread—a man can't live on it." I knew nothing of the art myself—very few Shetlanders do—it, like the cow-work, is all left to the women. William had chronic heartburn and pain in the stomach, accompanied with belching. Those were the hey-days of American patent medicines, and Ayer's, Jaynes' and Bristol's almanacs were in every cabin. He dosed himself with all their different sarsaparillas, and finally bought Green's "August Flower" by the dozen. Even his strong Shetland frame could not stand this forever.

His sister-in-law was one of those rare beings with whom it is simply impossible to quarrel, all angularities apparently having been rubbed off from infancy. She had been brought up a Methodist, had memorised a great many Wesleyan hymns, and they certainly guided her life. She had more than once offered to bake his bread for him, but all she got for that was, "I want none of your help."

Unlike his father, William was very reticent about his sea adventures. He never had a single story about them. In fact, the only thing past that interested him was to find

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

out how those who had been his equals as a young man had got on in life, and I could give him a good deal of information in that line. He said his father was too hard on him—a thing I could hardly believe when I thought of my grandfather. But in later life I found that it is not uncommon for a man to be much more forbearing with his grandchildren than with his own. He has then reached the age when “getting on in the world” seems of less importance. William had no sisters, and all his attachment was for his mother. If he ever had any notion of revisiting the land of his birth it passed when she passed. But he always spoke of Shetland as an undesirable country of hardship and poverty.

Well, I worked with him for a month or so. The weather was far too hot for my comfort—coming, as I had done, from 60° North—and the haying was all scythe work. Moreover, the six weeks of idleness on ships and train had not added to my powers of endurance, nor did the menu with William. Oliver bolted in one day, in his usual impetuous fashion, when William had gone to the wharf and I was alone at dinner. He snatched up a loaf, broke it across and looked at it. “That’s

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

awful," he said, and he brought me a chunk of his own, and several times after he did the same. But this sort of thing could not go on. I saw that if I stayed with William, I would soon be as bad as himself. On his part, he never tried to induce me to stay. Perhaps he did not like the responsibility. So I put in the winter with Oliver for board and lodging, accustoming myself to the use of the axe.

There was no winter milking in those days, but all the grain and peas were thrashed with flails on wet days, and the straw fed to the cattle along with turnips. There was not a flake of snow that winter, but torrents of rain. I carried oats and turnips every night and morning to some fifty half-grown swine penned in a rough field a half mile back over the hill ; and boiled peas and potatoes for half a dozen mature ones fattening near the house. Oliver did not approve of his cattle or swine reproducing in the fall, and I often had to fill up a sack of young pigs—with the mother rushing at me—and drown them in the river. Oliver did not really need me, as his wife had brought with her from Shetland the custom of working steadily with him in the fields. Indeed she preferred to do so, and hated to stay in the house, that part of the work being attended

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

to by the daughter. And the wisdom of her choice was shown in her long after-life, till, without a day's sickness or helplessness, she lay down in her bed and passed on, at the age of eighty-five. A peaceable life was hers, and a peaceful end !

DULL TIMES

In the spring of 1878, work being slack in the Valley—as indeed it was all through the Province—I went to Nanaimo, but the coal-mines were almost idle, and my companion was still out of a steady job. After a week I got a chance at the Nanaimo saw-mill, then run by a Yankee named Chauncey Carpenter. The wages were \$30.00 a month and board, but when we were idle, as happened often, board was deducted at \$1.00 a day. And Carpenter managed it so that at the end of a month we never had more than \$10.00 coming to us.

The whistle woke us at 5 A.M. ; breakfast at 5.30, and start work at 6. Whistle blew for dinner at 12, work resumed at 12.30 and continued till 6, when we had supper and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

were free for the rest of the day. We were lodged in two ancient block-houses of hewed square logs, built by the Hudson's Bay Co., on the bank of the mill-stream. They had two stone fireplaces in each, and small windows with iron-bound shutters, and rows of wooden bunks for which we brought our own bedding. They were infested with rats, which scampered over us all night along, but we soon got used to them, though an occasional growl might be heard from a disturbed sleeper, as an extra heavy one fell with a thump upon the floor. Our board was good and of considerable variety, and when I finally decided to go back to the land, with its staples of bacon, peas and potatoes, I sometimes regretted the saw-mill luxuries.

It was there and then that I got my first sight of politics. A provincial election was on, and D. W. Gordon, then Victoria member for Nanaimo, was opposed by James Abrams, prominent clothier, in the interest of the second Walkem administration. There were lots of speeches on both sides, but the best, as I thought, was by Benjamin Raper, a supporter of Gordon's, who wound up amid great tumult with—"All hail the power of Walkem's name; let miners prostrate fall;

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

bring forth the whiskey in a tub, and crown him lord of all." Abrams was elected, but it spoiled his business, as it has done for that of many another good man ; and Gordon turned his attention to Ottawa.

FIRE AT NANAIMO

While I was there a fire swept the lower side of Commercial Street—practically a string of saloons—and Carpenter gave us a holiday to go and see it. At that time the leading merchants of Nanaimo were Alexander Mayer (called Myers), a German Jew, and John Hirst, an Englishman. The latter had lately completed the first substantial building in the city, a stone warehouse, which still stands at the head of what was then called Hirst's Wharf. As the fire spread there was a call for blankets, to be soaked in water and spread over buildings to quench sparks, and Mayer, though aloof from the fire, turned out rolls of them, but Hirst would not furnish one. There were loud comments on the generous Jew and the skinflint Englishman, whose store-front was charred black by the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

blaze across the street. Mayer afterwards had a sale of damaged blankets, and I got a pair of stout green ones for \$3.00 which added much to my comfort at the mill, and accompanied me back to Comox. Bottles of liquor were thrown from the burning buildings, and many of the mill-hands got drunk that night, and pursued each other with axes over and around the great lumber piles. But Carpenter was highly elated, saying that now he would have a call for some of it. He afterwards built the barque *Nanaimo* to ship lumber abroad.

At this time Mark Bate was perennial mayor of Nanaimo, and Samuel Gough perennial organist and city clerk. The only preacher I knew was Cornelius Bryant, a good man, with flaming hair and whiskers, who had been a schoolmaster, and then became a Methodist minister. The town hall was a small rough stone cottage on Front Street, probably built by the Hudson's Bay Co., and it looked familiar to the eyes of a Shetlander. The post-office was a compartment in the second-hand store of a queer codger named William Earl, near where the Windsor Hotel now stands. As soon as the weekly mail was landed by boat from Victoria at Gordon's

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Wharf (now that of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., but then lately built and still owned by D. W. Gordon) the two or three bags were brought up, and Earl stood up inside the open wicket—while a whole crowd waited outside—and began to read out the addresses like a schoolmaster calling the roll ; and each addressee would shout “ Here ! ” and the letter or article would be passed out to him. If he stopped for a minute, probably to untie a bundle of letters, some one would remark, “ Now he’s reading a postcard.” One evening I mailed a letter to a friend in New Zealand, putting on what I had been told at Comox was the necessary postage. Passing two or three evenings after, I saw the letter stuck in the window. I went in and asked what was the matter. “ Not enough stamps,” he said. I told him it was enough at Comox, and asked to see his postal guide. So we went over it together, and grumblingly he had to admit that he had made a mistake.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

BACK TO THE FARM

About this time my uncle and aunt wrote, saying that if I could not get steady work at Nanaimo, I might as well come back to Comox. Oliver was getting over fifty, and needed more help than my aunt could give him, the daughter's marriage was approaching, which would tie her closer to the house ; and they offered me ten dollars a month from the first of November to the end of February, and fifteen dollars from March to October—of course including board and lodging besides the cash. I decided to take this, and was back in time for the haying.

When I got back I found the election was on there too ; and the Robb's who were strongly opposed to Dr Ash, the sitting member, had induced Reginald Carwithen to come out in opposition to him. They had erected a great arch, spanning the head of the wharf, with an inscription : " Vote for Carwithen, and throw physic to the dogs." Carwithen was quite sanguine, having been promised the votes of half the district as being a local man, whereas Dr Ash lived in Victoria. But Ash was extremely popular, being a

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

good man, and very helpful to anyone from the district who needed his services professionally. He was also a member of the Cabinet and had much influence in getting grants for roads and bridges. So when polling day came around, he had an overwhelming majority, and poor Carwithen was nowhere. He felt pretty badly, and said his neighbours had cheated him, but it cured him of politics for the rest of his life.

The haying was all scythe work. Oliver never invested in a mowing-machine while I was with him, as that would have meant scrapping the oxen, which he could never bring himself to do. His only conveyance was a heavy cart balanced on two broad low wheels. It had a large flat platform to hold the hay, more spacious than the top of an ordinary four-wheeled wagon. The cart was hauled by means of a long stout fir pole passing all the way under it, fastened to the axle, and with its front end resting in the ring of the ox-yoke, to which it was chained. He guided the oxen from cock to cock in loading (they eating as they pleased), and my aunt stood on the top of the load with a little two-tined fork to steady herself. She was not allowed to do any trimming, she merely had

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

to stand on the top of each forkful as he put it up. He placed a forkful on each corner of the platform, then what he called "joiners" between, and then he filled up the centre. This made it easy for him to pitch off when we came to the unloading hole in the side of the barn. She stood inside the hole and turned his forkful over to me, and I spread it back through the mow, and threw a handful of salt over it.

There was much more jar to the ox-cart when moving than is to a four-wheeled wagon, and once on the hillside one wheel rose on a knoll, the whole load slid off, and she went under it. She was not hurt, but ever after she refused to go up unless I steered the oxen. Though he never got a mower, he finally got an unloading fork, as the oxen could easily work it. All through the haying season he stood on edge, and often we were roused before daybreak to cock up hay from the threatening rain. She said July clouds were more scaring than harming.

They kept about fifteen good Durham milking cows, and as I never could equal either him or her in speed of milking, and besides was younger and with longer legs, my job, starting at 4 A.M., was to gather the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

cows, who, once set moving along the bush trails, made their way home by twos and threes, as the flies pushed them, on to 8 o'clock. He had only one bell-cow ; I would have had a dozen but was short of cash, and so had to make it up in leg work, which did me no harm. I found the Shetland boots and moleskin pants which I had brought did not suit the country at all. The boots were too low for tramping through heavy brush and fern, though they served endlessly for Sunday wear. My working boots were long-legged cowhide made by William Heathorn of Victoria, and sold at \$4.25. I got a new pair every October, which served me through the winter and up to April. Then the seams began to rip, and as I had neither my grandfather's tools nor his knack in using them, the holes let in necessary air through the summer, and I got a new pair again in the fall. The soles always outwore the uppers, through the absence of hard roads. As for the moleskin pants, they were a perfect sponge to soak in dew every morning, and so hung like lead all day, whereas the denim pants of the country, though they quickly got wet through, yet when I came out of the brush and fern the sun dried them as quickly, so that they were

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

quite comfortable by 10 o'clock. Like most Shetlanders, I had been trained to do all my own button work and mending, albeit after a very rough fashion, and I find that very useful right up to the present time.

The same routine of cow-hunting was gone through in the evening after we stopped field work at 6 o'clock, and it was generally between nine and ten before we got through, and that was his bedtime all the year round. And now as to the handling of the milk: it was set in milk-pans in a shed, the roof of which was covered with a thick growth of hops, which he used in his bread-yeast; my aunt did the skimming at the proper times, I did the churning usually, and he made up the butter of each churning in a great chunk, like one of his big camp-oven loaves, and these chunks were kept under pickle in casks in a cellar dug under his barn. When October came they were broken up and divided into 2 lb. rolls, each wrapped in a thin muslin called butter-cloth, and packed into small pickle-filled barrels (like herrings in Shetland), which were shipped to Nanaimo or Victoria, and he made his annual trip to the towns to dispose of them. Whatever returns he got were faithfully passed over to the wife, who

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

was his minister of finance, and she as faithfully paid me, on the tenth of every month.

I took over her job of guiding the oxen when he ploughed, and she warned me not to lose my temper, especially in the hilling of potatoes. It was a ticklish job to keep their huge feet from crushing the spreading green tops; and she said, "If your uncle should call you a thief or a liar, mind, you never say a word." However, it never came as far as that with us.

Oliver advised me to repay my father the £19 he had given me, saying how good it was for a fellow to be able to look the world in the face and owe no man anything. I did that during my first year of work for him, and have never had to borrow since. He had a system of his own in his work, raising a large crop of potatoes which he pitted early in October, turnips were put under cover in early November, and then, as long as the ground was bare, we gathered and hauled stones on the hill-slopes of Section XVI, piling tons and tons along the roadside fences, from whence the road workers took them when wanted to reinforce the river banks. When snow came we split rails or firewood,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

to be hauled out on drags, for he never had a proper sleigh.

His only hired help besides myself were Indian women to help in the potato harvest. Their tools were big clam shells or flat-pointed sticks, and half a dozen of them would come, marshalled by a man, who, as soon as he got them to work, would recline majestically in a fence corner on his blanket till near noon, when he would start a fire and cook a good supply of potatoes and salmon. He also saw that the women were properly paid at night, each getting a bucket of potatoes, though they often added a little to this by having some of their many skirts stitched together at the bottom, thus forming sacks into which they dropped an occasional extra large potato, for which they had a weakness, irrespective of the quality. I often pitied these women on white frosty mornings when I saw how eager they were to get their broad, brown, bare feet on freshly turned soil. Yet though I had boots, pieces of flour sacks often took the place of socks.

Oliver did no winter milking. He dried off his cows in October and turned them into the woods, from whence they emerged in good order by Christmas, or when snow

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

came, and were fed on what the farm produced the rest of the season. He never had the slightest idea of buying mill-feed for them, and they all calved in the spring. I remember how disgusted he was when one of them outwitted him and calved in September and he had to milk her through the winter. But my aunt enjoyed the milk in her tea, which up to then had been denied her. Oliver followed the sun as closely as he could, always seeking his bed between nine and ten, but in summer he rose before five, and in winter at seven. All the time I was with him, being without horses, he never had a lantern. The delinquent cow was milked in the dusk of the winter mornings and evenings, when the others were fed, and she fared no better than they did. This habit of his suited me well, as in the winter it gave me time for reading—the same as in Shetland. But there I had no books—whereas here I soon got them.

I have spoken of the marketing of Oliver's butter ; his beef cattle and pigs were usually shipped in charge of John Wilson, who rarely made a mistake, but if he did, was promptly checked by my aunt, who could work out the price of a fat steer or pig "in her head," as she expressed it, in record time, though she

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

could not put the figures on paper. Some good farmers were very dense in these matters. One man went around Cumberland a whole day offering his eggs at 30 cents, or three dozen for \$1.00, and wondered why the people limited their purchases to two dozen.

I may mention here that, roughly, \$5.00 equals a British pound, a quarter equals a shilling, and a cent a halfpenny.

As a child, my geography had told me that "Vancouver Island produces potatoes of unsurpassed excellence," and I found it true. But the market was small, and they sold by the ton at \$12.00 to \$15.00, or were retailed at the pit to Indians at 1 cent a pound. Oliver told me that dealers had refused him a barrel of flour in exchange for a ton of first-class potatoes. They were often fed to cattle, and always to pigs. But his chief customers were Indians, who came up the river in canoes to his barn, and they were not confined to the Comox tribe, for Euclatas from Valdez Island and Campbell River were also supplied. These were a hardier looking people. The Indian did not understand weighing, but he knew the bucket. An iron bucket would not do, though holding more. It had to be the little, round, painted wooden

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

bucket of the Hudson's Bay Co. The Indian was very helpful in filling this bucket, shaking it, and always piling a few extra potatoes on the top. Then Oliver would stand up and say: "Potlatch Chickamin,"* the Indian would hand over his quarter, and the bucket would be emptied into his basket. The basket when full was emptied into the canoe, and this process would go on till the canoe was loaded. The McCoy racket against potatoes makes me tired. They are half my living. In Shetland and Ireland, where people live long, they have been the most valued of all vegetables for hundreds of years, and a fat person there is a curiosity.

* "Potlatch Chickamin" means, literally, "Give metal." It belongs to the Chinook jargon, a trading lingo invented by the Hudson's Bay Co.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“THE SEASIDE LIBRARY”

Few now remember the name of George Munro, but if Henry Ford deserves credit for bringing a dubious blessing within reach of the bodies of the common people, no less did Munro merit praise for an undoubted benefit to their minds. And hosts of poor farm lads like myself, leaving school at thirteen, and working for little more than board, got the chance of an acquaintance with the best in English literature, which, but for him, they would never have had.

George Munro was a Nova Scotian who, in the 'seventies of last century, had a publishing business in New York, and who originated the once famous "Seaside Library." At that time there was a great to-do about pirating and infringement of copyright by American publishers, but Munro declared that he paid a royalty to the authors and publishers of every British work he reproduced, and he made a point of furnishing them all "unchanged and unabridged."

They came in single "numbers" at 10 cents, and in double numbers at 20 cents, according to the length of the story; and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

specially long works went through several double numbers. Thus, *The Vicar of Wakefield* was 10 cents, *Ivanhoe* or *Pickwick* 20 cents, and *Les Misérables* a dollar. The size of page was 8 by 12 inches, the paper was ordinary book paper, and the print clear, and as free from errors as any schoolbook (there was little wooden paper in those days, and no linotype machines). Most of Jules Verne's works were fully illustrated by woodcuts clearly reproduced from the originals, and better than those in the newspapers of to-day.

I saw these pamphlets needed binding if they were to be lastingly useful, and as each issue had a list of those previously published, and all were sent post-paid for the price from New York, I ordered what I wanted, and had them bound in roan with leather backs at \$1.50 per volume by Mr R. T. Williams, of Williams' Directory, Victoria, who lately—an octogenarian—passed to his rest; and here are the principal contents of my first, which, with binding, cost me \$3.90.

The Arabian Nights Entertainments, translated by the Rev. George Fyler Townsend, four double numbers; *The Wandering Jew*, two double numbers; Jules Verne's *Mysterious*

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Island, three double numbers ; *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* ; *From the Earth to the Moon and Around the Moon* ; Captain Neale's *Flying Dutchman* ; *Bab Ballads and Adventures of Verdant Green*, both fully illustrated ; and Dumas' *Three Musketeers*. A motley collection truly ! but one which any boy might covet ; and what would they cost now, if they can be had at all ?

A second volume consisted principally of Macaulay's *History of England* in ten parts, with notes, his *Lays of Ancient Rome* ; McCarthy's *History of our Own Times* ; Verne's *History of Great Voyages and Great Navigators*, his *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, his *Castaways*, a voyage round the world descriptive of South America, New Zealand and Australia, his *English at the North Pole*, *Hector Servadac*, and *Michael Strogoff* ; Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* ; George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss* ; and Haliburton's *Sam Slick*.

A third volume included the authorised and revised New Testament in parallel columns ; Farrar's *Life of Christ* ; Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of Paul* (a monumental work) ; Spurgeon's *John Ploughman's Talk and Pictures* ; Bickersteth's *Yesterday, To-day and Forever* ; Edwin Arnold's *Light of*

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Asia ; Froude's *John Bunyan*, and his *Carlyle's Reminiscences* ; Macdonald's *Malcolm and Marquis of Lossie* ; Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* and *Erema* ; and Blackie's *Self Culture*.

There were others, but I have said enough. True, they were cumbrous books, and needed a table, or more often, the reader's knees ; but they were treasuries of joy for many a long winter evening. Unfortunately, some of them went out visiting, and came back much the worse for it, but though over the half century in age, they are all still in existence.

And here is a word of advice to any young fellow who will take it : If you have read Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, and four or five each of the books of Scott and Dickens, you have got the cream of English fiction, and can afford to leave the rest, and give your mind to more solid literature.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A CLOSE SHAVE

In the winter of 1879-80, my Uncle Oliver set me to cut paths for the cattle through the hilly bushland before mentioned, and to put a "slash" fence around part of it so as to keep the cows within some known bounds. As I worked back over the hill there was a salmon berry swamp that came in the line of this rough fence, and trees were scant in it; but in the middle stood a great red fir, at the foot of which were fragments of a cedar-box and some dried up human bones, showing that the tree had been used as a repository for the dead, according to an old and long-forsaken Indian custom in which the coffin with the body was set high up on a large limb, and all branches below stripped off, but the supporting branch had evidently let its burden fall. The tree was too big for me to tackle; but not far off stood a smaller tree, a balsam, which was softer to cut, and would serve to carry the barricade over the swamp. A big mossy log lay alongside of it, on which I could stand, and which raised me up above the thick butt, for I was not smart enough for a spring-board. I chopped

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

away on the front side till I got past the centre, and then turned to the back and worked at it till the tree began to lean over ; but unfortunately its top branches caught in those of the red fir, and lodged there. I wanted the tree down to continue the fence, so I chopped away the back of the stump sloping upward to the butt so that the butt might skid down over it, and then the jar when it struck the ground would loosen the top. It did that all right, but the pressure of the top on the branches of the big fir as it fell, cracked a lot of dead limbs, which sprang back and came down in an avalanche on the very spot where I stood. But I was not there, for I had tripped and fallen down alongside and partly under the log on which I had been standing, so the ruin missed me altogether, except for a few scratches. But I had a time working my way out from under the rubbish. So much for the experience of a greenhorn in the woods.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

TROUBLOUS TIMES

William began now to let out his haying by contract, and his potatoes and turnips—not very many—were worked in the same way. He milked one cow and let the calves run with the others, which turned him in some good young beef, and he always had half-grown pigs for sale to those who wanted to finish them off. As a bachelor and a Shetlander, it took very little to keep him, as I have found by fourteen years' of personal experience. His chief expenditure was for patent medicines, which did him no good.

Then they divided the land, Drabble running a line from top to bottom of Section XVI, and William took the south side ; but, as the buildings were all on the north side, Drabble divided the ground on which they stood into lots, the lines of which ran through the centres of the dwelling-house and barns ; and William also reserved a lot at the north corner of the Section, which afterwards became known as Sandwich Corner. To make up for these small lots, Oliver's share of the main Section was wider than William's. Those lots have puzzled many people, but

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

neither William nor Oliver would build on the south side of the Section, as they were afraid of being flooded ; and yet they would not build on the hill because they wanted to be at the river both for themselves and their cattle. Neither of them ever had a well.

William next rented his side of the place to a New Brunswick man with a family, and went to live on a small bush place that he had bought west of the river. So Oliver had new neighbours in the end of the house. But this only lasted a year, as the tenant could not manage to pay any rent ; in fact he was more of a woodsman than a farmer, for all his crops ran to weeds. So William came back, and had quite a time following up the man to get some returns. The man split a quantity of rails, which then sold at \$20.00 a thousand, but William said they were too slim—it took twelve of them to make a panel, instead of the usual eight. So he would not have them, and Oliver finally took them off the man's hands. Then the man went back to Denman Island, from which he had come, and in the long run he furnished William with the timbers for a new barn, and William had to be content with that.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

He and Oliver were still at variance over the land. Oliver insisted that he had fulfilled all the conditions proposed by William in his letter to Shetland ; and William merely told him to go to the Land Registry Office in Victoria and see who was the owner of Section XVI. Then they arranged to put the matter to arbitration ; William chose Captain W. R. Clarke, an old sailor who had turned auctioneer at Victoria, and Oliver took Alexander Maclean, a merchant there, with whom he dealt. These two got A. Rocke Robertson, a prominent lawyer, as third in the case, and the three of them went fully into the dispute, and decided that Oliver had acted up to the agreement, and was entitled to half of the land. Oliver had the deed made out, ready for signature, and then William refused to abide by the decision of the arbitrators. He even held off payment of his share of the costs, but, as Oliver paid his, the men said they did not mind, as Oliver's money covered all their outlay.

And so the chronic disagreement dragged on. Oliver's failing was hastiness and nagging ; William's was sullen pertinacity. Though eighteen years a sailor, he could

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

not swear ; his early training held, and he had never learned the silly habit. Oliver had never come in the way of bad language, and they had sense enough to keep from blows. So all they could do was to shout at each other angrily, which always sent cold shivers down my back. Whenever they happened to come out of the house together, Oliver would call out, " When are you going to sign my deed ? " and William would turn back inside and bang his door, knowing that Oliver could not stay from his work, and thus they avoided each other as much as possible. I believe both were good men at heart—they kept up the custom of family worship—but surely there was never a better proof of the supernatural wisdom of the Old Book when it says : " A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle " (Proverbs xviii. 19).

It was about this time that I put two old northern legends into metrical form, to which a number of farm pieces were afterwards added, and the whole—under the title of *The Rich Fisherman*—was published at \$1.50 by the Macmillan Co. of Toronto in 1932.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“UNREASONABLE”

There, islands overhung by sullen skies
Lie lone amid the ever-moaning main ;
There naked hills and cliffs enormous rise,
Which tireless winds and waves assault in vain.
Scant soil returns the toiler meagre gain,
And pastures thin, with star-like daisies gemmed,
Serve tiny cows, which tethering bonds restrain
From oatfields small and poor, by peat-moss
hemmed,—
A bleak and stormy land, to scarcity condemned.

And here, by mountains sheltered, and by trees,
A winding valley opens far along ;
Here the height-sweeping storm becomes a breeze,
The cascade's distant plunge a drowsy song.
Here flocks and herds wax frolicsome and strong
On Nature's wild profusion, broadly sown,
The cows, that up the river pathway throng,
Their cumbrous udders feelingly bemoan—
A land of rural bliss, to poverty unknown.

Yet, oh, swift river, could thy course be mine !
Yet, oh, strange heart, still yearning wistfully ;
Oh restless eyes, that range the rugged line
Of peaks majestic, longing for the sea ;—
That low, dull stretch of uniformity
Which laps the solemn strand where I was born—
Grey Shetland ! Thy grim spell takes hold of me,
Here dwell I, right by Amalthea's horn,
Grandeur and joy around, yet inwardly forlorn.

From *The Rich Fisherman*.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

CHANGES

In the spring of 1882 William began to build a new house. His old companion and neighbour, Charles Green, had sold out for \$2500.00 and gone to live in the woods, and William told me he could do the same if he had a separate dwelling-house to offer to a purchaser. He located the house (which is still in use) on the lot which he had reserved on the north corner of Section XVI. John Fitzpatrick was the builder, and his work was as substantial as in the Lorne Hotel. But William had only money enough for the outside walls, floors and staircase, and then Fitzpatrick left. The chimneys were built, taken down, and rebuilt three times before they were satisfactory, and several different carpenters tried their hands at the inside work as William found money to pay them. So the work lingered on for a year, in which he did not get any younger, and his way of living kept telling on him.

In March 1883 he started for Victoria, taking a quantity of potatoes for sale to help in the house building, and incidentally to see a doctor. But he never reached there, being found dead in his stateroom when the steamer

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

arrived at Nanaimo. The cause was said to be the breaking of an ulcer in the stomach—it may have been cancer. Oliver was extremely undemonstrative, and the only time I ever saw him visibly affected was when that news came up. As it would be a fortnight before the boat got back, a friend at Nanaimo took charge of the body and it was buried there—the first of the family to pass in British Columbia. William was in his sixty-first year, and the best characterisation I ever heard of him was that given by Dr Ash, who knew him more intimately than any one else: "A good man, spoiled by a bad, abused stomach." He left no will, and his only heirs were his two brothers.

The same year that I left home my father gave up the croft at Houlland and leased a small piece of land on the steep hill-slope overlooking the port of Sandsayre, and there he quarried stone and built a substantial cottage with slate roof and made a good garden. My sister and the brother next to her had situations and the youngest was still a schoolboy. My father had work whenever he wanted it, and my mother kept a cow and had occasional boarders after my grandfather passed on; so they were all doing well.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

The news of William's death upset all this. Oliver wanted my father out right away, so as to have everything straightened and settled up. So rather reluctantly he got another man to take over his lease, and he and my mother and the two boys came out in August. My sister had married shortly before.

Both legally and morally Oliver was already entitled to half (that is, 75 acres) of Section XVI, but the whole thing stood in William's name. Robert, of course, made no trouble, and Oliver said the best way was to divide William's half according to the number of his nephews and nieces. So his daughter and Robert's daughter and three sons each got 15 acres. This gave Oliver 90 acres and Robert 60 acres, and the two brothers signed each other's deeds. Robert's daughter sold her share to her brothers, who worked the 60 acres in common.

When my father arrived with the family, William's quarters were too cramped for them, and the new house was only a shell. Oliver and Robert agreed to finish it together and to occupy it together according to the old Shetland fashion, which, as I said before, had been followed by William and Oliver in the first house, flimsily built in 1865, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

which was now falling to pieces. My father busied himself nailing up lath, and then a plasterer was hired, and my father, who had done something of that work in Shetland, worked with him, and before winter the house was ready for occupation, and both families moved into their respective parts of it. Built of red fir it was twice as roomy and far more solid than the old habitation. It served Oliver and Robert and their wives to the end (and there never was a cross word between them), the second and third generations have passed their lives in it, a fourth is growing up, and it seems as weather-proof as ever.*

William's estate was small and easily divided, only about \$80.00 in cash, and two promissory notes of \$100.00 each, owing to him by neighbour farmers. He had no debts of his own. By Oliver's advice, there was an auction sale of the half-wild cattle, and we bade out those we wanted. Oliver got one-fifth of the proceeds on his daughter's account, as well as of the cash and notes.

My youngest brother, Robert, took my place with Oliver for a few years, then he joined us on the farm, and Oliver got outside

* It was destroyed by fire on 26th September 1935.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

help. In 1889 I got married, and about this time several new men entered the Valley, and the settlement stretched up through the woods to Black Creek and beyond. The chief of these were Sergeant Major Salmond from Kincardineshire, who had been with Roberts in Afghanistan, Horace Smith from Derbyshire, John Blackburn from Lancashire, George Kelland from Devonshire, and John Johnston from Perthshire. These men and others objected to going eight or nine miles to Comox Landing for their letters, and wanted post offices farther up the Valley, and also, if possible, a weekly mail.

SANDWICK POST OFFICE

The matter of improved mail service through the Comox District was taken up with the authorities at Ottawa by D. W. Gordon, who then represented the whole of the Island outside of Victoria. He asked me to take charge of a mail delivery at the "Mission Corner," as it was then called; and John Grant, who had rented Gordon's farm in the Upper Valley, took charge of another office

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

there, which was called Grantham after him. Shortly before this the Provincial Post Office Inspectorship, which had been hitherto combined with the Postmastership of Victoria, was divorced from that office, and the first independent Inspector was the well-known and efficient Everard Hyde Fletcher.

When Inspector Fletcher came around to open the offices, he told me that there were several other "Missions" in the province, which would cause trouble in the delivery of mail. He had also just started a "Duncan" office at Cowichan, and he wanted a name for my office that would not make confusion. When William Duncan first wrote to Shetland after locating here, he had named the Section after his native parish, and had told us to address, "William Duncan, Sandwich Farm, Comox District, Victoria, Vancouver Island." This old-fashioned address had been long forgotten, and "Comox, British Columbia," would find us here from any part of the world. But the Inspector's call for a name that was "different" refreshed my memory, and I mentioned the old farm name. "Sandwich will do fine," he said, and so that was settled. Yet we have had letters here intended for a place in Illinois of the same name,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

besides, of course, the Ontario "Sandwich," but that spells differently.

The first mail carrier, William Chandler Smith, was an Ontario man who settled in the Upper Valley bush, where his son James is now located. He drove an ancient white horse and a two-wheeled spring-cart. He attended at Comox Wharf when the steamer came in from Nanaimo, and brought up the Sandwich and Grantham bags, which had been sorted there, and he took them back the following week when he went down. The Grantham office was soon discontinued for lack of patronage—but Sandwich held on, and for a time outdid Comox in business, according to the Inspector. Comox post office began to go begging. Neither Holmes nor McPhee, the leading merchants of the district, would be bothered with it, though it was landed at their doors, and the captain of the steamer threatened to take it back to Nanaimo. At last a man who lived nearly a mile from the wharf took charge of it.

It got to be inconvenient to have so many people calling at the house, and we thought of putting up a separate building, where we might keep a few goods, as the postmaster of the parish of Sandwich had done. The

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

bottom of the lot below the house was occupied by a grove of young spruce, which we cleared away, and erected what is now the main store building. The builder was an old New Brunswicker named Franklin Cunliffe, who had put up many barns in the Valley, and his work was rough but strong, for it is standing yet. I saw to it that the ground sills were laid on heavy stone boulders resting on hard pan, and I cleared away all the black soil from under the building. When it was finished, my wife and I moved into it, and my father and mother and the other boys stayed in the house above ; but the whole business of farm and store was run together, I doing farm work morning and evening, and often through the day. There being few people around except on the weekly mail-day, when I was always there, my wife could easily attend to callers at other times. Right then the Cumberland coal-mines were opened, and either my brother William or I made weekly trips up there selling farm produce, and worked up quite a business, there being a regular monthly pay-roll—a new thing for Comox District. But then a strike developed, and a lot of our customers cleared out, leaving us in the lurch to the tune of nearly \$400.00. This

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

so disgusted my father that he strongly advised us to give up the store entirely and stick to the farm. But I knew that though the farm was a good one, there was scarcely room for all of us on it, and I took charge altogether of the weekly Cumberland trips, picking my customers, so that we never lost so heavily again. In the fall of the same year William went back to Shetland for six months, and brought a wife along with him when he returned. They lived with my father and mother and the youngest brother, Robert.

THE CENSUS OF 1891

In May 1891 I was picked, without notice, to take the census in all the country between Union Bay and Campbell River, excluding Cumberland and the Islands. It took me about a week, doing it all on foot. A horse would have been an incumbrance, as I had to cross fences everywhere and hunt up people in the fields. I first finished all the district as far up as Black Creek, then set by one day for Campbell River, and starting from home at 5 A.M., I reached my destination

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

at 6 P.M. There was nothing but a foot trail beyond Black Creek, and Oyster River was bridged by a fallen tree. The only settlers on the way were James McIvor at Oyster River, and Joseph Stewart and James Knight on the long open curve called Oyster Bay. The star of Thulin was yet below the horizon, and the solitary white resident at Campbell River was Frederick Nunns, the last remaining of an Irish family that had settled there a few years before and built a great log château, in which I passed the night with him ; and there was a piano, and much other fine furniture. It was a relic of disappointed hopes, and fire destroyed it a year or so later. Before reaching it, the path had led me by some splendid cultivated fields with high rail fences. Well, I thought, the Nunns have not done so badly after all. But when I got through, I found that the Nunns' farm consisted of about an acre of stumps on the river bank, and the fine fields belonged to Indians. These were certainly miles ahead of the Comox tribe, but they did not come under my category. I have not seen the "River" since. The total for my district was not quite a thousand.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

MY FATHER PASSES

My father was fifty-three when he left Shetland in 1883, and it was a great and undesirable change for a man who had never previously seen a tree ; in fact he was like an old tree transplanted, he never could adapt himself to his new surroundings. He even got lost in a half-acre wood lot in one of the fields, and I had to hunt him out of it when he did not turn up for dinner. Of course he never learned to milk, but stuck mostly by the woodshed. He gradually shelved himself—seemed to dry and shrivel up ; and ten years after his arrival he died at Nanaimo, where my mother had taken him to consult a doctor, who could find nothing organically wrong with him ; and he was buried—as he directed—beside his brother William.

He was a curious case of strength and harmlessness. Though an eager fisherman, he never killed a warm-blooded animal bigger than a mouse, and it got the weight of his foot only because it destroyed the grain. (I never saw a rat in Shetland, and my grand-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

father never saw one in his life.) Superfluous cats and dogs had nothing to fear from him ; and he hired neighbours to butcher the croft animals when his father got past that work. Something of the same nature had been mine to begin with, but it was quickly knocked out of me by common-sense Oliver.

My mother, on the contrary, though two years older, immediately adapted herself to the new country. We got a new cooking-stove, with which she turned out bread equally as good as Oliver's camp-oven bread. Like Oliver's wife she insisted on working in the fields, and mother earth repaid them both with long life and unbroken health. Up to the age of seventy-two my mother was our steadiest cow-milker, and like her aunt she lived to eighty-four, passing to well-earned rest in September 1912.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE BEGINNINGS OF COURTENAY

Reginald Pidcock, original owner of Section XVII, did not incline to farming, and in 1865 he sold it at cost to Bishop Hills. Then he moved to the west bank of the Courtenay River, where he was the first white resident, and took hold of practically the whole town site of Courtenay—then solid bush except one small natural opening, where he put up a cabin. In one of his hunting excursions there, he had come across a small creek, tributary to the Puntledge, and conceived the idea of bringing it down to the high bank of the Courtenay to run a saw-mill by overshot power. He ran a line where he wanted it, and the other settlers, tired of erecting log and shake buildings, turned out in force and dug the long ditch for him in 1872. He had plenty of logs handy to the mill ; that quarter of the town now called "The Orchard," held a splendid stand of clean red fir. For some years he only furnished rough lumber, till in 1878 his friends in London sent him a planing-machine by way of Cape Horn, and then he could supply every requirement of the Valley. But though, as he said, he could

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

always get enough to eat, money was scarce, and he was ambitious. He wanted to make the Courtenay River the business centre of the Valley instead of Comox Landing, and in 1885 he began to build a steamer which was to carry mail and freight and a few passengers up to the bridge. The undertaking was beyond his means, and when the steamer was built she fell into the hands of Victoria men who had advanced him money, and who used her as a tug, *The Daisy*, at Chemainus.

Besides this, Joseph McPhee, merchant at Comox Landing, had claims against him for supplies which he could not meet, and poor Pidcock was in rather a tight fix, when fortunately D. W. Gordon got him the Indian Agency at Alert Bay. So he sold the mill to the Urquhart Brothers (who turned to steam) and he took in McPhee as part owner of the land. Then the Cumberland mines developed in 1889, and at first Cumberland was "a closed town," that is, all the houses and lots belonged to the Company, who simply rented them to the occupants. But some of the miners were independent enough to want to own their houses and gardens, and the nearest location for this was the bank of the Courtenay River. So Pidcock and McPhee set Drabble

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

to work and surveyed a town-site, and sold a few lots to miners. A few houses and the Riverside Hotel went up, and an elderly American named Whitney erected the building now occupied by the Canadian Pacific Express and Telegraph Company, and started the first newspaper. He began immediately to agitate for a post office, saying that the Sandwich office was out of the way, and should be moved over. I proposed that a small new office should be built at the Agricultural Hall, but Courtenay refused to cross the bridge east, and the farmers balked at going west; so, to satisfy all parties, the Inspector made Whitney postmaster of Courtenay in his own building, which did not greatly please him. A year or two later he removed himself and his paper to Cumberland, turning over the post office to a branch store that McPhee had erected where the Buckerfield feed store stands now, and it was more or less McPhee's charge till the Ottawa Government built the present city office in 1925. And thus, for more than forty years, the two offices of Sandwich and Courtenay have kept going within a mile of each other.

Meanwhile the Cumberland Coal Company laid out a town-site east of the original camp,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and sold lots to the miners there in 1895. Whitney moved his paper up, and both Holmes and McPhee built large stores there and ran them, as well as their old establishments at Comox Landing; and poor Courtenay came to a dead stop. In 1901 a little life awoke with the building of the Farmers' Co-operative Creamery, but it was not till 1912, when the Canadian Pacific extended the railway from Nanaimo, that the town began to take some shape, and real estate men got in their work. And it is still in sore need of some industry with a pay-roll.

A STRANGE CASE

What I am now about to tell is so unbelievable that I do not wonder if people should discredit it, but those who were my neighbours at that time know that it is all true.

In July 1897 a very small, round-shouldered man in very dusty travelling garb, wearing a very tall old stove-pipe hat with large holes bored in the crown, and carrying a very ragged pack of blankets, walked into the hayfield and asked for work. He spoke in a

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

queer cracked voice, said he was a native of Antrim County, Ireland, had property in Peterborough, Ontario, had been all over the world, and had just come up from Australia. He could have been any age from forty to seventy, it was impossible to tell what, his features were so discoloured. I found out afterwards, though I could not believe it at first, that this was caused by pure dirt. He was so frightfully dirty that the dirtiest Indian was clean to him. It was always a puzzle to me how he could get so dirty, for I never saw him with his nose actually in the ground, but the fact remains that in his normal condition the mud could be scraped from his cheeks.

He was of very little use in the hay, but he took up his quarters in the old house, which was still hanging together, near the barn. He appropriated William's rooms, dragging the old stove from the kitchen into the living room, and got some old stove-pipe but never used it. He put the stove in the middle of the floor, removed all the lids, and then built his fire on it, mostly old rails and sticks that he picked up around the barn, and piled inside the room. Sometimes, sitting on his nail-keg seat, he held one end

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of a rail on his knee while the other end burned on the stove. Of course, whenever he had a fire the smoke poured out through the door and two windows. My wife wanted me to pull down the old building, being afraid for the barn ; but I had not the heart to do it ; and one less risk was that he did not use tobacco, nor did I ever see him the worse for liquor. He drank water freely enough, though for all washing purposes he avoided it like a cat. Yet it was a marvel how he endured the smoke, through which he could be seen as in a thick fog—but he kept close to the floor.

All his cooking was done over the fire in tin cans, which he hung on a wire stretched across the room. Part of a sack of seed corn had been left in the cabin, and he boiled and ate the whole of it. He could not milk, but he got all the skim milk he wanted from the separator spout, where he came constantly with his can, which latterly got so thick on the inside with coagulated milk that there was only a small space left for the fresh liquid. He was not without a grim sort of humour. He usually got a bucket of water once a week, for boiling porridge, potatoes, etc., and for drinking. This bucket stood

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

by the cabin door, and, coming past one hot day, I saw that it was swarming with "wrigglers." He came out with a tin cup and filled it. "Man," I cried, "look out for the wrigglers." He emptied the cup down his throat and said with a cackle, "Let them wiggle now!"

As the fall came on and he showed no signs of leaving, the womenfolk put in an old bedstead and some cast-off bedding, as he had previously slept on the floor. He did not show much appreciation of this, merely asking, "Where's the pot?" But he used the bedstead.

He could read, and also write his name, "Thomas Thompson," legibly enough. The only book I ever saw in his possession was a *Life of the Duke of Wellington*, in that series of neat little cloth-bound volumes called "The Cottage Library," published seventy years ago at a shilling each by Milner & Sowerby of Halifax, England. But the book was so smeared and begrimed that it was scarcely readable.

He often went to visit a neighbouring farmer who also came from Antrim, and he said Thompson's story must be true, as he knew the country. This man was accidentally

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

killed in the woods, and Thompson seemed much affected by it.

As the spring came around he wanted to do some work, so he was sent to weed in the onion patch. I did not expect much from him, and I was not disappointed. Coming around shortly before noon, I saw that he had not done much, but as far as he had gone, he had carefully pulled out all the onions and left a row of weeds. The only plant he seemed able to distinguish was the potato, so he was given a patch to dig and work for himself.

Then the Klondike fever struck the district, and Thompson too. Several parties left, and he was anxious to go with them, but none of them would have him. So he took an old milk-pan and went along the Tsolum beaches, panning the gravel. As this did not pay well, he got some 1×12 rough boards from the saw-mill (he seemed to keep a reserve of cash about him so that he could always get what he wanted and go where he pleased), and with tools borrowed from the barn he began to build a boat to go to the Yukon. Having his potatoes to attend to, it took him a long time, but he put plenty of nails into it, and when at last it was finished,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

it looked as much like a pig-trough as a boat. He calked the seams with rags, and made a wonderful contraption of side-wheel paddles which he turned by hand as he sat in the centre of the boat.

The Comox Agricultural Show coming on at this time, a fun-loving neighbour loaded the boat on his wagon and put it under a tent on the fair grounds, with a notice—"Come and see the splendid boat just built to go to Klondike ; admission twenty-five cents." He also stood in front to collect. Many people from the outskirts of the district went in, and most of them thoroughly enjoyed the joke ; but one matter-of-fact Scotsman, on coming out, exclaimed disgustedly, "Why, I could build a better boat than that myself!" However, nearly ten dollars was raised and duly handed over to Thompson, much more than recouping him for his material outlay.

When the boat was launched it was lopsided and leaky, but he put all his things on board and went down the river easily enough. I hoped he was gone for good, but in ten days or so he turned up again as at first, with his pack on his back. When asked about the boat, all he would say was, "The pawdles wouldn't wurrk."

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

At last he made up his mind to go back to Peterborough, and asked me to take him and his belongings down to the steamer at Comox Wharf, which I very thankfully did. He was taciturn on the way, but as we drove past the Roman Catholic Church on the hill-top, he remarked, "Many a night have I slept in a church."

All the neighbourhood had been curious about him, and was rather disconcerted a month later when it was rumoured that he had got into a row with a "tough" on the train, and had jumped off into the wilderness north of Lake Superior. But we found out afterwards, through the postmaster of Peterborough, that he really got there, and died in the Old Peoples' Home.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE "REMITTANCE MAN"

About this time a rather distinguished-looking grey-bearded Englishman, dressed like a tourist, called at the store to buy a pair of overalls and a plug of tobacco. He had no money, but said he was going to work for Harrigan, a farmer about four miles off, on the Cumberland side of the Valley, who also was out of change. "But," I said, "I have never seen you before, and how do I know that I shall ever see you again?" "Did you ever read *Vice Versa*?" "Oh yes," I replied. "Well, my name is Frank Anstey, and I am the author's first cousin." I gave him what he wanted, and that was the last I saw of him. How he had got Harrigan's name is a question, for that farmer had not seen him. But if the relationship was real, I said he was quite welcome to his purchases for the sake of the hilarity of *Vice Versa*. Some considerable time later the papers had a notice of his death in the Old Men's Home at Kamloops.

Apparently he had been wandering around the province for years, chiefly on the mainland, and was supposed to subsist on remittances from home.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE PASSING OF OLIVER

The weight of seventy years was now telling on Oliver, though he kept on with his usual work. He had a good helper, a young Englishman named Markham Ball, who took an interest in seeing that everything moved properly on. One day in August 1898, Oliver, in coming down a ladder from a haystack, scratched his leg on a nail, and thought nothing of it. But it turned to blood-poisoning, which almost immediately threw him into a painless stupor, from which he never recovered, but was away in less than a week.

He was a man of thoroughly straight character, and of great bodily activity, who could not understand why other people should not be the same. He made a good deal of money, but all through hard work—speculation was foreign to his nature. He had heavy financial losses, but never through his own fault or carelessness, and he was a steady supporter of church and charity through his wife, who was his finance minister.

He was no talker on religious subjects, or indeed, on any subject, but he certainly followed Paul's directions to work with his

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

hands, to eat his own bread, and to give to him that needed. Unlike his parents he was no singer, yet as he worked he had a habit of humming—in a flat key—just two hymns, Doddridge's "O happy Day," and Rous's Psalm, "God is our refuge and our strength" (Psalm 46). He always had family worship, and, of course, went to church every Sunday, and on that day he used to read aloud articles from his only magazine, Horatius Bonar's *Christian Treasury*.* He did not seem able to read quietly, but had to give voice to the words to understand them, and this suited his wife, who was not so apt at reading, though with a great memory for hymns. He did not bother with daily papers, but had two weeklies, the *Montreal Witness* and the *Northern Messenger*, which he took all the time I knew him. I have sometimes wondered — futilely — how things would have turned out if Robert had taken his place with William in 1864. But "secret things belong to the Lord," and we shall know the wisdom of His arrangements in "the ages to come."

* Mrs Jessie M. Saxby, the well-known writer, an early contributor to the above magazine, is still resident, a nonagenarian, in Shetland. She was an Edmondston of Unst.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

I was his executor, and in spite of his losses he had \$1900.00 in cash to leave to his widow and daughter besides the stock and farm, and a house in Nanaimo and a lot in Vancouver, the two last of which they afterwards sold to advantage. The widow stayed by herself in the place where he left her for seventeen years, falling back more and more into the plain-living habits of her girl-life in Shetland. She kept a flock of hens, and brought the eggs regularly to me at the store, and they covered all her needs twice over, the balance always going monthly to the credit of the daughter's family. On a July morning in 1915 she rose and made her usual breakfast of porridge, attended to her feathered charges and went back into the house. About 11 A.M. one of the women wanted to see her about something, and not finding her in the sitting-room as usual, climbed the stair to her bedroom, and found that she had gone home, leaving nothing but a cast-off garment spread out upon the bed. May her privilege be mine.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

MORE CHANGES

In 1902 the others proposed that I should confine myself to the store, as they wanted to be free to manage the farm as they pleased. So an accounting was made and I bought their share of the store goods, and they bought my share of the farm stock. But we each still retained our several undivided shares of the real estate.

In the middle 'nineties we had bought twelve acres of Section XVII from the Anglican Synod. The land was then in its natural condition of timber, brushwood and fern, and we had cleared and cultivated half of it. I now took five acres of the uncleared part, as I had to keep a horse separate from the farm horses, in connection with the store, and I built a combination stable and wagonshed there. As I could not disconnect myself altogether from the soil, I excluded the horse from half an acre of this land, which I cleared, dug and used as a vegetable garden. I raised much more than I needed myself, and disposed of the surplus at Cumberland, going in especially for onions. But onions will not grow on new land, whereas potatoes crave it,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

so I broke in the ground with them, and then carried on with the onions, which, unlike most crops, will grow indefinitely on the same spot if well fertilised, and that was how I utilised my horse manure. It was all spade, hoe and hand-weeder work, and following my old habit of rising with the sun from the first of April to the end of September, I got several hours of good fresh air every morning before eight o'clock, and also proved the truth of the old northern proverb, "The morning hour has gold in its mouth."

About a year after this, my younger brother Robert, who always stood a little apart from us others, and whom even his mother could not quite understand, came and told me that, as he never wanted to have anything to do with storekeeping, he wished me to take over his share of the store-building and lot, in exchange for my share of a wooded section of land west of the Courtenay River, before-mentioned as owned by our Uncle William, and which we had used as pasture before the houses of Courtenay town-site blocked our way. Robert said that if I would do this, he would have no difficulty in arranging with William, and then he would build, and live over there. I had no objection, so

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

the deeds were drafted and the change effected as he desired. After this, at my own expense, I added to the main store-building a kitchen and woodshed on the one side, and a vermin-proof flour shed on the other.

Events crowded each other about this time. William's wife and four children took a trip back to Scotland to see her parents. Then in 1904 my wife went to visit her friends in Sweden, a visit that had sorrowful results. In February 1906, Robert died, single and intestate, at thirty-eight, and all his estate fell to his mother. He was the most like his father in temperament of all of us, but not so strongly built. He could not hurt a fly.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

George Grieve was a pioneer New Brunswicker with a large family, who in 1874 came to the Valley and settled in the woods west of McKelvey. He was said to have cleared two bush farms in New Brunswick, and he certainly looked the ideal hard-bitten woodsman. He now faced heavier timber, but with the help of his sons he soon made a wide clearing, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

in ten years they had a good place. Then they bought the large vacant farm on the upper road of W. C. Musters, one of those two or three early young English arrivals who found the country too hard and went back. Here the old man had scope for his architectural abilities, shown in the huge barn and old-fashioned farm-house ; and the sons were foremost in the district to bring in agricultural machinery.

In the early days there had been little ceremony at funerals. The few settlers all gathered, and the home-made coffin was decently interred. Oliver Duncan, living near the church, was carried to the grave by his neighbours in a plain pine box over which the carpenter had rubbed a little lamp-black. In more distantly located cases the coffin was placed on a wagon, and the bearers followed it on foot. But the turn of the century brought a modern undertaker to Courtenay—with a polished, glass-sided, black-plumed hearse, and with ornate coffins which were protected from the contaminating earth by outside wooden cases.

But of course all this cost money, which went up sometimes to two or three hundred dollars, as one family vied with another in

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

display. This drew the attention of George Grieve, who had little use for anything but utilities. It was soon after the building of the Creamery in 1901, and co-operation was in the air. He believed the community wanted a co-operative hearse, because, he said, "a poor man can't now afford to die." So he travelled the Valley trying to raise \$125.00 ; for which sum he said his friend Ralph Craig of Nanaimo, blacksmith, and builder of substantial and well-known democrat wagons, would "make a fine hearse, and paint it black, and put neat windows in the sides ; and it could be kept under lock and key in the church shed for the use of anyone who needed it, and it would save the people a whole lot of money."

This sensible advice went unheeded, and the project failed, but, personally, he baffled the undertaker. The veteran had reached the age of eighty-two, and one day in May 1909, he started out to visit a married daughter, and human eyes never saw him again. Everybody knew him, and he was hunted for months, both by concerted bands and singly, and rewards were offered, but all in vain. Several persons, since the Valley was first settled, have been lost in the woods surrounding it, and,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

dead or alive, sooner or later, they have all been found. But not so with him—he passed, and left no trace.

For a life well blent with toil and content,
Spent under the broad, bright sky,
What end so good as the deep green wood,
Where none but God stands by?

THE WEATHER—AND ITS VAGARIES

The average precipitation in Comox Valley for the last twenty years was 48 inches annually. In Victoria it was 28 inches, and in the city of Vancouver 56 inches. But all weather prediction is futile here, and no one but a fool or a newcomer will venture it. George Grieve said when asked, "While I was in New Brunswick, I could tell something about the weather, but since I came over the Rocky Mountains I have given up prophesying." The year 1934 will be remembered in the Valley as one in which the weather all through was adapted to the farmer's wishes in every way, and which he could not have improved on, rain and sunshine coming in proper quantities and just when wanted. It was

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

the finest year I ever saw. On the other hand, the present year (1935) has been most unseasonable.

One year of strange extremes was 1887, in the May of which occurred the terrible colliery explosion at Nanaimo, the greatest disaster in British Columbian history. The previous winter had been an average one, with moderate snow, and the spring was a good working season, but late and frosty, with snow low down upon the mountains. Then May brought tree-crashing south-easters with torrents of rain, swamping the green grain in the fields. The newly-built Roman Catholic Church near the Landing went down with two long fir trees across it. But the following lines from the *Colonist* of that time will give a better idea of all the circumstances :—

Can this indeed be May,
That month so green and fair?
Surely November at its worst
Could scarce with this compare.

For clouds of blackest hue
In dense battalions form,
And trees uproot, and fences fly
Before the warring storm.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

The shivering cows rush home
To shun the fierce downpour,
And ancient straw and musty hay
They eagerly devour.

The brimming Tsolum foams
With current brown and strong ;
And over ploughed and seeded lands
The wild duck sails along.

But these are trifles. Ah !
What real trouble springs
Where Death's dark angel hovers low,
With close and stifling wings !

Woe for the stricken town !
Woe for the homes of gloom,
Which husband, son, or father's face
Shall never more illumine !

O month of cloud and wrath !
Long, long through future years
Nanaimo will remember thee
With sighing and with tears.

God bind the broken hearts,
God comfort those who mourn,
For what can human aid avail
In such a time forlorn ?

Then the sky cleared, and the sun came
back scorchingly, and ruled like a tyrant
through June, July and August, insatiably

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

draining all moisture, and the crops were very poor. This drew the following, approved by the *Toronto Globe* :—

August returns, but not with plenty crowned ;
Thin, dwarfed, and light of head is all the grain ;
The meagre hay was—ere its blossom—browned,
The root-crops withered, all for want of rain.
The cows for after-grass do seek in vain,
And through the boundless woods afar they roam,
They anger me ; but when driven home again,
Their sad eyes plead for hay, and I am dumb,
For I have none to spare—I think of months to come.

THE GREAT SNOW

I believe I mentioned before that the winter of 1877-78 was clear of snow altogether. That has never happened since, though an inch or two has sometimes let us through. Frost is also very uncertain, we usually have at least one sharp nip, though often the woodshed gives sufficient protection to a sack of potatoes. But it is well to be prepared for the worst, as many learned in the winter of 1889-90, which gave us the heaviest snow on record.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

It began early in December with six inches of soft stuff which froze on the roofs, forming a good foundation. This was followed daily and almost nightly through the month by a monotonous descent of heavy soft flakes, slanting from the south, till it reached a depth of five feet on the level, and most of the fences had disappeared. People were so busy shovelling roofs that they had no time to break roads, and it was with the utmost difficulty that a single sleigh track was kept open between the Valley and the wharf. When two sleighs met on this track, there was much tall talking and floundering, with damage to harness and rigs.

Many barns and outbuildings went down in the Valley, and the Presbyterian Church had to be lightened of its load, though not before it had been so strained as to necessitate the long iron rods that now hold the building together. Then was seen the wisdom of the steep-roofed Anglican Church.

Barns were shovelled day and night till the piles of pitched snow rose high above the eaves, and it was easy to walk from the ground to the ridges of the buildings. And here I may recall one ridiculous episode. An old horse, tired of long confinement, got out one

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

day into the single track road, and followed its wide curve around to a hillside, where he stopped to look at his strange surroundings. Thence, suddenly seeing his own stable in the Valley below with all intervening fences submerged, he made a bee-line for it. He wallowed down the slope two or three hundred yards and then stopped, and there he rested for two weeks, his owner snatching time from more pressing duties to carry him a bundle of hay daily. He came out all right.

People who had prepared their firewood in the bush, expecting to haul it out in sleighs, could not get to it, and had to dig out their nearest fence rails to keep the fires going. Cows had three weeks of dry fare, as although there were plenty of turnips pitted in the fields, it was impossible to get them.

At last, after New Year, the wind went north, the sky cleared, and the heavy damp snow froze to a depth of six inches. And the frost brought liberty along with it, as people and teams went helter-skelter over fields and fences from end to end of the Valley.

The farmers so far had been so tied to their own creaking buildings that public structures had had to take care of themselves. The winter school holidays, which necessity had

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

unduly lengthened, were now over ; but the then teacher, Miss M. Mackay, who lately attained fame through long service in Vancouver City, objected to the condition of the building. She told the trustees, who were Samuel Piercy and myself, that she thought she was born for something better than to be smothered in a cave like that.

Well, the rural school allowance for incidental expenses, then limited to \$14.00 a year, had already been spent for firewood and well-cleaning—so there was nothing for us but to go at it ourselves.

The structure was unusually high, and sheltered as it was at that time from the south wind by tall trees, the flakes had settled down perpendicularly and evenly all over it, till it looked like a gigantic snowy haystack.

We climbed up gingerly, one on each side of the roof, and we worked carefully, to keep the pressure proportionate, and, after breaking through the crust, we dug and dug till it seemed as if we would never reach the shingles, and we blessed old John Brown the builder, who was said by George Grieve to be "the greatest man I ever knew to hide nails." It took us a good half day to clear that roof.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

About a hundred yards north of us, on the same hill, had stood the first Agricultural Hall, which covered as much ground as the present one, but was higher and more roughly built, having weather-boards instead of rustic. It was scarcely ten years old, but it had collapsed so completely that not a stick showed above the snow. Afterwards old Adam McKelvey, who held a mortgage on it and the acre of land in connection with it, hauled the wreckage home to build a barn.

Late in March it was an unforgettable experience to stand on the snow-covered hill by the Anglican Churchyard and see the whole broad flats one dazzling sheet of white under the brilliant sunshine. Sharp frost every night held it there, and it was the last week in April before any proper ploughing could be done.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

SOME SEMI-PUBLIC MATTERS

I will now take up the thread of events from the time of George Grieve's departure. That same year William and I divided our share of Section XVI, according to the quality of the land. He had his choice, and took the upper division. But he still continued to farm my share, I having his third of the store-building and lot. In 1911 I began to build a dwelling-house on my share of the farm, and in 1912 circumstances obliged me to leave Sandwick Corner, where I had been postmaster for twenty-four years. I offered the store to William, who had served his time to the mercantile business in Shetland, and who had a family of boys growing up around him, but he said "farming was good enough" for him. So I bought his third for \$1000.00, and put up the place for sale as a going concern.

It was taken over by some young residents of the Valley who had known it from boyhood, and who bought the store goods outright, and made an agreement to buy the building and lot in a few years. But they neglected their business, and their creditors came down

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

on them and sold them out in 1920, and the building and lot fell back into my hands. Then a gentleman, who knew the location through visits as a commercial traveller, came along and wanted it. I offered him the place as it stood for \$3000.00, but he preferred to rent it from month to month. And he is there still.

When I left the store in October 1912, my wife and I moved over to our new dwelling-house to take up farming, as she had often wanted to do. But her health did not improve, and in December 1921 the long-threatened blow fell, and I was left alone.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

Returning to the general history of the Valley, the first school was erected in 1871 on an acre of land given by Bishop Hills for that purpose. It was a plain, high, barn-shaped edifice, strongly built of lumber brought up from Victoria (there being no local mill then), and it stood on its hill-top for more than fifty years—outbraving the Great Snow, as already related ; and was finally pulled to

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

pieces to get material for a barn. Up to the middle of the 'eighties it was the only school on the Island north of Wellington. Now count them if you can.

The first teacher was Samuel Crawford, an elderly Nova Scotian farmer, who came to the district in 1869, and bought the south part of John Wilson's farm (now owned by Andrews and Weaver). Crawford had taught school in his youth, and he had a grown-up son who was a competent farmer, so the salary of \$50.00 a month came in very handy for them. But children were scarce, and to maintain the required attendance of fifteen, he brought up half-breed children from Victoria and kept them on the farm. He was a good teacher, and said to be so by James Robb, who was not particularly partial to him. A later teacher was Miss Agnes Deans Cameron of Victoria. She stayed with the Robbs, and walked the four miles up and down daily.

Being for many years the only public building, the school was used for gatherings of all kinds, and saw wild and hilarious times, especially at political meetings. The funniest episode that I can recall happened as follows : One of the candidates was supposed to have

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

prohibition leanings, and Mr Samuel Cliffe, later known as proprietor of the Lorne Hotel, but who then lived on the Harmston farm, stood up in a great green blanket overcoat and made a speech on the respective achievements of England and Turkey in the world's history, winding up with a shout, "Look at the beer-drinking Englishman! Look at the teetotal Turk!" "Ay, Sam," remarked his friend and farmer-neighbour, the Irishman Milligan, "Ye do look awful 'shookum.'" * There was no more speechmaking that night.

CHURCHES

THE ANGLICANS

There were always a few Roman Catholics around Comox Landing, chiefly on the property of the pioneer Irishman, Patrick Murphy, which now holds the church, hospital and graveyard; but they were never a strong body, and their church was not built till the middle 'eighties.

The great majority of the first settlers were English, and, of course, Anglicans; so when

* "Skookum" is Chinook for "strong."

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Bishop Hills acquired Section XVII, in 1866, they set to work and erected a small log church on the site of the present parsonage. The Bishop sent up a second-hand chancel window from Victoria, also a quantity of rough lumber, and what of it was not needed on the church was used to build a two-roomed cabin close by.

Rare visits were made by clergy from Nanaimo, and there was a resident catechist named Price, who read services on Sundays and fished and hunted through the week—a compulsory matter with him, as his salary was next to nothing, and he exchanged the products of rivers and woods with the settlers for milk, butter and vegetables.

This state of matters ended in 1871 with the arrival of the first clergyman, Rev. J. X. Willemar. Mr Willemar, a native of eastern France, was, like most of his parishioners, of rural ancestry. His salary was only \$50.00 a month, and with a young and growing family he had to utilise his early training. He fenced in with rails (of Beech's manufacture) all the church land between the upper road and the river (some of these rails, after sixty years, are still in use on the lower road), he cultivated about half of it, raising all his

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

own vegetables, as well as hay and roots for his stock of sheep and cattle, and having his own milk and butter. As his family grew he kept adding with his own hands to the original Mission cabin, till it rose to the size and appearance of a respectable residence, but the walls were thin and hardly wind-proof, and the roof was leaky to the last; and finally at the end of the century it was demolished, and the new parsonage built with funds raised from land sales.

Having thus, in great measure, to support himself and family by the work of his hands, Mr Willemar, while constant and regular in his Sunday services, had no week-day meetings except on Christmas and Good Friday; and as the fastest mode of travel was by horse and buggy, it was not so easy to get around as now, nor were the roads in any such shape. Yet he was pretty regular with evening service at Comox, before any church was erected there, and also made occasional canoe trips to Denman Island. He did, personally, much of the work on the hillside church, and those at Comox and Cumberland were both built under him.

When I came, in June 1877, he was preaching in the old log church with the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

chancel window out, it having been removed to go into the new church on the hill. That much-travelled light-giver was finally replaced by the stained glass in memory of his father-in-law.

Altogether, Mr Willemar worked himself into the daily life of the people more than any of his successors. He was followed in 1913 by Mr Laycock, who built the Courtenay church, but the Great War broke up his pastorate. He was afterwards Archdeacon of Columbia, and at present has a large parish in London. Then came Mr Flinton, who was more of a country clergyman, but a good preacher. Like Mr Willemar, he was interested in farm life, and did his best to introduce goats to the Valley, but unfortunately his health broke down. Next came Mr Bourdillon, temporarily from England, now we have Mr Chapman.

I never saw an Anglican church or heard and Anglican service till I came here ; but as it was the only church then, I attended it with my uncles. Before my father and the rest of the family came, the Presbyterian services were under way, so they never connected themselves with the Anglicans. For many years I attended both churches every

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Sunday, the services being at different hours. But I have long been persuaded that denominationalism is of very small importance.

Mr Willemar died July 1935, being well on in his ninety-fourth year.

THE PRESBYTERIANS

Matthew Piercy, another old New Brunswicker with a large family, had been fellow-emigrant with George Grieve in 1874. Both these men and their wives had come as children from Northumberland, and all retained the Northumberland "burr" in their speech. Piercy bought the rest of John Wilson's farm, and as he and his neighbour, Crawford, the teacher, were both Presbyterians, they determined to have a church on the common hill-top of their property. George Grieve being of the same persuasion, the thing worked well, they giving land and materials and Grieve doing the work. This church was likewise under construction in June 1877.

The first minister was a young married man from New Brunswick, named McElmon, known as a student missionary by the Grieve and Piercy families. He bought a piece of

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

He was at
Cloverdale
from home
B

land from Piercy near the church, and built the house now occupied by Mr Adey. His stout opposition to the liquor traffic brought him many enemies, and after five years he sold his place, and moved over to Washington (then only a territory), where he did well, and is still alive, I believe, in Bellingham.

His successor was the Rev. James Christie, M.A., from Aberdeen, an elderly Scotsman of high gifts and education, but who had proved the truth of Scripture that "wine is a mocker." He had come, I believe, to this remote place in the hope of escaping, but the mocker followed even here. His sermons were excellent and dignified, but it was a case of "do as I say, and not as I do." He was what now is called "a good mixer," and was in great request at local entertainments, where he gave readings from *Peck's Bad Boy* and such-like literature. He lived at the old Elk Hotel and served the church on horseback between the two points. He took much interest in local politics, and would sit for hours on the hotel verandah discussing them with those who had time for such things. Yet, though he kept a bold front, he had his times of depression, for, passing me on the road one day (I being then in my twenties), he called out,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

“Eric, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” And surely the caution is good for all of us.

He left after three years, and I only saw him once again, when, as his name had stayed on the voters' list, he came up to vote at an election. Passing down the wharf I saw him in his old place on the verandah. He saw me, too, and shouted, “Eric, I am like Job's war-horse, I smell the battle from afar.”

The above will surprise no one who knows that some thirty years previously the Rev. John Scarth, a minister of the Establishment, who came from Scotland to the parish of Sandwick in Shetland, was a constant user of Scotch whisky, and sometimes entered his pulpit under its influence. It is to the credit of the Bruces of Sumburgh that they banned all liquor shops from their property. And, at the present day, there seems to be a renaissance of the evil, so that even women and girls are falling before the disgusting habit.

Christie was followed by another Scotsman, Rev. Alexander Fraser from Inverness, who owed little to education, but was a thoroughly good man. He was tall and scrawny, with a

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

long red beard, and did hard and heavy mission work in the early days of Cumberland, braving rain and snow and infectious fevers, following trails, then traversed by black bears and deer, which are now wide open roads, and spending nights in empty, fireless cabins. Many a dark rough morning, going up, I have met him coming down, mounted on his white range horse, and received and returned his hearty greeting. He secured the first church site in Cumberland from Robert Dunsmuir. "Ay," said the grim old pioneer of industry, "we'll gie ye a bit o' grund," and it was directly on the line between the old and new towns.

It was no joke to get to Cumberland in those days. The trail was the roughest imaginable, and for long stretches the wagon-wheels rarely touched earth, but hopped from stone to root and from root to stone, and woe to any spring vehicle! Many a day I walked ahead of the wagon, throwing out stones; and eggs had to be solidly packed in straw to stand the racket. Yet it was a home market, and we were no longer compelled to ship our produce merely for what it could fetch after paying the heavy freight to Nanaimo and Victoria.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Fraser was active in every movement for the betterment of the whole district, and he designed and worked at the building of the manse below the road. After eight years of strenuous activity, his wife's health forced him to remove to California. The presentation fad had not then come into vogue, but if ever any man deserved such, he did.

His successor was a third Scotsman, Rev. Alexander Tait, from Caithness. Altogether different from any of his predecessors, and without attractive personality, he was yet a genuinely good man. Unlike Fraser, who was "hail fellow well met" with everybody, Tait confined himself to his study, and was rarely seen on the roads. He was a deep thinker, and of rather hesitating speech to begin with, but once started, he preached as well as Christie, and with far more effect. He stayed some seven years, and then went back to Scotland, but before going he told a resident of the Valley that the greatest war in history would break out in 1914, and be followed by a long period of economic unrest. This was in 1899.

After he left, the Church of Scotland, which had been so far responsible for the upkeep of Presbyterian services in the Valley, turned the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

work over to the Canadian Church, and the next minister, Rev. Thomas Menzies, was an Ontario man, much younger than any before him, except McElmon. He stayed some twenty-one years, and being of very versatile temperament, worked himself into every concern of the district, and finally represented it at Victoria. His successors have all been short term men.

It is interesting to recall that Tait had four veteran dominies together in his congregation. These were Crawford, one of the church founders ; John Mundell, from the Scottish border, who taught in Craigflower, Cariboo and Nanaimo, before he came to Comox ; John N. Muir, who had been principal of Victoria High School, and famous for his fight with the Department of Education under John Robson ; and James A. Halliday, principal of New Westminster public school, who had there among his pupils Richard McBride and William Wallace Burns McInnes, though he never seemed proud of that. He bought the Upland place originally owned by Beech, and he and his sons, always progressive, and never afraid of hard work, have made it one of the foremost farms in the Valley.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

COMOX LEGISLATORS

The district's first representative at Victoria was Dr John Ash, a Victoria physician, who owned some property in the section of Deep Bay, and was a member of the Cabinet. But his interests were mainly in Victoria, and his opponents called him merely an additional "fifth" member for that city. As I mentioned before, Reginald Carwithen had ineffectually opposed him, and he held the seat through the whole of the 'seventies, till it was called his pocket-borough.

At the next following election, William Dingwall, a young Scotsman who had just started a store at Comox Landing, was induced to stand, and as by that time the doctor was too old to bother much about it, he was easily elected, and was called "the man who scared away Dr Ash." Dingwall was of a very happy disposition and extremely popular for a time, especially as he was easy in extending credit to customers, and he was characterised by the Rev. James Christie as "a man whose sole ambition in life is just to make a joke." But he was a poor public speaker, and the "Settlement Bill," as it was called, was his

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

undoing. And here it is necessary to give a little provincial history.

When the Canadian Pacific Railway was first projected, it was intended to strike the coast at Bute Inlet, cross Seymour Narrows by bridge or ferry, and come down the east coast of the Island to Victoria, and there was a land grant of many miles on each side of the railway the whole distance. When it was finally decided that the road should end at Burrard Inlet, the Ottawa Government was fined the sum of \$750,000.00 for its failure to construct the Island section. The Victoria Government tried to apply this money to its original purpose, but could get no one to take it up. At last a syndicate called "The Esquimalt-Nanaimo Railway Co." made an offer, but only to build the road as far as Nanaimo, whereas they wanted the land right up to Seymour Narrows. Comox objected, saying the land should be given only as far as the road was built. But Victoria and Nanaimo were determined to have the railway—all the lower Island members were a unit in favour of taking the offer; the mainland members were indifferent, and Comox was left out in the cold. Poor Dingwall was no Gerry McGeer, he sat mute, and so the deal went

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

over. But it cooked his political goose for him, and at the next election he was opposed by A. Maitland Stenhouse, another Scotsman of considerable private fortune, but stone deaf.

This man had bought a piece of property on the river-front between Courtenay town-site and the Campbell farm, and he was sponsored by the Rev. Mr Christie, who, on being taunted with the infirmity of his candidate, replied : " It is better to be deaf than dumb." At a big turnout in the old school-house, Mr Stenhouse, a short, stout man, stood at the teacher's desk and read his address and platform from manuscript. He had the peculiar strained voice often noticed in deaf people, and it was quite useless to heckle him. When he had finished, James Robb rose slowly at the back of the room, and, pointing with his finger, said : " If *that* is to represent the manhood of Comox at Victoria, then Lord help us ! "

However, Stenhouse was elected and served out his term with the help of a secretary who sat beside him and took notes of the other members' speeches. He was one of the first members of the Union Club of Victoria, and when his legislative period was over he left Comox, and was said to have joined the Mormons in Utah.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

HUMPHREYS APPEARS

A third time Dingwall stood, but now his opponent was poor Thomas Basil Humphreys, who had then become known as "Wandering Tom," having already represented Saanich and Lillooet. This man was a member of the second Walkem Cabinet, elected in June 1878, and had been turned out by Robert Beaven, perennial member for the city of Victoria, when he took up the Premiership after Walkem had become a Judge of the Supreme Court in 1882. Humphreys was the son of an English officer, and was born in India. He had come to British Columbia in the early 'seventies, and had been a provincial constable in the interior before he went into politics. He was said to be nearly the first orator of his time in Canada, excelled only by Sir Charles Tupper, and he was certainly the finest speaker I ever heard — the once famous W. W. B. McInnes was nothing to him. But somehow he had fallen in the world, and was under a cloud, and now in 1887 when he came to Comox, he had that deathly pallor which was noticed in the face of W. J. Bowser in his latter days. He told the people—who

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

jammed the old schoolhouse to hear him—that they were fully entitled to at least a quarter of the \$750,000.00, and if they put him in he would see that they got \$20,000.00 as a first instalment, or else he would never show his face in the Valley again.

As \$3000.00 was the highest appropriation for the district in those days, this almost took the settlers' breath away, but the bulk of them believed him, and he went in with a huge majority. And he kept his word, for he never returned, and was dead before his term was out. A little after the election I was at Victoria, and was asked by John Robson and Cornelius Booth how on earth the Comox people came to let him in. I could only reply that they were carried off their feet by his eloquence. "Ah," said Booth, "if only old Corney had been there to show him up!"

In 1889, Dingwall, ruined in business and broken in health, was attacked by pneumonia, and died at thirty-eight, leaving his wife and family dependent on his father-in-law.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE CUMBERLAND SIDE

Then we turned to the Cumberland side of the district, and our next member was Joseph Hunter, a civil engineer of province-wide reputation, Superintendent of the Island Railway, and construction engineer of the line between Cumberland and Union Bay. He was opposed, unavailingly, by Joseph McPhee, who then took his first and last dive into politics. Hunter, a hard-headed Aberdonian, told us plainly that the Island Railway had not paid, and never could pay, as it was too close to water-borne freight; so it was no use grumbling over its stoppage at Nanaimo. I suppose if Vancouver Island could be split open like a Shetland ling, and its backbone taken out, leaving it spread out flat, like England, a railway from end to end, thirty miles back from the coast, would be just the thing. But man with all his cleverness has never yet been able to remove mountains except on the tiniest scale. That must still be left to Him "who sets them fast," and "hangs the earth upon nothing." Hunter was elected in 1890, and being re-elected without opposition, served the district till

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

near the close of the century. He died recently in Victoria at the age of ninety-four. He was a son-in-law of the Premier, John Robson.

After him came James Dunsmuir, who put up \$1000.00 to start the Co-operative Creamery; Lewis Mounce, called "the balance-wheel" of the Grant and Mounce firm, who was practically pushed into politics; and Robert Grant, his partner, "the good boss," a free-handed man, extremely popular with all who worked for him. Their saw-mill supplied all the coal-mine timbers, and built both the old and new towns of Cumberland. They were followed by Michael Manson, coal wharfinger at Union Bay, the only one of the lot who seemed to enjoy politics. Most of these men served two terms. Then we came back to the Valley with the Rev. Thomas Menzies before mentioned, and Hugh Stewart, called the "the member for the logged-off lands," whose monument is Merville. Swinging over to Cumberland again, we had Dr Macnaughton. Then the district was enlarged to take in Alberni, and now we are represented by an Alberni lawyer.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

MERVILLE, THE SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT

What first drew attention to Merville was the sudden wholesale disappearance of a huge forest which formerly stood in that area, leaving only the blackened ground, apparently ready for cropping. But it has been remarked that those great firs must live on air rather than earth, as they do best on gravel ; and the burning of the logging slash had cleaned out most of what little soil was mixed with the stones. Instead of being cut up into farms, the whole tract should have been reforested. The more or less swampy country between Black Creek and Oyster River, with its non-resinous growth of spruce, balsam, cottonwood, alder, etc., may be more difficult to clear than the hard, dry ridges of Merville, but it shows a different soil, much better suited for agriculture.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ALEXANDER LEDINGHAM

The district lost quite a character this winter in the passing of Alexander Ledingham, a native of Ontario, who came here without means in the summer of 1885, and took hold of 140 acres of bush-land in the Upper Valley, sheltering under a huge capsized tree-root till he gathered enough material to build a shack, and afterwards running the engine at Grant and Mounce's Cumberland saw-mill for several months to get money for a start with cattle.

He was a lifelong bachelor, thoroughly wedded to the soil, and sturdily built, with a limp from a schoolboy accident which gave him the rolling gait of a sailor, but never excused him from work. Of a strong mechanical turn, many of his tools and implements were home-made, and he was an expert saw-filer and tree-pruner. He was always ready to help those who needed it, not only with useful hints and suggestions, but with hand labour.

In 1920, at the age of sixty, he sold his cleared and valuable farm to the Soldier Settlement Board (who placed four families

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

on it), and bought a lot and small cabin at Courtenay. Removing a large stump from it, he worked the lot as a garden, and, unable for idleness, he drove his small runabout to the beaches, where he cut driftwood logs into blocks for firewood, keeping his shed crammed full with two years' wood ahead, and leaving it so for another old bachelor who has succeeded him there. When told that his relatives would soon scatter what he had saved, he said that if they got as much enjoyment out of spending as he in getting, it would be all right.

During 1935 his lameness increased, and in November he went to a nursing home near Victoria, where he died on 12th February 1936, well on in his seventy-seventh year. Too few are left of "Sandy's" rugged, self-helping breed.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ALEXANDER URQUHART

A very different figure vanished from the Valley on 22nd April. Alexander Urquhart was born in Gaelic Ross-shire, January 1846. The son of a sailor, the sea claimed him from boyhood, carried him to various parts of the world, and finally cast him ashore on the east coast of Vancouver Island in 1871. Here, in a little bush clearing, he found a neighbour Scot, old Alexander Brown of Nairn, who passed him on to James Thomson, Irish owner of the Dyke Farm, where he learned to use the scythe. Moving farther up the Valley, he became an expert farmer under John Wilson, who was then taking up what was to him the more congenial calling of travelling trader on the coasting steamers. But Wilson soon after sold his farm, and Urquhart, finding himself adrift, took hold of a stretch of swamp land on Baynes' Sound, and started to raise beef cattle.

Being now in a measure settled, he be-thought him of "the girl he left behind him," and brought her out, meeting and marrying her at Nanaimo, and coming home in an Indian canoe. A year or so later he got the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

chance of buying, on time, the better half of the huge Macfarlane farm in the Lower Comox Valley. There was no land road to Comox then, and, being even more agile on water than on land, he rafted his household goods and cattle up from Baynes' Sound, as well as a large quantity of building timber and rails, which were sorely needed on the dilapidated old place.

He had a rough time there to begin with, as, having housed his cattle in the old log sheds, a heavy snowfall one night crushed them down, and he lost nearly all his stock. His neighbours began a subscription to help him, but he was too independent for that, and refused it. Next he built a large frame barn in the middle of the Flat, but made the mistake of using cedar for his upright posts, and another heavy snow split them down the centres, and that building too caved in. Then he cleared away a splendid alder grove from the foot of the hill, and erected the present large and substantial farm steading.

Though not the first to bring Jersey cattle to the Valley, he was the first to go in for them in wholesale fashion, and the first to do away with the old milk-pans and deep-cans, and bring in the Scandinavian cream-separator

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and modern dairy methods. His butter commanded the highest price in Nanaimo and Victoria, and brought Comox to the front in that line, long before the Co-operative Creamery was thought of. He was well-known and honoured in dairy circles all over the province.

When automobiles first invaded the district, a buggy-horse which he was driving shied from one of the monsters, throwing him out and breaking his thigh-bone. But, though limping, he managed fairly well till about five years ago, when a second car accident put him permanently on crutches. Yet his mind stayed bright, and through the papers he kept continually in touch with local and world affairs. He was well looked after by a devoted wife and daughter, and it was not till the last three days of his life that a stroke made him bedfast. His family of two sons and three daughters, with their mother, all survived him, and there are many grandchildren.

His wife, at eighty-seven, slipped away very suddenly on 3rd June. It seemed as if she waited just long enough to see him off, and then followed him. Though stout and burly in build, he was very nimble till accident disabled him. Without his disadvantage of

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

bulk, she was tall, slim and quick-footed, the very personification of neatness ; and her house and dairy were always in shining order. He was dark and she was light, and the difference showed strongly in their children. She retained her peculiar Gaelic accent to the last, and never tired of reminding me that both of us first saw the district in the summer of 1877.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

BACK TO BEGINNINGS

About 1849, Maria Nordstrom, a sturdy country girl from the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, left home and went into domestic service in Stockholm. A couple of years later she met and married a young house-painter and decorator, Wilhelm Ask (the name in English is Ash, a well-known tree). Their married life lasted about twenty-five years, and their family was, first three sons and then three daughters. Then the husband, never strong, took pneumonia and died, and the widow for some fifteen years acted as charwoman, took in washing, and in other laborious ways managed to bring up her family, giving them all the benefit of a good public school education in the city.

In the late 'seventies, when the boys had gone off on their own account, a brother of hers who had got a blacksmith's training at home and had gone abroad, wrote to her from Nanaimo, where he was chief blacksmith for the Coal Company, offering to pay her passage and that of the girls if she would come out and keep house for him. She took his offer, and they came out by way of New York and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

San Francisco. As not one of the four could speak a word of English, except, "We do not understand"—a sentence he had sent them—they had some curious adventures, but they came through all right. He had got a cow and chickens on a large town lot, so the mother felt quite at home to begin with. But soon after they came, he made up an ill-assorted marriage between the oldest girl, Matilda, who was eighteen, and a chum of his, who was more than twice her age, and, like himself, too much given to liquor. The youngest, Maria, was only a schoolgirl, and the middle one, Anna, stuck by her mother, but soon got work as a domestic servant, coming home every night. As time went on, drink, the curse of his countrymen on the Pacific coast, got ever a stronger hold on him, and at length he became so unbearable that she left him, taking a small house for herself and the two girls, where she worked as she had done in Stockholm, and they, well trained by her, helped.

In 1887 I chanced to be at Nanaimo, and called at the house of my travelling companion, who had now got settled, brought a wife from Shetland, and had two small children. He had a steady job with the Coal Company, and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

had besides started a small store which his wife attended in his absence, and she had a girl to help her in the house. While I was there the girl was standing up in a window washing it, and she turned and looked at me. She was no pretty doll ; she had the usual blonde Scandinavian complexion, and was pale, never had the bright colour of her sisters—but the most intellectual of the three. But something said to me, “ There she stands, your future wife,” and she was the first and only woman who ever attracted me as such.

MARRIED LIFE

After I got home I wrote to her, proposing marriage. She replied, refusing, and giving reasons ; but my mind was made up, and I combated those reasons. I remembered the dictum of the old master : “ If you see a girl careful of her mother, catch that girl.” So I kept on, and at last she consented, and two years later, in February 1889, she being twenty-two, and I thirty, we were married at her home by the Rev. Joseph Hall, Methodist minister, who,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

with his wife and family, had passed through the Vancouver City fire, and who entertained us at dinner with his experiences there, the only thing he saved being a nutmeg grater.

The same night we went on to Victoria, where we secured some solid second-hand furniture from Henry Jewell: three kitchen chairs which have been in constant use ever since and are still good. We also got an easy chair for her mother, who, we intended, should live with us. We had a rough passage up to Comox, and she was seasick, and we landed in a snowstorm, being met by William with the sleigh. Her only possessions besides what she wore were a Wanzer sewing machine, and a large framed bird's-eye view of Stockholm; and her employer had given her a straight-backed, spring rocking-chair. The following morning I was bringing up a sleigh-load of furniture, and had laid the big framed picture on the top to be safe, under a waterproof cover, but passing an up-valley settler on the road, and slowing down to give him a lift, he suddenly threw himself on the top of the load, crushing the picture glass under him. He never knew what he had done.

She was very anxious to perfect her English, which was still rather broken, and within two

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

years no one could have told that she had not spoken it all her life. And I have noticed that the women of that race generally are far quicker than the men to get rid of their peculiar accent. Intellectual people found something attractive about her. James Robb was quite anxious to see what kind of a wife I had got, and he and she became great friends. Mr Justice Crease, who used to come up from Victoria with his boys in the holiday season for river fishing, and camped on the Puntledge Indian Reserve, got his farm produce from us, as being nearest; and one day he spoke to both of us in a very friendly way, ending by asking if I had made my will. I replied that neither of us had thought about it. "Poor policy," he said, "very poor policy." The following night we had a September gust, and early in the morning he appeared at our place and said, "As I lay awake in my tent during the storm I heard a tree falling, and I thought how that man might thus suddenly be struck down and pass without a will. And then I thought of the needless trouble and expense to that poor woman which must necessarily follow." So he commanded me to go out and get two neighbours as witnesses while he sat down and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

wrote my will, dated 5th September 1890, leaving everything to my wife, who was also appointed executor. Unfortunately, it did not serve the intended purpose, but I have it still as a keepsake, and it has been the pattern for many wills.

The first half of our thirty-two years together was happy and uneventful, and though we had change and trouble enough later, no cloud ever came between us, and our mutual comradeship never varied. She insisted from the first that I should read aloud at least an hour every evening, from the first of November to the end of March, and she longed for the winter months on that account. Her favourite authors were Blackmore and George Macdonald, both of whose works we practically finished, and we were in the middle of *The Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* when we parted at Victoria. *Lorna Doone* was not Blackmore's only worthwhile book, as some seem to think. *Kit and Kitty*, *The Maid of Sker* and *Cripps the Carrier* are all delightful and comical pictures of English country life without the grey pessimism of Hardy, and *Erema* is a book by itself.

She had also a great liking for the books of M. E. Francis, author of *Yeoman Fleetwood*,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

and for those of the Polish writer, Gerard, author of *Reata*, but she had no use for Haggard, or Kipling, or Conan Doyle. Of course we had Selma Lagerlof's books, which were homelike to her. Another special favourite was Charles Reade, most of whose books we read, as well as several of Scott and Dickens. For her own private reading she had complete sets of the Pansy and Alcott books in paper covers.

Brought up as my wife had been in the Lutheran Church, the Anglican service came easy to her, and while health lasted, her Sunday seat was never vacant. As our authorised version of the Scriptures had not the same hold on her as it has on us, she preferred that I should use Conybeare's translation of Paul's Epistles when we came to them in the course of family worship.

In April 1895, having no children of our own, we adopted the week-old twin boy of James Pritchard, a hard-working woodsman from Eastern Canada, whose wife had died at their birth, leaving him with a small and numerous family. Charles, as we called the infant, grew up under my wife's training a good and clever boy. She had a wonderful knack with children, and for many years, until physic-

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ally disabled, she taught a Sunday afternoon class at Sandwick public school, pulling her boy behind her in a small express wagon till he was able to walk, and then he trotted the mile by her side, taking great interest in the changing hues of woods and fields from week to week. She confined her teaching to the Gospels, and she had no lesson helps except Matthew Henry's Commentary. Some of her scholars still remember her with gratitude.

In the later 'nineties, Mr Halliday started a winter Wednesday night Shakespeare Club, intending to move it from house to house up and down the Valley; but as our place was central, and she was a good entertainer, it was fixed there, and so continued as long as it lasted, which was quite a number of years.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A GREAT MOTHER-IN-LAW

My wife's youngest sister took up domestic service in 1892, and her mother, leaving Nanaimo, came up to us. She was then a woman of sixty-six, and she could not speak a word of English except my name, which is really Scandinavian, and which she pronounced "Ayrick." My wife was too intent on learning English to teach me Swedish (and in fact I myself had not time for it), so the mother and I could only communicate through her. Sometimes, when she was away, and the old lady—attending to the housework—wanted something special done, she would make the most wonderful speeches and signs to me, and finally break into a laugh, grab me by the arm, and lead me to the job. The two women often had conferences together, and afterwards she would meet me with a broad smile and clap me on the shoulder.

All the time I knew her she limped, through sciatic rheumatism, probably the change from the cold dry climate of Stockholm to this coast did not suit at her age, and the hard, wet work of washing would aggravate ; but she never complained, and was always hearty and cheerful. None of the stale

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

mother-in-law jokes ever struck me. She was most unobtrusive, and insisted on leaving us to ourselves every evening at seven o'clock, mounting the stair to her room, where she had her Lutheran Bible and two volumes of Spurgeon's sermons translated into Swedish. She was a great help in looking after Charles when he was small ; in fact, he was often her charge all day long, though we always had him at night. He was quite fluent in Swedish at six, though he forgot it afterwards.

She stayed with us some seven years, and then Maria, who had saved her wages, decided to get a couple of cows and some poultry, and wanted her back to Nanaimo to keep house with her. Her sight failed latterly, and from 1902 she was quite blind, but she still managed to help herself and do considerable work around the house. In 1903 I was down, and went to see her. She could not see me, but she threw her still powerful arms around my neck, and hung there, in what her small charge used to call "a bear hug." Her call came rather suddenly soon after. Her placid portrait in its frame still looks down on me every night from the wall at my bedside. I never had any doubts about her future.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

MY WIFE'S VISIT TO SWEDEN

In 1904, when Charles was nine, she took him with her on a visit to friends in Stockholm. They left in May and came back in October, having had a wonderful time, particularly while navigating the Gotha canal from Gothenburg to Stockholm. They moved up and down from Upsala to the Isle of Gothland, with its ancient ruined town of Wisby, and saw every place of interest in Stockholm and the array of lakes in its neighbourhood. It was the time of the Russo-Japanese War, and they were rather afraid of the Russian fleet as it moved on its long ill-fated voyage from the Baltic to Japan, but it did not hinder them.

I met them at Comox Wharf with the wagon, but she hurried home ahead on her bicycle (stored at Robbs' in her absence) to clear up what she called "the bachelor dust" of six months, leaving the boy and me to bring up the belongings. I am afraid she found considerable dust, for I had not then been used to housekeeping at all. That came later, and even now a little dust does not frighten me as it does a housewife. I was rather disappointed by her appearance after her

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

long holiday. She looked thin and careworn, and although she was never inclined to stoutness, yet being only thirty-eight, I thought the rest and change should have rounded her out more than it did. She was not as spry in her movements as formerly, but she did her work the same as usual, and without complaint till the spring of 1910, when she told me of an insistent pain in the small of the back, stretching down through the hip-bones ; and as she was acquainted with the Colliery surgeon at Nanaimo through his attendance on her mother, she wanted to consult him.

By this time he had moved over to Vancouver City, where he had a good reputation and practice, and unfortunately I agreed with her that it was the best that she could do. So she went over, and he, I suppose naturally, concluded that the daughter's trouble was the same as the mother's, and accordingly treated her for sciatic rheumatism. He kept her in a private hospital on Barclay Street for months at a time, trying various measures, and the rests in bed no doubt eased her a little, but nothing helped permanently. He studied her under the X-ray, and in the fall of 1912 he ordered her to California for the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

winter. She refused to go without me, and this broke up my business as before related. What puzzled me about her was, that while in the cases of her mother and another friend who had real rheumatism, their finger-joints were swollen and distorted, hers were as smooth and limber as a child's.

VISIT TO CALIFORNIA

We went down in the end of October, and our first stop (on the advice of a neighbour who had been there) was at Auburn, a pretty little country town in the foothills a hundred miles east of Sacramento. All the month of November we roamed at will through the fields, helping ourselves to bunches of grapes which had been left by the harvesters, and climbing straggling barbed-wire fences rendered harmless by sacks twisted around them ; and she would run to the tops of precipitous little hills where I had sometimes difficulty in following her. These precipitous hills were so artificially. The little town had been a gold-hunting centre of the "Forty niners," and the hills were torn by their hydraulics.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

They had brought water through a long ditch from a mountain stream in the Sierra Nevada, and this ditch wound around through the hills, and was now used for irrigation and the town's water supply.

The country was all small hills, there was nowhere a mile of flat road, and the normal hills were all rounded, with the soil on their tops as deep as in the valleys. It was odd to see the ploughs in December mounting these hills and going right over their summits, preparatory for the sowing of wheat and oats, which was their only hay, and was cut in April before the sun burned it up. Some of the hills were covered by small pines, and the ever-present manzanita scrub, but most of them were under cultivation, and one or two carried olive groves, and there was a little olive oil factory.

There was no clover or timothy, what little pasture existed was a sort of wild oats, and the cattle were very thin. On one occasion we saw in the distance what looked like a green hill-top. "There," she said, "is the green hill far away," and we made for it, but when we got there we found only a little thicker growth of wild oats. We roamed the country for miles around our base in the little hotel.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

She seemed determined to work off her trouble—and it was from an Auburn doctor that she first got aspirin tablets, which were certainly a palliative. In our tramps we got acquainted with many people, several being of her own nationality, and for farther adventures we hired a horse and buggy ; and let me say here that if you really want to know a country, a quiet horse and buggy beats an automobile out of sight.

Geographical ignorance was amusing. A Mrs Dunlap, quite a public woman there, and head of the School Board, asked me what part of Saskatchewan British Columbia was in !

The only disturbing element was the roar of the transcontinental train, which passed through every afternoon, and the thundering echo of its passage among the hills, through a tunnel, and over a trestle, stopped all conversation for the time. We could see the lips of the townspeople moving, and they said they could hear one another, but we could not. From the top of one of the hills, Alta Vista, we could see the Sacramento River in the far west, glittering under the setting sun, and it looked much more inviting than in my first experience of it thirty-five years before.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

WE MOVE ON

We spent the months of November, December and January there, and in spite of pain it was a green spot in her life, and I read aloud in the evenings as usual. She had a knot of female acquaintances to whom she told her troubles, and they advised her to try the hot springs at Paso Robles, so at the end of January we passed on to the big hotel there, where she went through the whole course of hot, mud and sulphur baths, with massage, till the end of February, without any cessation of pain.

Coming down from Auburn we saw long lines of eucalyptus, a strange tree imported from Australia, about the size of a large cottonwood. Its leaves turn edgewise to the sun, giving very little shade, and it is said to be able to shed its bark without harm to its growth.

Paso Robles was quite different from Auburn, both in country and people. It was a large flat expanse surrounded by pale clay-coloured hills, with a scattered growth of grey scrub-oak, and the people seemed all to have the chalky complexion of their environment.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

There was a pervasive smell of sulphur everywhere, and the water rasped hands and face when washing. It had been a bigger place formerly, for there were brick buildings, now dilapidated and deserted, on the principal street. An Englishman from the Midland Counties had the rather easy job of keeping down the grass on the lawn in front of the hotel, and he showed me a patch of land which he said had given him a fine crop of potatoes, and which certainly showed no lack of lime. I thought he could do much better with potatoes under his own flag on Vancouver Island, but he was afraid he had now got too soft to stand the winter.

There were some large wheat farms in the country north of the town—really a southern extension of the great San Joaquin Valley—and in the town itself there was a flour mill, a branch of a big American Company, but it was not working. The slopes of the hills were scarred and torn by gullies, some of which seemed less than a week old. I was told that these were the work of cloud-bursts, which might come at any time ; but as long as we stayed, though it rained occasionally, not a drop ever ran in the ravines.

The doctor at the hotel had his hands full

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

of patients, and took my wife's story of rheumatism on trust, without any special examination, and at the end of the month told her that she would feel the benefit of the treatment afterwards, and advised us to get out to the seashore, recommending San Diego.

We got away at the end of February, the railway taking us quickly out through a gap in the grey range to the coast, where we ran south between bare green hills and tumbling surf, reminding me strongly of Shetland. We passed through Santa Barbara, a pretty little place as viewed from the train, but we did not stay. The chief thing that struck me at Los Angeles was a poor calf tied to a fence with its back all humped up under a downpour of rain like a July thunder-shower. During the fifteen minutes of our halt the streets and sidewalks were streaming with water. The rain ceased as we got beyond the city limits, and then we sped through miles and miles of orange groves, yellow above with the golden fruit, and yellow below with wild mustard, which seemed to cover all the ground.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

SAN DIEGO

We liked San Diego, it was a clean, dry, breezy city like Victoria, and had then about the same population (40,000). Los Angeles people came down here to escape the summer heat, as, although it is 200 miles nearer the equator, the climate is much cooler and more pleasant than that of the southern metropolis.

Dana, in his famous *Two Years before the Mast*, speaks often of the poor open roadstead of Santa Barbara as compared with the fine south-easter-proof harbour of San Diego, but he also mentions the "desolate hills" surrounding the latter, and truly they were desolate except where water touched them. In the great Balboa Park there were long lines of little pine trees laboriously planted, but brown and dead for lack of moisture. We walked all over University Heights, on newly-made roads, and there were many fine views seaward, but when we faced around, there was nothing but "a dry and thirsty land" billowing far away. Yet wherever water was available there was everlasting spring, and in the deep adobe soil everything grew. The climate was so equable as to tire some of the inhabitants. A clergyman preaching in

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

one of the churches spoke of "countries that are blest with recurring seasons," and I found afterwards that he was from New England.

We saw the Spanish Mission in the old town, with its huge crumbling adobe walls, and went through the Mission Heights Park, where we had a long view of the Valley of the San Diego River, which even at that season was a mere trickle. The streets of the new town were being levelled, and as it was built on a wide expanse of rounded adobe hills which could be cut like cheese, we saw one man in a queer predicament. The streets on each side of his lot were cut down, leaving his fine bungalow some thirty feet up in the air, so that ladders were his only means of communication. There was the fashionable U.S. Grant Hotel; across the street from which was a little green lawn with a splashing fountain, and with benches occupied by ancient men, who sat there drowsily swapping stories all day long. There were no "loud speakers" in those days, but a man in a sea-captain's uniform and with a resounding voice, went up and down the streets announcing the time and place of departure of the excursion boats that plied around the bay. We could hear him as far as we could see him; and I have

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

often wished that the street-car conductors in Vancouver City—who chew their words—could speak as distinctly.

We went over by ferry to the great Coronado Hotel, and saw its famous break-water. We took trips through the harbour and around Point Loma in boats with glass panels in their bottoms, through which we could see many queer-looking fishes moving through the strange growths on the sea-floor ; and one day, while she was resting, I walked all the way around Point Loma, and the soldiers at the Fort Rosecranz never interfered. We were told that the new town had been started in the 'fifties of last century by a Yankee named Alonzo Horton, who owned the whole town-site, and had deeded the great Balboa Park in perpetuity to the city. We saw his grave with the recording stone in a little cemetery down in the hollow, south of the city, on the way to a kind of suburb which went by the sonorous name of National City, and had a number of good-sized brick buildings, apparently deserted like those at Paso Robles.

We enjoyed ourselves in San Diego, the only drawback being her weary ache, like an exaggerated toothache, as she expressed it, and we spent the whole of March 1913 in this fashion.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

HOME AGAIN

When April came in, her pain being no better, she said it was useless to stay longer and roast ourselves. So we came home, and as a final jolt the doctor put her through the severe operation of "stretching the sciatic nerve," which left her permanently lame, so that she had to use a stick in walking. Four years dragged on in this way, during which she was obliged to take spells of rest in hospitals when the pain got beyond endurance, and I learned to look after myself as a bachelor. Next, it came to our knowledge that liquor had got the better of our doctor, and soon after he went into a sanitarium, where he has been ever since. Marvellous, is it not? That a clever man (for he was known as an excellent surgeon) will "put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains!"

In the spring of 1917 we heard of a Dr Stanier in Victoria who was doing wonders for rheumatic people by electric treatment, so she went to him. He put her under the X-ray, and then he said, "My good woman, there is no rheumatism in you, and electricity can do nothing for you. You must have got

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

your back very badly hurt at some period of your life." And then, for the first time, the story came out of a backward fall from a crumbling window-sill in the ruined town of Wisby. She said she thought at the time that she would never get back to British Columbia. Yet that iron woman kept it from her friends, and even from Charles ; and the extreme pain seemed to pass over, for she never mentioned it in her letters to me.

Dr Stanier said that two of the spinal vertebræ were entirely gone, and the only thing to help her was a plaster cast, which could not now cure, but would ease the pain. As soon as I heard this I wrote to the Mayo Brothers of Rochester, Minnesota, and laid the whole case before them, saying that money was no hindrance if they thought they could help us. They wrote back very kindly, saying that if it was a case of spinal tuberculosis they could not advise us to make the trip. So she got her plaster cast, a thing like a huge corset, weighing ten pounds, and it was certainly a great relief from pain. Any other woman would have taken to her bed for good, but not she. She continued to do, or superintend her housework, with a little neighbour girl to help her, and claimed to be like a

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

crab, with her backbone outside. It was good for both of us then that we had learned to look beyond this world for our abiding portion.

CHARLES GOES ON

Meanwhile Charles, growing up, had done well at Sandwick Public School, and in 1910 I would have apprenticed him to a leading farmer, as his father had done with his twin ; but as he had easily passed for the High School, and was not actually our own child, my wife insisted that he should be given the best possible chance, and, accordingly, while we were in California, he was attending High School in Vancouver City. He passed just as readily for the University as he had done for the High School, and seemed to incline towards the career of a teacher. But he volunteered, along with a number of his fellow-students, and went overseas in 1916 at the age of twenty-one. He was twice wounded in the shoulder in France, and then, after getting his lieutenancy, fell at the Canal du Nord, in front of Cambrai, six weeks before the Armistice. It was pathetic to see his weekly letters

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

coming to his mother, long after receipt of the fatal telegram ; but neither then, nor at any other time, did I ever see that woman weeping. He never knew the serious nature of her illness, but thought it was merely rheumatism. It was then that we took as our mutual motto, " Better times are coming."

NEARING THE END

The plaster cast was a great relief and support to her. I tried also a much recommended steel contrivance as being less cumbersome, but it would not answer. We had a quiet horse which I hitched to the buggy, and she could drive herself all over the Valley, visiting friends as she pleased, and leaving me free for the farm work. The worst difficulty was in the hot months of July and August, when the weight of the cast would chafe the skin off her back if she got into sunshine. Twice I had to cut it off and tie it up temporarily with adhesive rubber strapping, so that she could get to Victoria for a rest in the hospital till the skin healed, and then get a new one. So I put up a cabin for her on the beach some six miles

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

off, where she stayed during those months, getting her milk from a neighbour there, and I making weekly trips with her other supplies. She had plenty of company—a whole row of occupied cabins.

She was now comparatively comfortable, and this might have lasted indefinitely, but once that evil disease gets into the system, it keeps spreading. I was afraid for her lungs, but the kidneys was its next point of attack, in 1921, and then she had no rest, day or night. Dr Stanier thought the removal of one of them might stave off the inevitable a little longer, and in November we went to Victoria for that purpose. She was quite cheerful, saying everything was all right for her in any case ; but she seemed to have a premonition that we were soon to part, and spoke of women whom I might get as housekeepers if she had to go. But I told her I would probably soon follow, and already she had taught me all the housekeeping I needed.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A TEMPORARY FAREWELL

It was a dark evening when we reached Victoria, and we took a cab out to the Jubilee Hospital, where she had been before, and we engaged a room as usual in the Strathcona Ward, where Dr Stanier and a leading surgeon, Dr Ridewood, kept her under observation for eighteen days, during which she got rather impatient, and wished they would "do something." On the 25th November they operated, and called it "a success," but she lay for three days in great pain, and five days more in unconsciousness, from which she passed to final rest on 3rd December. During the days of pain she told the nurses to keep me out of the room, as it could only vex me and do her no good. But I slipped in once, and then she called me to the side of the cot, and took hold of me as her mother had done, saying, "Oh how good to feel the old whiskers on my face once more!" I vowed then that I would never cut them off.

After the stupor overcame her, I sat beside her every day, but only once got any sign of recognition. On 1st December, at 11 P.M.,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

the nurses were making their arrangements for the night, and to avoid inconveniencing them I rose to go. Then she spoke, in an ordinary voice, "What's your hurry?" "I'm in no hurry," I replied, and I came and stood over her for a long time, but there was nothing more, only closed eyes and child-like breathing. Sitting there on the 3rd, as the dark winter afternoon drew on to three o'clock, I could see that the end was not far off, and I expected some gasping, or spasmodic movement, but there was none—she simply stopped breathing. I stood up, and bent over the quiet face, and a young girl, the day nurse—the only other person in the room—came behind me and took my hand by way of comfort—poor thing! But I needed no comfort then. I knew that her painful nights and days were past for ever, and that He who is the "Death of death, and hell's Destruction" would, in His own good time, bring us together again in lasting companionship.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

A CAMPING PLACE

I kept on farming in a small way for six years more, and then looked around for some younger fellow to take hold. William's oldest boy—the sturdiest—had fallen in France within a day or two of Charles ; the second had got gassed, and not feeling able-bodied enough for farm work, had taken up electricity ; and the youngest was a bank clerk. So I turned over the place to Charles's twin, Norman Pritchard, with whom I had always kept in touch. He too had been overseas, but managed to get back and was lately married, and being used to farming was glad of the chance.

I had a quarter-acre lot on the old back road which I had bought from Oliver Duncan in 1880. It was a stony knoll, covered with shoulder-high little fir trees. I cut down enough of these firs—now over 90 feet high—to give me room for a cabin and garden, and there I am at present, with a fine view, still raising my own vegetables, getting my own wood from the bush, and helping myself in every way. I may add that I am writing all this without glasses.

The title to this lot is a relic of the

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

past, being in Drabble's neat handwriting, and with the great, plain, clumsy signature of Oliver.

REFLECTIONS

As I see the automobiles whizzing by my cabin door, I sometimes wonder where they are going, and what they do when they get there. This is certainly a speed-mad world. The Bible tells us that near the time of the end "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," but it also tells us that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." According to the ancient legend, the Devil (in whose personality I firmly believe) told the first pair that if they took his advice they would get knowledge, and they did, to their sorrow.

It looks at present as if alcohol and gasoline were his two chief agencies for the destruction of the human race ; but, like some agricultural pests, they cannot live long together, for the one will destroy the other. And that is how the Great Over-Ruler often brings good out of evil. As His chief messenger says (Acts xiv. 17) : "He left not Himself without witness,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

in that He did good, giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons," and it is not His fault if, instead of using His gifts like reasonable creatures, we abuse them to our own hurt. In fact, we often act like children or madmen playing with fire.

THE GREATEST MATTER OF ALL

Thomas the Twin made the whole world his debtor through his incredulity. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." The very artlessness of the narrative attests its truth. What a fearful blank would be left in the history of mankind if the simple records of the New Testament could be blotted out! To me Christianity is the most reasonable of all beliefs, appealing to learned and unlearned alike. When I see the regular succession of seasons—the planting, growing, ripening and decay of vegetation, the orderly movements of sun, moon and stars, I cannot help feeling that there is a Master Mind behind it all. If David (who thought the sun and

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

stars were set merely to illuminate our little speck) was amazed at the splendour of the heavens, how much greater cause for wonder have we ?

It is unreasonable to think that this Mind or Being would not wish to reveal Itself in some way to other minds capable of some measure of appreciation, and the Bible is the only possible thing for me to fall back upon in that line. It commends itself to my conscience as being a gradual revelation of the Creator's mind to the minds of men as they were able to take it in, and it culminates in the appearance of Jesus Christ at a time when legendary days were over, and written records were made of world-happenings. So the Bible is a superhuman book leading up to a superhuman Man, a Man who proved Himself divine by conquering death, as certified by more than 500 witnesses. This Being came into the world supernaturally, without a human father, and little wonder if signs accompanied His entrance.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

I have heard a professedly Christian minister disown belief in it, and yet declare that he trusted in Him as his Saviour. Well, Matthew and Luke shut us up to this—that either He was the miraculous Son of God, sinless and Divine, or else He was a base-born infant. In the latter case He was an impostor, and consequently a wicked blasphemer, and how could he save that minister, or me, or any one else? The evident reason why the Virgin Birth is not mentioned by Paul, or Mark, or John, or Peter, is that no one doubted it when they wrote, because most of the original witnesses were still alive.

Christ's life and death are matters of common history which cannot be controverted, and His resurrection was attested by over 500 people who saw Him all together, as well as by the sudden heroic bravery of the hitherto cowardly disciples, and Paul's meeting with Him on the Damascus road. I have heard really good ministers call Paul's experience "a vision," but I hold that it was Christ in person. Nothing else could have so turned that splendid man, who conscientiously believed that he was

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

-serving God in crushing the followers of the crucified malefactor who had blasphemously called Himself the "Son of God." But Christ knew both the sincerity and the strength of the man. He saw that the lesson of Cornelius had not been enough for the original disciples, and He wanted a man of Paul's ability and learning to reach out to us Gentiles. And He did not think it too much to make a journey from the presence of "Him Who dwells in light unapproachable," to get that man. Paul always distinguished sharply between that meeting and the "visions" in 2 Corinthians xii. He never scrupled to tell what was said to him on the road. Comparing the episode with Christ's bodily appearance to the other disciples, he says, "Last of all He was seen of me also."

THE ASCENSION

Dean Inge, who scoffs at miracles, says Christ's Ascension was a physical impossibility, and recalls the old chestnut of a three-storied universe. Now, we know that Our Lord's risen body was what Paul calls "a spiritual

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

body," it had the power of appearing and disappearing at will. And yet it was touchable. "Handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Scientists say now that the distinction between spiritual and material is getting thinner and thinner.

Another clergyman, editor of a church paper (following the Dean), says: "The Ascension was like the appearance in the house of the famous two (Emmaus), one moment He was there—in a flash they knew Him—and in that same flash He was gone. This is what happened on the Mount, and we call it Our Lord's Ascension." Surely this is altogether wrong. Christ did not vanish at the Ascension. He went right up in full view of the men standing there, till a cloud took Him out of their sight. We know He is not now bodily on this planet, but how in reason could He leave it without ascending? And if men, who are the dust of His feet, can now talk and fly over the ocean, why should not the Creator (Heb. i.) go through His own universe in any way or form He pleases, visible or invisible to mortal sight?

Our globe is a pretty small affair among the countless worlds that night brings before

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

us, and Dean Inge says that many of them may have reasonable inhabitants like ourselves, and I quite agree with him there. Then he adds, "If so, Christ died for them as well as for us." But what if there was no need? What if our world was the one lost sheep out of the hundred that the Shepherd had to recover?

DEFINITE LOCATION AND FORM

I think there has been too little stress laid on the touchability of Our Lord's risen body. It has been thought of as a vague spiritual appearance, and therefore the abodes of the blest, wherever they are, have had the same intangible impression on our minds. But if we are to be individual beings in the life beyond, as we certainly will be, it stands to reason that we must have bodies and definite abiding-places.

Some say that Christ in His human nature was not omniscient, quoting Mark xiii. 32 and Acts i. 7 as proofs. Paul says that "although from the beginning He had the nature of God, He did not reckon His equality

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

with God a treasure to be tightly grasped, but stripped Himself of His glory and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men" (Phil. ii. 6, 7, Weymouth's translation). The Scriptures seem to leave this matter open.

But in any case He had to speak in parables to the disciples, who knew no more of science or astronomy than David did. Therefore, instead of the interminable universe and the countless worlds that course through it, He told them of His Father's house and its many mansions. Why should not those feet which once trod this globe be now treading the surface of some far greater world "preparing it," as He said, for His people? "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." These words imply some definite location. This globe, as Isaiah says, is "waxing old like a garment," and needs cleansing and renewing; but it is an almost negligible part of His creation, and He is not now on it. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him." He came at Pentecost, and has been witnessing ever since, not of himself but of Christ, who in bodily

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

presence is elsewhere, but who will come again, in like manner as He ascended (Acts i.), and if we belong to Him we shall have bodies like His, either at our death or at the final resurrection (Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2). People who doubt Our Lord's return should be referred to Peter's axiom, that one day and a thousand years are alike in God's eternity.

Jesus Christ, as the great apostle tells us in his letter to the Colossians, "is the visible image of the invisible God, the First-born and Lord of all creation, for in Him was created the universe of things in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers — all were created through and for Him, and He is before all things, and in and through Him the universe is a harmonious whole" (Col. i. 15, 16, 17 (Weymouth)). In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form. He has shown us what God is like. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

ASPIRATION

It is remarkable how men in every age and country have abhorred the idea of annihilation. It was a heathen who said, "I shall not *all* die," and even the gloomy writer of Ecclesiastes declares (Ch. iii. 11 (margin)) that God has set eternity in man's heart. One Psalmist will only be satisfied when he awakes in God's likeness; another claims that though his heart and flesh fail, yet God is the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. Micah says, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" ever feeling unworthiness and weakness, and ever asking to be held in straight paths, that the footsteps slip not. And so gradually we come out into the clear light of Christ's gospel. He had to die because our sin was *on* Him, but death could not hold Him because there was no sin *in* Him. So it will finally be with all who trust Him.

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

PROGRESSION

I believe that our God and Saviour works in an orderly manner, not doing anything needlessly or uselessly, and that therefore our present condition in the universe will not be radically altered by what we call "death." Why, then, are we so trained and accustomed to solidity underfoot and a wide view overhead? I think it means that we shall pass into an immensely larger world, but of the same general tenor as this, with this difference: that from it the Devil, with his train of sin, suffering and death, will be forever shut out. Having known both good and evil, and having voluntarily chosen the good, Christ's people will all be gathered there, free at last from trouble and temptation. It will not be all rest and singing—their Master will be there in bodily presence, and "His servants shall serve Him"—but always with joy and alacrity, everlastingly free from fatigue, age or infirmity. As in the parable of the talents, those with special ability will be rewarded with wider opportunity, and all will be led by Him to ever higher knowledge and ever higher happiness. Rid of this cumbrous flesh, their

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

movements will be "as fleet as a glance of the mind," and then, and not till then, will speeding and safety be synonymous.

Many a departing believer, looking forward along that glorious vista, has exclaimed :
" Bless the Lord, O my soul."

"RETROSPECTION"

" My days are like a shadow ! "
Of old the Hebrew cried,
And in my own experience
His words are verified,
For mighty trees, and mountain peaks
Which snows forever crown,
And sixty long and toilsome years
Are in a moment flown.

Staked on the bright green knowe-slopes
The little Shetland kye
Are mapping out their swaths again
Before my gladdened eye ;
Again, through matted daisies,
With heedful steps I trace
The burned and buried fortress walls
Of a forgotten race.

And, from the heights, peat-laden,
Rough ponies, half a score,
Wind down the narrow stony paths
To hamlets by the shore,

From Shetland to Vancouver Island

Where, over little riglands,
Like checker-boards outlaid,
With chattering tongues and busy hands,
Women and children spread.

I climb the middle Ward Hill,
I see each cape and bay
From Helli Ness to Sumburgh
In azure stretch away ;
The fishing boats are speeding
Southward, below the sun,
Over the far horizon's rim
They vanish, one by one.

There goes the Southern steamer
With trailing train of smoke ;
There lies the broad-built Dutchman
As stolid as a rock
Even when the ghostly spindrift
Walks down the rising sea,
And the wild wandering elves of storm
Alight on Halilee.

Ho for the gales of winter
And dancing stacks of corn,
When chimneys quake and rattle,
And many a roof is torn ;
Ho for the mile-long billow
Which rends, with grinding roar,
The long brown tang from Venga-ba *
And cumpers all the shore.

* Venga-ba, a great sunken reef with a heavy growth of sea-weed only reached by winter storms.

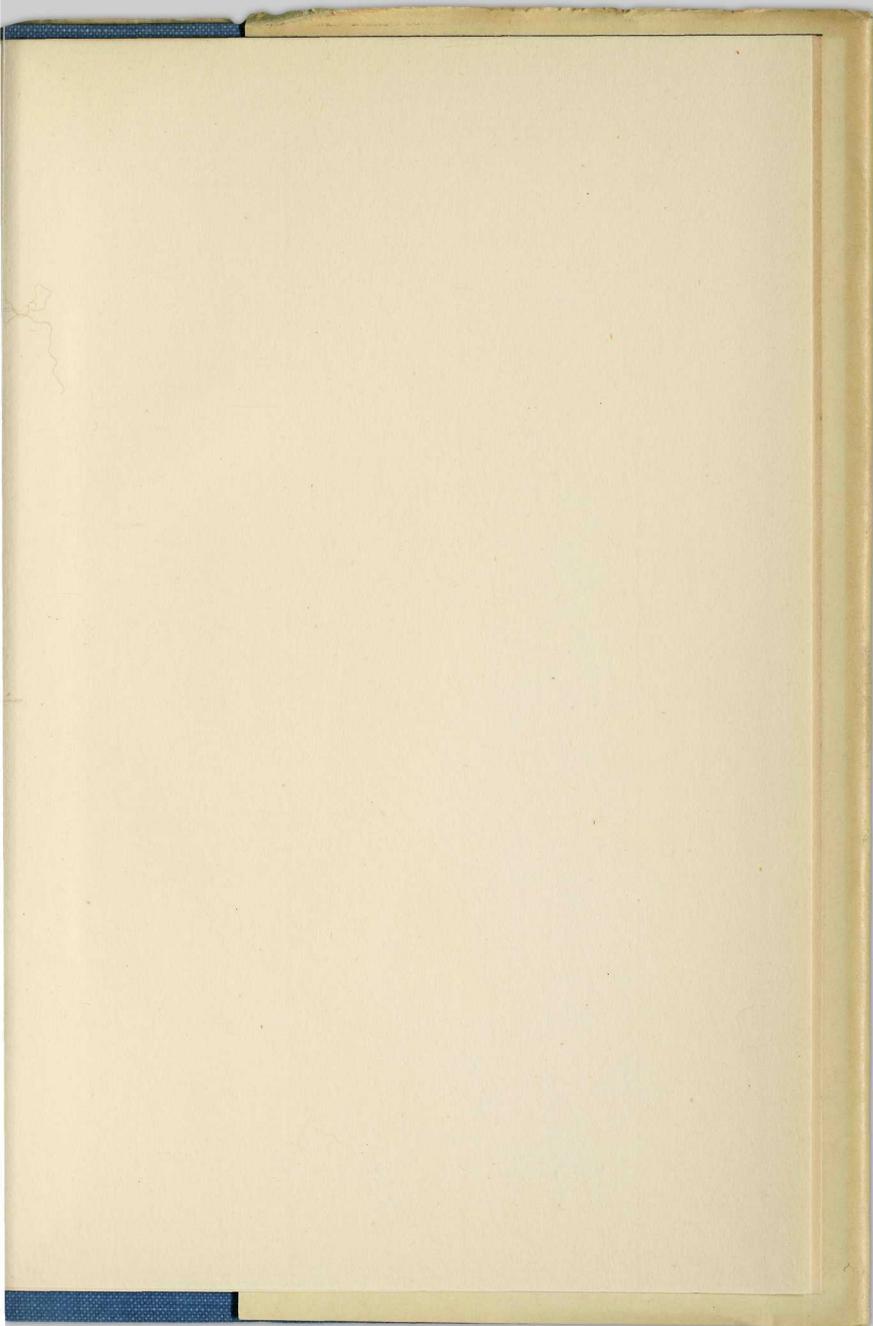
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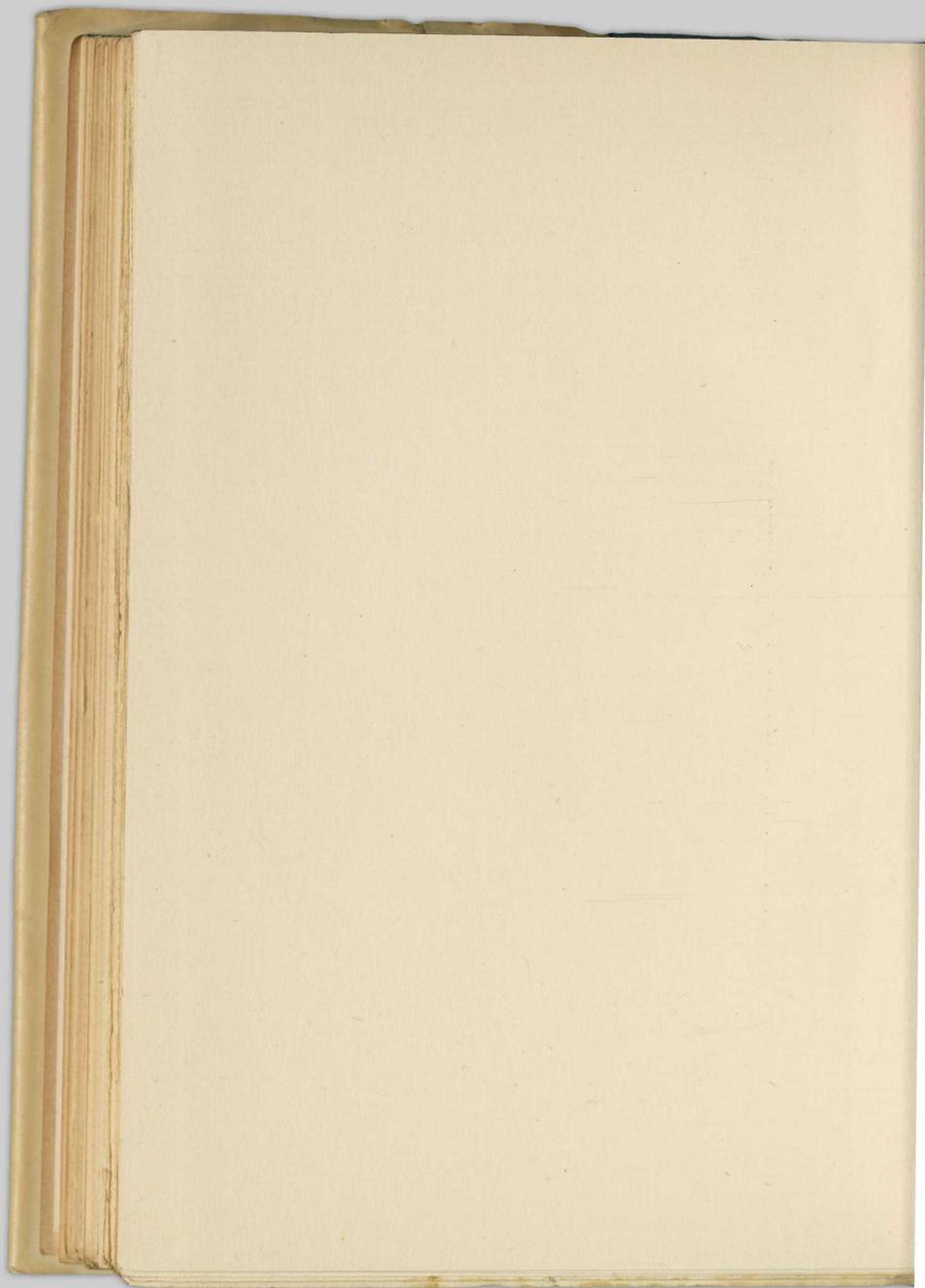
Ho for the cliff-head torrent
Wind-swept aloft in air ;
Ho for the whirling sea-gulls
That clamour everywhere ;
Bird-shriek and ocean-thunder,
Do these dispel my dream ?
Ah no ! The long train's hollow roll,
The auto's honk and scream.

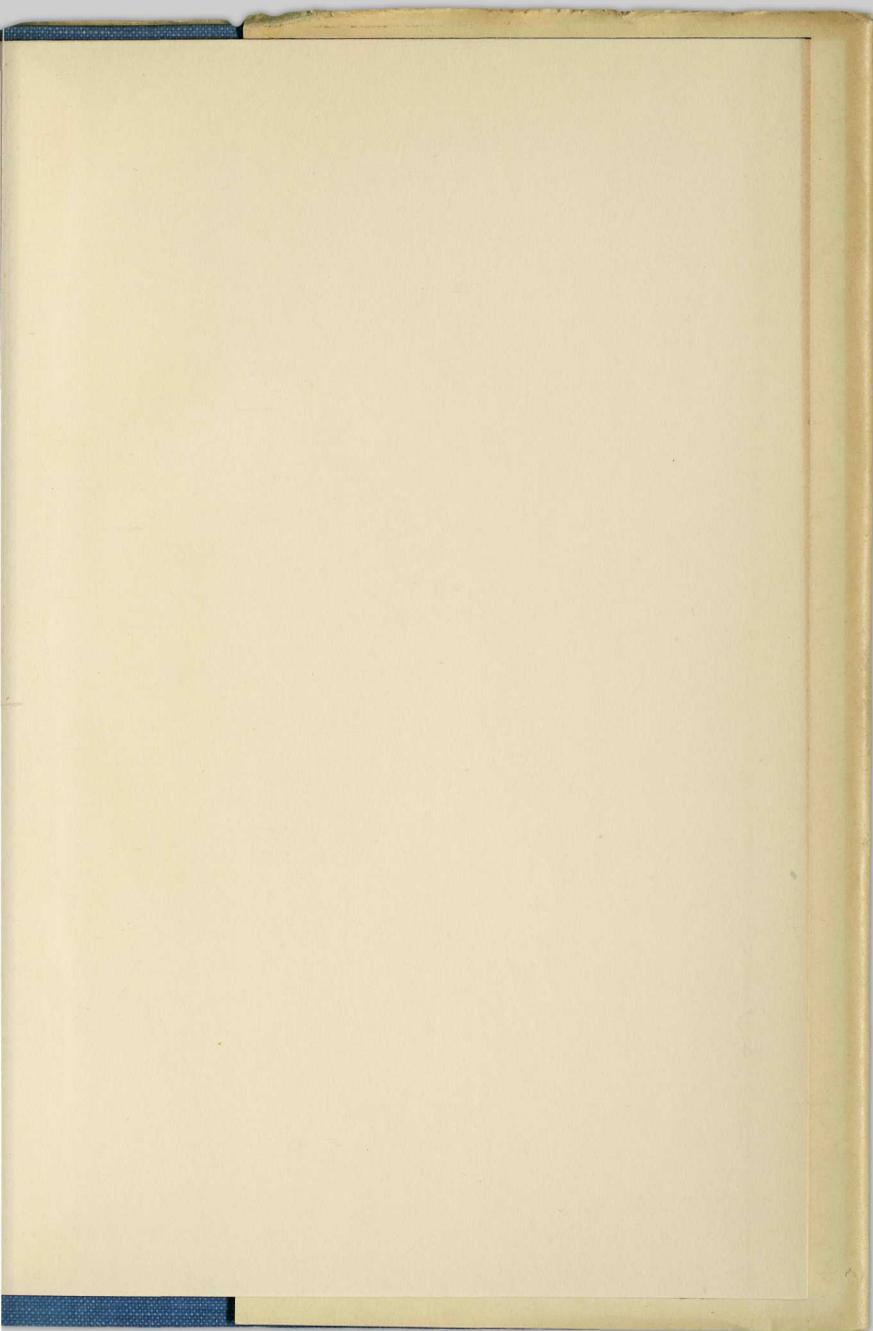
Gone are the scenes of boyhood,
The days of youth are gone ;
The care-worn years of manhood
Speed ever swifter on ;
And there is no returning !
Who wishes it ? Not I,
The days of youth shall have from me
Not one regretful sigh.

I turn me to the future,
The ages yet to come ;
" Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard."
What can we be but dumb ?
Yet peace, with all who love HIM,
Shall evermore remain,
And, somewhere, they will find the best
Of everything again.

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