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NOTES OF A NATURALIST.

A Rough Passage—Sea-Sickness.

Sea and Coast Scenery.

British Columbia—Glacial Phenomena.

VICTORIA, V. I., June 25, 1879.

Coming down from the mountains to the sea makes a grand change in the flow of one's life. For leafy woods, with their flowers and fruits, we have drifting tangle and dulse; for granite domes, types of permanence, water-waves heaving in eternal earthquake, and the narrowジョンダー of a ship's deck for the wide freedom and wealth of the landscape. I left San Francisco last month on the steamer Jakota, in company with a friend, to see what I might learn in new icy fields to the northward.

SEA-SICKNESS.

After the usual flag-flying, public and private, on leaving the wharf we were over, and we had sailed outside the Heads, then the enjoyment of the voyage fairly began. It was curious to note how suddenly the eager, gay countenances of the passengers were darkened and subdued as soon as the good ship was free in the open sea and began to heave on the swelling waves. The crowded deck was nearly deserted, and a dread gloom settled over all. The trouble was only sea-sickness, the beginning of it, nevertheless, no fun could show face more deeply and truly gloom-clouded. First, there was a going to bed, with "this world is all a fleeting show" expression; then a staggering reappearance on deck to try to find out whether there might be any hope left in the fresh air; then a sudden introversion, intensely concentrated; as if every past act and experience were being passed over in mental review; then a rush to the rail and volcanic activity: The illness was so real, and the cause so natural and apparent, it seemed strange that nearly every one afflicted should be more or less ashamed of it.

Next morning a heavy wind was blowing, and the sea was corrugated with broad white-capped swells, across which the Jakota beat her way, head and stern up and down in mimic time, like a Spanish 'steel' racing across a prairie. Few indeed of all our passengers were to be seen. The deck was as clear and silent as if all had been washed overboard in the night. How bare and poor a substitute for a summer landscape the ship made that morning! How poor a camp-ground. No wood or shelter, and too much water. Yet there is something extremely beautiful and exhilarating in the free sweep and swell of the dark heeded ocean. Long ways beyond the wave tops, and some of the outer fringes were borne away in scud to wet the wind; and when the sun shone out it was all brilliantly irised.

SEA GULLS.

And how visibly was the skill and sufficiency of nature manifested in the gulls that followed us, skimming the rough waves and beauty...
And how vivid was the skill and sufficiency of nature manifested in the gulls that followed us, skimming the water with alacrity and beauty, never without effort, often flying nearly a mile without moving their long, narrow wings, flying from side to side by silent lifting themselves this way or that, and tracing the Gulf Stream in complicated, sinuous, and almost circular, now and then just grazing the largest swells with the tips of their pinions. How they can fly at the rate of eight miles an hour, and madly wind their way without the wind, and then, with the wind, without a single wing beat is a mechanical problem not easily solved. How unlike the feeling, weightless wings of the animal king as compared with the helpless, heavy, ganoid, scaly ones of the whale! Six whales, their great flukes appearing above the water, in near view like elevated pillars of granite, calm and motionless, then plunging to the bottom, and there being seen no more. Nor if this all, for together with and around the whales are a school of parrots, of a bright greenish-yellow color, edging out of the waves in pure strength and drollery, calling all the same way, which is a strange feeling of life fouling the waves and all sloshing as one. We cannot but feel glad to know that we have such neighbors in the unexplored fields of the seas. Sea parrots, floating on the water, and fellow-residents in the one harmonious com- monwealth of the world, human like the rest of the sea, without thought, without feeling, the green parrots, in the good things provided them by the one All-Father.

Gulls, one with its great from heat beating on through calm and storm, is a handy, noble spectacle. But think of the hearts of those in the sea, how few the stimuli, through the darkness and light, day and night, on and on for centuries. How the red life blood must rush and gurgle in and out of their huge vessels, the blood passages open and closed, the gills welling. I am not well wish to come nearer these stupen- dous birds, but no close contact is allowed. We can only see them far below the sea to fill and keep up the great world.

SEA SCENERY.

The sceneries of the sea, however sublime in its vastness, is never so beautiful as that of the land. The cloud colors about one of our four sunsets, enjoyed on the way to Victoria, were remarkably pure in tone, for how few the stimuli of the moon, through the culled range of canna, a few degrees above the horizon, and a mossy gray rain-cloud above it, from the windows of our steamer, overlapping the lower canna, and partially veiling them. And from time to time the sun made its appearance at window openings, and reddening the wide, far-stretch of fringes in the tints of yellow, white, the same, with the reflec- tions on the water, making a beautiful and im- pressive picture of a scene of sunset at sea.

COAST SCENERY.

The coast scenery off Cape Flattery is high- ly picturesque and begins to publish the events of the glacial period in plain terms. The little headlands up to Oregon are mostly grass-topped, and the forests seem to keep well back, away from the heavy winds. Here they are clad with a thin growth of evergreen, with here and there an Educated edge, or to the brink of the cliffs beaten by the waves. Even the little detached islands, so marked a feature hereabouts and northward, are but small, i.e., from ten to twenty feet in diameter, densely forested. On the Straits of Flue and the scenery becomes more interesting and attractive, for how few the stimuli of the wave, the ocean gales, while receiving abundance of rain, furnish still more luxuriance, and the plenti- ful water falls feed in shining continuations of the cedars, with the lofty, gloomy, and occasional clouds, that make a most pleasing advertisement of their riches to every lover of forests and mountains.
We arrived in the harbor of Esquimalt, three miles from Victoria, on the evening of the fourth day, the harbor of Victoria being too narrow and craggy for ocean, and vessel the size of the Detroit. From Esquimalt to Victoria, we made our way by a well-grafted carriage road, which goes whining on through a charming underground of spruce, oak, mahogany, hawthorn, dogwood, elder, spireas, willow and fir. The road, covered with the softest moss and montane rock, freshly glazed, and, mixed with yellow stones and boulders. The town has a young, loose-jointed appearance, notwithstanding the importance claimed for it as the capital of British Columbia. It is said to contain about 6,000 inhabitants. The Government block is solidly built, and the streets are broad and open, the houses are substantial, and the houses, with their small lawns, are enough to please in bulk and architecture. The attention of the tourist will, however, be more worthily attracted to the many neat cottage homes found here, embodied in the fresh and florid colors of cultivating roses and honeysuckle conceivable. Californians may well be proud of their wine, and their fruit, and their gardens, and their living in lands where the scents of the rose and falling in balsy cascades over the gables. But here, with so complete a measure of warm moisture, distilling in day and fog and gentle, festering, living, a new soil development is reached. And to the English honeysuckle, it seems to have found here its very home of homes. To see what may be done in the rose and honeysuckle line is of itself a worthy cause of a trip to Victoria from the other side of the globe.

The wild rose, abounding almost everywhere throughout the woods, are still more surprisingly lovely. One species blooming freely along the shady woodlands paths is from two to three inches in diameter, and more fragrant than any other wild rose I ever saw, excepting only the one that grows near Woodstock, one of the species of Spireae, fairly fill the air with fragrance after a shower, and how brightly then do the red dogwood berries shine out from amid the green of leaves and mosses.

GLACIAL PHENOMENA.

But still more interesting and significant to me are the glacial phenomena displayed here. Of this evergreen tree, bush and hercacious vegetation is growing upon fresh moraine material, scattered and grooved rock-bosses, as unfrequented and telling as those in the channel of the ancient Mer de Glace of Mont Blanc. This harbor is plainly glacial in origin, ended from the land. The rock lichen here and there in it are unchanged rocks montane, and the shores are grooved and scratched, and in every way as glacial in all their characteristics as those of a new-borne glacier lake. That the diminution of the ocean is being slowly extended over the land, the rock-wearing away of the coast rocks, is well known, but in this northern, freshly-glaciated region the coast rocks have been so short a time exposed to wave-action that they are scarce at all wasted. The extension of the sea, effected by its own action in post-glacial time in this region, is less than the millionth part of that effected by glacial action during the last glacial period. The direction of the flow of the meltwater, which all the phenomena here shown in it was generally southward.