

OPEN LETTERS.

The Vancouver Centenary, and the Discoverers of Pacific America.

FOR some time preceding this last year of Chicago, the search-lights of history have been turned upon Columbus, his immediate successors, and the valiant Norse predecessor. Following upon these studies of Atlantic America, the local pride of Pacific America now demands the honors due the discoverers of the western shores of the New World. The hazardous voyage of Sir Francis Drake, resulting in the narrative "The World Encompassed," and of those other early round-the-world navigators who ventured into and across the great South Sea, are being celebrated at the present California Midwinter International Exposition, which is for the praise and glory of the whole Pacific coast. It was only a half-century after Columbus that galleons came to the Golden Gate, and now, side by side with models of these crafts, California's people show the counterfeit of the magnificent battle-ship just launched from the ways within that Western sea-gate—match-pieces for the caravels and the battle-ship at Chicago.

It is no longer questioned that some Chinese Leif Ericsson touched upon the Pacific coast centuries before Sir Francis rode in the shadow of Tamalpais, and Buddhist priests reached New Spain before Cabrillo, Vizcaino, and Ferrelo brought their galleons from the south, and the piratical ones concealed their booty on the Farallones.

Professor George C. Davidson, the veteran scientist of the Pacific coast, whose surveys of thirty years cover all of that ocean's edge from Mexico to Bering Sea, has fully identified all the anchorages of these earliest visitors, and elaborated the proofs that Sir Francis Drake anchored in the little bay north of the Golden Gate, and not in the harbor of San Francisco, as so long supposed.

Even after the great navigator, Captain James Cook, came into the Pacific, the vast, mysterious South Sea was a realm of fable. Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and the lost Atlantis were washed by its waters; Del Fonte's river, the archipelago of San Lazaria, De Fuca's Strait, or those of Anian, tempted two centuries of discovery before the mystery was dispelled. In his second voyage Cook proved that the imaginary southern or Antarctic continent of that day did not exist. In his third and last voyage he supplemented the work of Bering, proving how closely the continental shores of Asia and America approached, and sailed up to the edge of the ice-pack in the Arctic. The recent publication of Captain Cook's own journal of his last voyage is most opportune at this season of sudden interest in all things concerning Pacific America, and it is to be hoped that a reprint of Vancouver's now rare "Voyages" will soon bring the work of that great surveyor within every student's reach.

George Vancouver, who entered the British navy at the age of thirteen, was a midshipman with Cook on the voyages toward the south pole and the north pole. In 1790 he was given the orders the execution of which fills the volumes entitled, "A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, In Which the Coast of Northwest America has been Carefully Examined and Accurately Surveyed; Undertaken by

His Majesty's Command, Principally with a View to Ascertain the Existence of any Navigable Communication between the North Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans; and Performed in the years 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, and 1795. In the *Discovery* sloop of war, and armed tender *Chatham*, under the Command of Captain George Vancouver."

This long voyage, during which three summer seasons were spent in surveying the Northwest Coast and three winter seasons were devoted to the Sandwich Islands, was more fruitful of results than any other expedition of its kind—the greatest and most accurate piece of surveying recorded; their completeness causing Vancouver's charts to remain standards of authority for almost a hundred years.

Vancouver's commission ordered him to proceed by way of the Cape of Good Hope and the Sandwich Islands to the Northwest Coast, and to take over the fort at Nootka, which Spain had been forced to cede to Great Britain by the Convention at Madrid in 1790. He was then to survey that coast from latitude 30° N. to Cook's Great River, examining all considerable inlets and mouths of rivers for the supposed passage through to the Atlantic—as the reported voyages of Berkely, Meares, Kendrick, and Quimper in behind Nootka had revived a belief in the existence of Juan de Fuca's Strait.

Vancouver was not a discoverer, and was not entitled to any such first honors mistakenly accorded him. He only verified the reports of others, sailing by their notes and rough sketches; but his narrative and charts being the first published, and remaining for so long the sole authority, he has rather usurped the laurels of his predecessors. He sighted Cape Mendocino in April, 1792, and, cruising within a league of land, rounded Cook's Cape Flattery, entered De Fuca's noble strait, and proceeded to explore "the promised expansive Mediterranean Ocean, which by various accounts is said to have existence in these regions." There he found landscapes "almost as enchantingly beautiful as the most elegantly finished pleasure-grounds in Europe," and that "the country exhibited everything that bounteous nature could be expected to draw into one point of view." But while he "could not believe that any uncultivated country had ever been discovered exhibiting so rich a picture," he sowed seeds of discord by his ill-considered nomenclature. As a boy, he saw Captain Cook scrupulously recording the native names of every place, and making every effort to obtain them, but it does not appear that Vancouver ever made an effort to learn one local name. Had he but pointed a finger in dumb inquiry, we might enjoy some better name for Puget Sound and the matchless mountain that guards its eastern wall, and the Rainier-Tacoma controversy would not have arisen to embroil two cities, and to force that technically just, but poetically unjust, decision from the Board of Geographic Names as to the name of the superb peak at the head of Puget Sound.

By a strange fatality Vancouver missed the opportunity to impose commonplace names upon the great rivers of the coast. Although anchoring in the discolored waters off their mouths, he failed to discover the

Columbia, the Fraser, and the Stikine, and even scouted the possible existence of the first two when Gray and the Spaniards reported them.

He first visited the Spanish settlement of "St. Francisco" in California in November, 1792, when the Presidio was garrisoned by thirty-five soldiers, and sheep and cattle grazed on all the hills. The commandant's adobe house, where Vancouver visited the sergeant temporarily in command, is still standing. Vancouver also visited the Franciscan and Santa Clara missions, and about twenty-five miles below San Francisco, he entered a country he "little expected to find in these regions. For about twenty miles it could only be compared to a park which had originally been closely planted with the true old English oak."

The accounts of Vancouver's California visits of 1793 and 1794 are most interesting, and his search of all the fiords of the great north coast, all "terminating as usual" in some cul-de-sac, is a romance of exploration. At last it was proved that no passage through the mountains existed, and by the surveyor's last camp-fire on Alaska islands they remembered "with no small portion of facetious mirth" that they had set sail to find the mysterious Northwest Passage on the first of April.

Vancouver's "Voyages" is still the best handbook for all that marvelous scenic coast. Yet of this great surveyor neither a full biography nor a portrait is obtainable, and copies of his works are seldom found save in the largest libraries.

Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore.

American Artists Series.

H. BOLTON JONES. (See page 771.)

IN no class of pictorial representation is there so much variety and individuality among American artists as in that of landscape, and no class of picture is more popular, for happily we have outgrown the old prejudice which relegated landscape to a place inferior to that of figure-painting. To say nothing of our In-

ness, who is in the world's first rank, we have in Davis, Martin, Tryon, and others, delightfully individual and successful landscape-painters.

The picture "Spring," engraved on page 771, is the work of one of the most conscientious and sensitive of the landscapists. Mr. Bolton Jones knows nature and loves her well, and he is so well skilled in the use of his materials as to be able deftly to transfix many of her moods. In other words, he is a well-trained painter.

Mr. H. Bolton Jones was born in Baltimore in 1848. Eighteen years later he exhibited in the National Academy of Design in New York. In 1876 he went to France. He did not go through any regular academical course there, but painted from nature in Pont-Aven and other parts of Brittany, and spent one year in like manner in Algiers. During his residence in France he profited much by contact with artists older than he, among these Wylie, Pelouse, and Defaux. In 1881 Mr. Jones was admitted an Associate of the National Academy of Design, and two years later he was made a full member. He shortly after became its vice-president, a position which he held for several years. He received medals at the Paris and Chicago expositions.

W. Lewis Fraser.

"Garfield and Conkling"—A Correction.

IN the January CENTURY, ex-Senator Dawes, describing the "Garfield and Conkling" controversy, said that the feeling was intensified "by the appointment to the cabinet of a Secretary of the Treasury from New York, not only without consultation with the Senator, but against his earnest recommendation of another." Mr. Dawes writes to explain that "strict accuracy would have required me to say 'by the offer of an appointment,' etc., the offer having been made to Judge Folger before the appointment of William Windom. Judge Folger subsequently accepted the Treasury portfolio from President Arthur. THE EDITOR.

IN LIGHTER VEIN.

Minerva in Boston.

MY Minerva flouts the Graces, and forgets how fair her face is,

But the higher criticism she entirely comprehends;
So she dresses very plainly, after some reform un-

gainly,
And looks on Briggs and Spencer as her intimates
and friends.

She's indifferent to ices and confectioners' devices,
But on esoteric Buddhism she loves to ponder
well;
And though she never glances at the popular romances,
She indulges on occasion in a "study" or "pastel."

She's superior to flirtation; she contributes to "The
Nation,"
And she'd be a rank agnostic if she did n't know
so much;
She declines in social duty to display her modest
beauty,
But she's put a poem of Browning into genuine low
Dutch.

She is musically clever, and the "tune" taboos forever,
For to "Vagner" she is faithful, and to Brahms she
gives her heart;

Then at art's high altar kneeling she will talk "tech-
nic" and "feeling,"

And if I say, "It's pretty," will reply, "But is it art?"

Dare I ever hope to hold her in the arms that would
infold her?

Or, with Plato for my pattern, must I tell my love
in Greek?

Let me curb this crude young passion, and, since
courting's out of fashion,

Woo Minerva with a problem, and of Eros shyly
speak.

Most persistently I'm cramming, but I weary of my
shamming,

And am not intoxicated with Castalia's bitter cup;
I might win the maid's affections through a course in
conic sections,

But I wonder if, once married, I could keep the
blamed thing up.

Edward A. Church.