BRITISH AND UNITED STATES BOUNDARY LINE—YAHK RIVER.

FRONTISPIECE
FOUR YEARS
IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA
AND
VANCOUVER ISLAND.
AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR FORESTS, RIVERS, COASTS, GOLD FIELDS,
AND RESOURCES FOR COLONISATION.

BY COMMANDER R. C. MAYNE, R.N., F.R.G.S.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1862.
TO

CAPTAIN GEORGE H. RICHARDS, R.N.,

OF H.M. SURVEYING SHIP 'HECATE,'

UNDER WHOM I HAD THE HAPPINESS TO SERVE DURING THE TIME I WAS IN THE COLONIES I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DESCRIBE,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.
PREFACE.

So little is yet known about British Columbia and Vancouver Island that the Author hopes his experience of four years, spent in the survey and exploration of both these Colonies, may be found of interest.

To Dr. Wood, R.N., of H.M.S. 'Hecate,' to the several travellers from whom information has been obtained and whose names occur in the book, as well as to the others—too many to enumerate—who have assisted him in various ways, the Author begs to return his thanks.

To Mr. E. P. Bedwell, R.N., Dr. Lyall, and Dr. Lindley, for the sketches which enliven the text, his thanks are also gratefully tendered; and last, but by no means least, to Mr. William J. Stewart—without whose aid these pages would probably never have seen the light—he gives his most cordial thanks.

For any errors which may occur in the latter part of the book the author claims the reader's indulgence, as the revision of it has been carried on in great haste amid the bustle of fitting out a ship for foreign service.

H.M.S. 'Eclipse,' October, 1862.
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FOUR YEARS
IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Appointment to H.M.S. 'Plumper' — Historical Sketch of the British Possessions in North-West America.

In February, 1857, I received my appointment as Lieutenant to H.M.S. 'Plumper,' then at Portsmouth, fitting out for service at Vancouver Island.

This distant possession, and the adjacent mainland of British North America, were then little known and still less heeded. What little was known of them, from the chance visits of explorers, and their more recent occupation by the Hudson Bay Company for the purposes of their great fur-trade, may be very briefly stated.

The Spaniards were the first Europeans who set eyes upon the coasts of the Pacific. During the earlier half of the sixteenth century they busied themselves at intervals in exploring it. At that time Spain and Portugal were the two great maritime powers of Europe, and there had been concluded between them a treaty, which the Pope was expected to confirm; by which, while the latter nation was to enjoy all rights of discovery and possession eastward of a meridian line passing 370 leagues west of the Cape Verd
Islands, to Spain were to pertain all seas and lands west of that line.

There was another maritime power in Europe, however, which, although of little importance then, was destined one day to eclipse theirs totally. The rising navy of England was little disposed to consider itself bound by an arrangement that closed so many seas and shores against it. Nor was the English people, flushed with its recent repudiation of the Papal power, inclined to submit without a struggle to the partition of the unknown world by the Court of Rome. Elizabeth did not understand, it was explained to the Spanish ambassador, "why her subjects should be debarred from traffic in the Indies. As she did not acknowledge the Spaniards to have any title by donation of the Bishop of Rome, so she knew no right they had to any places other than those they were in actual possession of. As to their having touched here and there upon a coast, and given names to a few rivers and capes, these were such insignificant acts as could in no way entitle them to a proprietary farther than in the parts where they settled and continued to inhabit."

The adventurous mariners of that time were ready enough to act in the spirit of Elizabeth's protest, and entered upon the career of discovery in the West energetically. It must be confessed that they sometimes went beyond it, and the Gulf of Mexico—and later the southern shores of the Pacific—were haunted by free-traders and freebooters, who, carrying their defiance of Papal authority and Spanish prohibitions to an extent somewhat unjustifiable, plundered the Spanish settlements of the coast, and took and sacked their trading vessels. For a time it seems that their dread of the passage of the Straits of Magellan kept them from the Pacific; but at length the reports which reached England of the wealth that lay there mastered their fears, and Drake in his first voyage round the world came there in 1578. A year later,