

## A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER IN WESTERN EXPLORATION.\*

So little is heard nowadays of the achievements of that notable little group of adventurous mariners who explored the Northwest coast of our continent, that one is inclined to welcome with more than ordinary enthusiasm Professor Meany's bulky volume bearing the alluring title "Vancouver's Discovery of Puget Sound." From the words of his preface, one is indeed led to expect a contribution of much more than ordinary importance to the literature of Northwestern discovery,—in fact, such an exhaustive piece of editing as, for instance, is associated with the name of the late Dr. Elliott Cones. "The sources for a work of this kind," says Professor Meany, "are not easily accessible. Part of them have been printed in journals and voy-

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\* VANCOUVER'S DISCOVERY OF PUGET SOUND. By Edmond S. Meany. New York: The Macmillan Co.

ages, the books being long since out of print and rare ; but by far the greater portion of the sources are in the public and private archives of England and Spain." One gathers from what follows that Professor Meany was fortunate enough to enlist the coöperation of a host of helpers at home and abroad, including the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Elder Brethren of Trinity House, the Secretary of the Spanish Royal Academy of History, and the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia,—to mention no others,—and that his own researches extended over many years. In face of all this it is somewhat disconcerting to discover that of the 340 pages in Professor Meany's book some 280 are taken up with a verbatim reprint of Vancouver's narrative (pp. 33 to 385 of vol. II. of the second edition). To this text Professor Meany adds a number of foot-notes, for the most part, in the words of his sub-title, "biographies of the men honored in the naming of geographic features of Northwestern America." The first sixty pages are occupied by an introduction, followed by brief biographies of Vancouver and Quadra, and an historic sketch of Nootka Sound. With a few trifling exceptions, the material embodied in these sixty pages is readily accessible elsewhere, as is also of course Vancouver's own narrative. There remain the foot-notes. These, indeed, reveal much patient research, and are unquestionably of interest and value as a commentary upon place-names occurring in Vancouver's narrative ; but they go far beyond the necessities of the case. For instance, Vancouver named a low sandy point of land New Dungeness, because of its resemblance to Dungeness in the English Channel. Professor Meany not only gives a detailed description of the old Dungeness in his foot-note, with a chart of the harbor, but branches out into a description of the old lighthouse at Dungeness, with a photographic reproduction ; the lighthouse brings up the venerable institution of Trinity House, whose history is succinctly given ; and this again suggests the new lighthouse, a description of which is clipped from an English newspaper. All this is doubtless interesting in its way, but does not seem very essential to an interpretation of Vancouver's narrative.

In the Introduction, Professor Meany quotes a number of passages from one of several logs, kept by officers and men of the "Discovery" and the "Chatham," and now preserved in the Public Record Office at London, *appropos* of Sir Joseph Banks's charge that Vancouver's discipline was harsh in the extreme. Why

these disjointed passages are pressed in to bolster up a charge which, Professor Meany admits a page or two later, had no adequate foundation, it is difficult to understand ; but it is much more difficult to understand why, having access to this mine of contemporary material, he should have made no further use of it. One can think of many obscure points in Vancouver's narrative which might have been made clear by the evidence of these original records, if some of the energy devoted to the elucidation of quite irrelevant questions had been turned in this direction.

All this sounds rather ungrateful, but it is disappointing to find so much genuine scholarship expended to, comparatively speaking, so little purpose.

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