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RANDOM REFLECTIONS.



A SALUBRIOUS climate, advantages of location, the prosperity and development of a province having many and great natural resources, make the growth of Victoria to the status of a large city in the not far distant future a certainty. While cities come into existence and grow to metropolitan proportions because of such agencies; while it is not possible for any man or set of men to bring into existence or maintain the growth of a city independently of them; yet the character of its institutions, the advantages they afford for the development and perfecting of human powers both of body and mind, the influence they exert for the building up of character and habits of thought, must depend entirely upon the conceptions and efforts of its people.

Man is largely what his surroundings make him; more readily than any other species in the animal creation does he respond to cultivation, in fuller development and greater powers even in a purely physical sense. The spirited fleetness of the racer that very nearly matches within certain limits the highest achievements of science and mechanics combined in land travel, and the ponderous form, gigantic strength and patient docility of the lumbering cart horse, represent the result of a

long course of development from an original common stock in different directions. Man in comparison with any of the domesticated animals has been perpetuated from generation to generation with the least intelligent effort for the development of the range of his physical powers. Yet while it may truthfully be affirmed that man's physical development is as nothing to what it might be, do we not see in men an even greater difference of physical capacity than in horses?

But beyond the physical, comparison between man and animals ceases. Within a very narrow limit the fullest development of animal intelligence is gained, and of itself makes no effort to reach even thus far. The desires of the most cultivated animals, and the powers for their gratification, are confined to the same narrow limits as in the most neglected. Cultivation brings to man new desires and greater powers, under proper conditions for their gratification. To store man's mind with knowledge is to create a desire for acquiring more; cultivation of the powers of his mind in acquiring information fits it for greater achievements in the same direction.

To the progressive mind, with each ascending step new vistas open, new pleasures present themselves, new hopes spring up in the soul, the light of a fuller intelligence is shed upon its past gropings to make clear and simple what seemed clear and obscure; while to a mind of the same natural capacity without cultivation these powers, tastes and pleasures remain a sealed book. If knowledge is power in that which is speculative or philosophical, it is doubly so in the practical or commercial? If Victoria is to make the most of the advantages of her climate and situation in the future, it must be by cultivating and developing to the utmost the mental capacity of those who are to be its future citizens, the guardians and directors of its future destinies.

If her merchants are to rise to the highest place in competition with those of other cities that will share in the coming development of our province; if the mechanics who conduct our manufacturing enterprises are to gain for her a first place as a manufacturing centre, they must disabuse their minds

of the preconceived prejudice that birth or long residence in British Columbia, that family connections or alliances with local wealth, give them a pre-eminent claim to success: they must recognize that if success is to be attained, it must be by the development of superior mental power, by the acquisition and application of practical knowledge. Brain power, knowledge, intelligence are the requirements of success; the day when original strength and physical endurance were the first requisites for the satisfaction of human wants has gone by.

Look around the world for proof. See the laborer on this great Canadian and American prairie wheat fields who gets two dollars a day harvesting the crop at the antipodes, driving the Egyptian cultivator, whose wages are a few pence per day, from the English market almost at his door. Canadian operatives living in a country where a stalk of cotton never grew and where scarcely half a century ago the manufacture of cotton was scarcely dreamed of, selling manufactured cottons in China, the home of the cotton plant, and where the manufacture of the finest fabrics was carried on long before Canada was known to civilization, and receiving in return for each day's pay the wages of a dozen Chinamen; see the mighty engines of the Canadian and Northern Pacific crossing the great frozen plains of the Northwest and making possible, with comfort and safety, in two days, a journey that fifteen years ago required a month by dog train at peril of life and limb, amid discomforts before which the boldest might well quail; look at the canoe of the Siwash and the ocean-going iron ship in Victoria harbor, and estimate, if it be possible, the advance in knowledge which the staunch vessel represents.

The evidence of these truths is irresistible. If we are guided by it, we will see that the perfecting of the educational institutions of our city is the first duty we owe to its future. That our interest in the efficiency of our common schools will not permit us to descend to a low partizan squabble alike disgraceful to all participating in it and hurtful to our best interests for the possession of power and place in connection with them, and that we visit with the severest condemnation, irrespective of party or

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