

Resources of British Columbia.

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HOME MANUFACTURES.

Their Overshadowing Importance--The Artizan. The Greatest Benefactor of his Kind.

VICTORIA'S FACTORIES BRIEFLY DESCRIBED.

If we study the future in the light of the past, observing what home manufactures have done for other countries it will not be difficult to form a good idea of their overshadowing importance and of what they may ultimately accomplish for this province. For this we need only the example of our English ancestors. Though England is first known in history by the efforts of the Phœnician navigators to obtain the products of her mines, and although her pastoral and agricultural wealth chiefly attracted the Roman conquerors, yet England never emerged as a first-class power in Europe until she had learned to manufacture her own productions. Then the Island became a busy hive of industry and wealth. England exports no raw material; and what is the consequence? The whole land shakes with machinery, and her sea coast is one long counter, where she trades with the world, buying the crude material and selling the refined and putting the difference into her pocket. Home manufacture has largely been the recuperative power of France, Prussia and Holland, after being prostrated by long, devastating wars. These countries have steadily grown rich, have money to loan and invest in great public enterprises while Russia, whose exports consist chiefly of the raw material, is one of the poorest nations of Europe, considering her extent and resources. Home manufactures made New England, with her thin soil, granite hills, and rough climate, rich and self-reliant; while the sunny South, with a fertile soil, a delicious climate, but exporting all she raised, languished in poverty.

To the industrious artizan, more than to all other classes combined, society is indebted for the necessities, comforts and luxuries of life which it enjoys. Without the aid of his fashioning hand man would soon lose his civilization and degenerate to the condition of a blanketless savage. For what have we of

wealth or of worth or of ornament, that is not the product of his skill and labor? Scarcely anything. Without going beyond the limits of our own fair City, wherever we look, this fact stares us in the face. Here on Government Street, or on any of our principal thoroughfares, are long lines of stores containing everything useful to man, temptingly displayed, wooing for a purchaser. The artizan made them all. The finest gossamer fabric, the heaviest and richest tapestry, the tinselled toy and the jewelled chronometer, the needle and the anchor, all are his handiwork. Go from the center of the City to its utmost boundary and point out, if you can, one cubic inch of wealth contained therein that did not come from his creating hand. Look at those strong and spacious warehouses and long lines of docks, those beautiful steamboats that glide over the waters with the easy grace of so many aquatic birds, and those magnificent floating palaces that traverse the highways of the trackless ocean, burdened with the commerce of the world. From the heaviest beam or the largest iron bar to the smallest nail or rivet, all these are the work of the artizan. The work of his beneficent hand is as conspicuous as the wonderful writing on the wall, and abounding as the sands on the sea shore. From the barbed hook of the poor and patient fisherman to the golden scepter of the proudest potentate, his gifts are always the insignia of man's rank in life, and the greatest monarch that ever shook the earth with his footsteps, would fain hide away in very shame of his nakedness if suddenly despoiled of that which the workingman alone has given him—his raiment for be it ever so grand and costly, its every thread and fold were as surely made and fashioned by the skill and labor of this, alas, sometimes despised but greatest and best benefactor of his kind.

When it is considered that with the exception of silk and cotton, this province possesses, to an almost limitless extent, the raw material necessary for the manufacture of the various commodities entering into general use, besides several exceptional resources of great value, it would be a bold pen, indeed, that would now attempt to describe the scope of the possibilities for manufacturing enterprises here afforded, and which only await the touch of the capitalist's magic wand to awake a myriad of screaming steam whistles and set in motion countless propelling wheels to manufacture the inexhaustible products of mountain, field and forest. Hides, wool and furs for clothing; the finest forests in the world, for shipping, buildings, furniture and all other purposes for which wood is used; iron, coal and limestone lying side by side; numerous rich deposits of gold, silver, lead and copper; an immense area of agricultural and grazing lands; the waters swarming with finny inhabitants; a climate and scenery which make it the paradise of