

HISTORY OF THE LUMBER INDUSTRY OF AMERICA.*

"To the memory of men of brain and brawn who hewed out of the forests of the New World room for Civilization, and to the men of to-day who are making the American Lumber Industry an agent of commercial progress at home and abroad, this work is dedicated."

It is now pretty well understood by all students of the subject that the success of a nation in almost any part of the world depends upon the maintenance of a due proportion of forest, for the forest not merely distributes water in the soil, but regulates the precipitation which is necessary for the proper cleansing of the atmosphere. More than this, modern industries depend, to a far greater extent than has hitherto been generally understood, upon a due supply of timber for the thousand and one uses to which wood is put by civilized man. In a word, the life of a nation is largely the life of its forests. Yet, strangely enough, this fact has never been sufficiently recognized by the historian, and the consequence is that those who seek to follow the life history of many nations are reduced to collating the gossip of the court or the official records of battles when, in fact, the real sources of the actions which they record lie far back in the treatment by the people of their forests and forest wealth. The cutting off of the forest has turned many a place into a desert, making it necessary for its inhabitants to move on and possess the land of some less wasteful people, and so have come those intrigues and wars the minutiae of which are so faithfully recorded by the writers of history. It seems strange that the original facts have been so generally omitted by the historians that it is almost impossible—even in the case of those nations whose rise and subsequent downfall have clearly followed the wilful waste and afterwards woeful want of their forests—to trace back to their cause even effects so marked and, in the end, so disastrous. Even in America, whose chief attraction from its earliest settlement has been its forest resources, the historian seems not only to have failed to collect material easily available, but to have been almost wholly blind to the importance of such facts as were easily within his reach.

Fortunately for those who are to come after us and who will seek to understand our actions, as we seek to trace out the causes

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