

THE LUMBER INDUSTRY.

Unlike the country to the east of the Rocky Mountains, British Columbia is well wooded. The frequent fires ignited by the Indians on a grassy soil strewn with dry leaves, and a dry climate, in mid-summer, must be either thanked or condemned, as the spectator looks at it, for the extensive prairies and the great absence of timber in Manitoba and the Territories. On the hills where prairie grass to encourage forest fires and on the skirts of rivers, lakes and ponds is absent in the east country—districts less accessible to fires—timber of fair size is generally to be found. Again, in districts protected later by the white population, bluffs of timber spring up with great rapidity, all going to prove the country would have been wooded instead of prairie but for the ravages of fires occasioned by the nomads of the plains. In this province conditions were very different. The mountains and the hills, for obvious reasons, were less the haunts of the red man, grass growth at elevations and among rocks was less luxuriant, and the climate was more humid, snow lying longer at elevations and rains more frequent at lower altitudes. These causes combined, led to the preservation of British Columbia forests. In places in the interior where the climate is more arid and the land is comparatively level, patches of prairie are frequently to be found. In these, under cultivation, more or less irrigation is found necessary for the proper growth of agricultural products. It is easily obtained, however, from the many streams coursing down the hill-sides hard by. On the island of Vancouver and the West Coast of the mainland, where the climate is moister and protection more general, the timber growth is simply immense. For the purposes of this description, however, it may be said that when white settlement was first commenced, British Columbia was from one end to the other one dense forest of the finest and most useful timber in the known world. The British Columbia cedar is now used in all parts of the world as the best finishing timber available for the better class of buildings. Douglas fir, named after David Douglas, a noted botanist, referred to before, who explored much of the mainland in the early years of the past century, is easily the king of the forest. It is of very nearly the same weight as the ash, but grows to an enormous size. It has often been used to the length