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THE CANADIAN TEXTILE DIRECTORY

A Handbook of all the Cotton, Woolen and other Textile manufactures of Canada, with lists of manufacturers' agents and the wholesale and retail dry goods and kindred trades of the Dominion, to which is appended a vast amount of valuable statistics relating to these trades. Fourth edition now in hand

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COTTON, MILITARY AND MEDICINAL.

In a "Lecture upon Cotton as an Element of Industry," Sir Thomas Bazley laid stress upon the soothing influences of well-conducted commerce, and asserted, with all the emphasis of epigram, that "the handmaid of Industry is Peace." But War, observes the *Textile Mercury*, is handmaid to Industry too, and sometimes turns articles of commerce to the most deadly purposes. Sir Frederick Abel some time ago gave a most interesting account of the discovery of picric acid, which, first known as carbazotic acid, is suspected to be the active agent in melinite, the new French explosive from which so much is expected. Picric acid was first obtained in small quantities, as a chemical cu-

osity, by the oxidation of silk, aloes, and other substances, and of the dyestuff indigo, which thus yielded another dye of a brilliant yellow color. It has been known to chemists for more than a century, and was first manufactured in England for tinctorial employment, by the oxidation of a yellow resin known as Botany-Bay gum. Picric acid was later developed from carbolic acid, or phenol, and so had a common origin with many beautiful dyes. "Its production from carbolic acid was developed in Manchester in 1862, and its application as a dye gradually extended, until, in 1886, nearly 100 tons were produced in England and Wales. Although picric acid compounds were long since experimented with as explosive agents, it was not until a very serious accident occurred in 1887, at some works near Manchester, where the dye had been for some time manufactured, that public attention was directed in England to the powerfully explosive nature of this substance itself." This, then, is a conspicuous instance of a remarkable discovery being turned alike to the development of trade and to anything but peaceful purposes, while cotton affords another well-known case in point. It has been used in many ways for defence—from quilted or padded garments in China of old; in this country, centuries ago, to give check to cloth-yard shafts; and in frontier fighting as a means of protection against Indian arrows—to its use in bales for outworks, during the war between North and South, when it could be obtained. That was but seldom, but it would be interesting to know what was the cost of some rough-and-ready ramparts when cotton was at famine prices, and for months together was considerably over a dollar per lb. in New York, and in August, 1864, touched close upon two dollars. But it is for offensive purposes that cotton is now most required, and there is a preparation of gun cotton to which the name of cotton powder is given. Although the employment of cotton as a basis for explosives may be reckoned among the things generally known, there is still a sense of incongruity in meeting with a picture of a group of girls picking cotton in the course of a lavishly-illustrated article on the "Gunpowder Factory at Waltham," in the current number of the *Strand Magazine*. There is room for endless moralizing on the strange chances of life and death, in that cotton should furnish either calico or cordite—an awfully powerful explosive; and that some parts of the consignment of the