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RANDOM REFLECTIONS.



THE desire to look into the future is natural. In the earlier history of the human family Hebrew and heathen alike have their seers. The nineteenth century Christian who harnesses the lightnings to his purposes smilingly pities the foolish divinings of paganism, and carefully notes the circumstances attending his first glimpses of the new moon. The mental darkness of the heathen Chinese, which conceals a diminutive predestinator in the inner recesses of his ample coat, excites the scorn or contempt of the educated Caucasian who secretly treasures a luckpenny in his pocket, unconscious of how "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Cultivation, progress, discovery, the acquisition of knowledge which brings power, instead of eradicating this tendency of human thought, only turns it in another direction and gives it coherence and purpose.

Where ignorance led and credulity followed to fall into the ditch of error, reason and intelligent investigation marshal the evidences of past experiences and of acquired knowledge to the unveiling of future developments, and Campbell's poetic allusion, "Coming events cast their shadows before," becomes a realization in every-day life. While this is true to all men, it is pecu-

liarly so to those whose lot is cast in a new country, who have ventured forth in obedience to the strongest influence of any to which our race is susceptible, that ever urges us to occupy the waste places of the earth—what is to be the future of our province, of our city. To us, even in comparison with people in other countries, the problem is of more than ordinary interest. Situated on the confines of a great and as yet only partially occupied continent, far removed from the great centres of activity in the progress and development of our race, we may be led to think that ours must wait on that of nearer and already more advanced peoples.

Contending for supremacy with cities which less than a decade since had not an existence even in men's anticipations, practical-minded men are led to examine the groundings of their faith in the future of the city of Victoria. The home seeker, after long debate in his mind, having come to a decision, and left behind him all that was, in search of that that is to be, is wary of the glowing representations of boomers, by which so many of the too credulous have been brought to loss in other places. He is met by the chronic croaker with doleful tales of past disappointment and predictions of future stagnation. The business man, looking back to the days of small transactions and great profits, may be discouraged by competition that increases as trade increases. But despite all the hobgoblins that may be conjured up to cloud the future, the evidences that point to solid development and commercial greatness in store for our province and city are such as to justify the most confident predictions.

"Westward the star of empire takes its way" is wrought into truth by the advancing tide of emigration in the same direction, that ever mounts higher and higher, and which temporary checks seem only to increase in its succeeding volume. Each succeeding spring sees it set in from the older countries of Europe on the eastern shores of the American continent to out-do the marvels of past incomings, and to spread itself ever nearer the Pacific coast line, where it must eventually stop. And the incomings from the old world is as nothing to the shifting of the resident and native popula-

tions of the Atlantic and central states and provinces of this continent toward this western shore. The observing, thinking resident of any of the central continental cities is astonished at the increasing annual outpour, not of Europeans, but of Americans, who pass westward, and to stay.

That British Columbia has natural advantages to attract and support her full share of this coming tide is plainly evident to the fully informed and unprejudiced mind. We are not credited with having, nor do we boast of, great agricultural resources; yet even in this respect our province will compare favorably with Scotland, Vermont, Nova Scotia, Quebec, or the western portions of Ontario. Our fisheries challenge the world for a comparison; our iron and coal alone are sufficient to insure an aggregation of population and a future era of prosperity, while the revenues yet to accrue from our wealth in timber are simply beyond calculation.

With such a combination of advantages and our splendid climate, to forecast otherwise than phenomenal progress for this country is to close our eyes to facts and to forsake the conclusions of reason and common sense. That Victoria will benefit to her full share from these progressive advances, the evidence is equally conclusive. With a perfectly land-locked harbor that is certainly capable of being made equal in accommodation to the Clyde, situated at the north end of a coast line of seven hundred miles without a harbor, by her island situation removed from the hurtful competition of rival cities in her near vicinity; having the advantage of competing railway systems without the blighting curse of railway domination, with a charm of situation and of climate such as is not possessed by any other city in Canada, if in America, what has she to fear?

Men like to live where it is pleasant to live. They congregate to do business in locations where the natural facilities for doing business exist. Victoria's climate fills the first condition even better than the most favored spot in our own province. The advantages of her position in respect of the second were sufficient to establish and maintain themselves without the assistance of the fostering hand of giant mono-