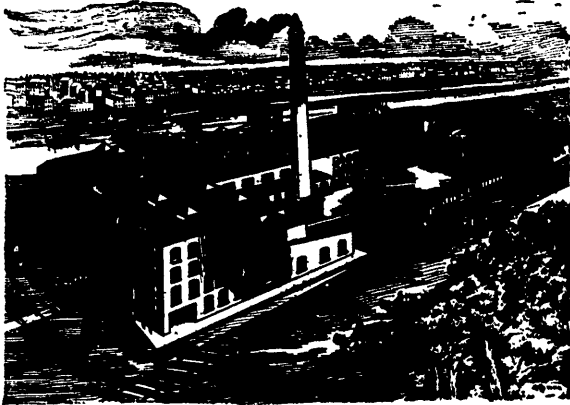


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## The History of Rubber.

From *Ainslee's Magazine*: The world was a long time learning the uses and value of rubber. For two centuries after the Spaniards saw the gum in the hands of the natives of the New World it attracted little more than curiosity. Old Heron, who went with Columbus on his second voyage, made a note of an elastic ball which was molded from the gum of a tree. At their games the Haitians made it bound high in the air. The natives were familiar with the gum and called it "ule," and from them the Spaniards learned to smear it on their coats to keep out of the wet. They had crossed the sea for gold, and never dreamed of a time when the sticky milk the uncouth Indians drew from strange trees would be worth more than all the other treasures of the hills. Jose, King of Portugal in 1565, comes down to us as the wearer of a pair of boots sent out to Para to be covered with a waterproof gum. Yet 300 years were to elapse before a Connecticut Yankee should make a pair of rubber boots which would not decompose. Dr. Priestly, author of the work on "Pneumatics," now forgotten, recorded that caoutchouc (pronounced kachook) was useful in small tubes for rubbing out pencil marks—hence the name rubber. The India link with it refers to the savages who gathered it in the Amazon wilderness. Dr. Priestly's cubes were half an inch long, and sold for three shillings, or 75 cents a piece. A stiff price for the finest rubber to-day is \$1 a pound. Its price for ten years has ranged from 62 cents to \$1. The conversion of the gum to useful purposes made but slow headway. The first waterproof cloth in 1797 was the work of an Englishman. It was tentative, and, of course, would not stand heat. In 1825 Charles Mackintosh, of Glasgow, discovered naphtha, and dissolving rubber in it produced a varnish which, when spread on cloth, made it really impervious to water.

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## Developing Vancouver Island.

The editor of the *Victoria Colonist* has been quoted recently as saying: "The development of Vancouver Island is now attracting great attention. Nearly as big as Nova Scotia, containing an inexhaustible supply of coal, remarkable forests of Douglas fir, spruce and cedar, it is also rich in ores of gold and copper and iron. Several copper mines have already begun to ship, and their output will materially increase from now on. A still larger number are being developed. Very noteworthy progress has been made in the development of the mineral wealth of Vancouver and of the whole coast region from Vancouver to Alaska. I do not think the people of eastern Canada have any adequate conception of the enormous resources of that country. The great question is transportation. We need Vancouver Island opened from end to end by railway branches to the coast to facilitate the concentrating of copper ores for smelting. If this were done the population of the island, now 76,000, would be doubled in a very short time. The construction of such a railway would also greatly facilitate the transport of merchandise to the Yukon and the bringing of ores down to the smelter. I have devoted some time to the investigation of this, but as yet the data acquired are not sufficiently complete for publication.

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