

of May, 1851, when it was almost wholly destroyed by fire. But that reverse was only momentary, and, though involving an immense loss to individuals, was a real and substantial benefit to the place. The flimsy and combustible structures that were swept away were speedily replaced by buildings of a better order—many of which are standing to this day.

Although the county government was formally organized in pursuance of the constitutional and legal provisions in 1850, the city and county were substantially one as to population and interests then, and for some years afterwards. The magnificent area that now constitutes San Joaquin county, with her thousands of highly cultivated farms, pleasant homesteads, and thrifty and happy households, was then a barren waste, without occupants or owners, and for the most part regarded as valueless by the unstable population of those days. But as the mines gradually decreased in productiveness, and the fascination of gold seeking was dispelled by hard experience, and the instinctive desire for homes and stable pursuits took possession of the people, attention was gradually turned to the cultivation of the soil and the acquisition of land. So gradual and steady has been the development of this commanding interest, which underlies the whole superstructure of our civilization, that it is impossible to tell when or where it commenced, or to note its progress, except in the grand results manifested in our population, productions, wealth, intelligence, refinement and general prosperity. The statistics of the material developments and resources of the county are given in another portion of this work. Great and gratifying as these are, they are by no means in excess or advance of the progress made in all of the higher elements of education, moral and social culture, public and private economy, and of public order, law, and civil government. Than that of San Joaquin county, there is no community on the Pacific Coast, or any where in the world, for that matter, whose fiscal and other common affairs have been for the same length of time and in the aggregate more intelligently directed, or whose public credit has been more steadily and uniformly maintained. While we cannot claim exemption from the crimes against person and property that characterize all human society, the criminal records demonstrate that the moral status of this county is at least as high as that of any community of equal number and cosmopolitan character in the civilized world.

The vast material resources of the county are rather indicated than