

which the present outlay is likely to secure. What it will be to old Canada now is the most momentous and interesting problem of the day. There are many who think that it will be her salvation: that it will give her a substance and a backbone which she could not otherwise have had; and enable her to become—a nation, perhaps, they would not say—but a permanent Confederation. These men assume that Canada will be able to engross the North Western trade. But upon what do they base that assumption? If upon convenience of transit, this, apparently, must depend upon the possibility of carrying a railroad, at a cost not utterly ruinous, to the north of Lake Superior: for a water way, frozen during five months in the year, can surely never hold its own against railway communication. If upon patriotism, their faith must be strong, and nobody can say that they are infected with the scepticism of the age. In old Canada the population is almost entirely British, and there is still a certain feeling of border antipathy to the Americans, the offspring of U. E. Loyalism and the two wars. But the settlers of the North-West are a mixed multitude, and likely to be more so as time goes on, while those who know the country assure us that there the border antipathy does not exist. At St. Paul is being formed a colony of Canadian business men, which will be a point of attraction and a connecting link. The special sentiment of the Canadian element is likely to rule for a season; but in the end commercial influences will prevail, and unless the road can be constructed round Lake Superior, they will infallibly cause the North-West to gravitate commercially towards the States immediately to the south of it, with which it is connected by nature. Signs of the tendency will probably appear before long if it is true that under the present prohibitive system the people of Manitoba are unable to provide themselves with cows and oxen. We have not yet had from any one of our public men a statesmanlike speech upon this question, deliberately attempting to forecast the future. Of blazing rhetoric about the glorious fertility of the “illimitable wilderness” we have