

case. As a general rule, the snow in Canada is easily removed by the snow-ploughs, which are used both there and in the Eastern States, and the trains run regularly all winter, with the exception of an occasional snow storm. But as we get farther into the interior, the thickness of snow continues to diminish with the decrease of atmospheric moisture, till in the plain of the Saskatchewan it does not pack over fourteen inches thick in winter, and then evaporates quickly; and even in the Yellow Head Pass in the Rocky Mountains, it barely attains from two to three feet. In addition to these facts, the isothermal lines, which run in a W.N.W. curve across the Continent, show an increase in the mean temperature on the Pacific coast equal to fully 11 deg. of latitude as compared with the Atlantic; whilst the range of the thermometer becomes less, and the winter and summer temperatures more equable. Thus, the mean annual temperature at Cumberland House in lat. 54, long. 101°40, is only one degree lower than that of Toronto, 10 deg. more to the south, but also 42 deg. more to the east; and in Victoria, Vancouver Island, where snow rarely falls, and the arbutus grows in the open air to the size of a tree, the climate closely resembles that of Nantes or La Rochelle in France. In short, if the trains run all winter in Canada, they could do it *a fortiori* across the western portion of the Continent.

As to the general fitness of the country for settlement, that has already been shown as regards the great plain and "clayey level," extending together for 765 miles from Ottawa to Nipigon river. Beyond this, there is an interval of 285 miles, between the Nipigon and Winnipeg rivers, a small portion of which, as already explained, is composed of silurian rocks, and comparatively sterile. But although the cultivable areas are limited, where they do occur, the soil is rich, and the country is intersected by many fertile spots and hollows sufficiently extensive for farms. Further west, the beauty of the Fertile Belt, which stretches in a north-westerly direction for one thousand miles, has at last been recognised, and is now becoming world-renowned; it has truly been named a "Paradise of fertility," and its soil and climate require no further comment. Indeed, its climate is more suitable to the emigrant from Northern Europe than that south of the Missouri, where summer droughts are common, together with excessive winter colds and winter snows.

In British Columbia there exists a large tract of fine country along the Upper Fraser; and farther west the proposed line traverses the great Chilcoaten or Central plain of the colony; a garden of itself, full of agricultural and pastoral wealth, and containing over twenty millions of acres, the two-thirds of which are fit for cultivation. When we compare this succession of fertile lands with the sterile regions of the American desert (though traversed by the Central Pacific Railroad in one of its narrowest and least arid portions) and the facilities of the British line over the American in an engineering point of view, we may feel ashamed to think, that we have made so little use of the superior advantages at our disposal, and that the Americans, under far greater obstacles, have got so far ahead of us. (See Appendix C for a description of this desert.)