

waves, nature has marked out the most expeditious line of route, and combined every topographical advantage for its completion.

The great water systems of British America are an instructive object of study, and, as affecting the topic under consideration, have never received the attention they merit. The direction in which navigable rivers flow usually indicates the course commerce will take in a country; and, as a rule, a railroad admits of easiest construction through valleys scooped out by the perennial action of streams. But to execute a line across the direction of many water-courses must be acknowledged to be a very cross-grained and expensive operation. Now it is a curious fact in the geography of America that, in the direction of the St. Lawrence, and there only, the rivers of America follow a course east and west. The Mississippi and the Missouri, having their courses close to the British frontier, disembogue into the Gulf of Mexico; the McKenzie, after winding its way through nearly sixteen parallels of latitude, discharges into the Arctic Sea. On the other hand, in that track which possesses the climate most favourable for an overland route, the waters of the St. Lawrence, penetrate well-nigh half-way across the continent. That river joins on to a chain of lakes and navigable streams that finally merge in the Winnipeg River, and by the branches of the Saskatchewan, this water system strikes into the heart of the Rocky Mountains, marking out the practicable passes through that otherwise stern barrier.

As misrepresentations respecting the soil and climate of that section of British North America now under review have prevailed in this country, let a word or two suffice for the inquiry whether the nature of the country in these particulars is incompatible with settlement in, and transit through, it. The space between Fort William, at the head of Lake Superior, and Fort Garry, Red River, comprises large and fertile tracts, varying from 20,000 to 200,000 acres in size. Sir George Simpson, in his evidence on the subject given before a Committee of the House of Commons, in 1856, eulogises the qualities of the soil in the valley of Kamenis Toquoiah. Every one of the ten thousand settlers already cultivating the land in the Red River district is a witness to the abounding agricultural wealth found there. For 400 miles up the Assiniboine, to its junction with the Moose River, there is nothing to be seen but prairie, covered with long red grass. "On the east, north, and south," says Sir George, "there was not a mound or tree to vary the vast expanse of green sward; while to the west were the gleaming bays of the Assiniboine, separated from each other by wooded points of considerable depth." The productiveness of Red River settlement may be inferred from the yield of wheat there, as compared with the average in the adjoining States of America. In Minnesota it stands