

—will take its position of importance, and will form the point of communication between Europe and the East. Talking of the Canal, the French are jubilant over its success. And with reason too! It gives them a commanding influence in Egypt. More and more is their impress becoming recognisable. The country is already, in many respects, assuming the appearance of a French Province, and the Viceroy must gradually sink to the position of a French vassal. Towns are rising up along the route of the Canal, in all aspects scarcely distinguishable from those of France. For example, Ismaili, only a few years ago a desert spot in the midst of a desert, is now a large city with French language, French Theatres, Cafés and Casinos. Financially the enterprise may be a failure, but politically it is a grand success, and it is as a political move that the Emperor chiefly regards it. English travellers bitterly complain of that supineness on our part which has permitted a rival thus to forestall us, to obtain such a grip of a position so vital in the line of our communication with India, and to make us, to a great extent, dependents on its friendship or forbearance. The 1st October, 1869, is the date assigned for the opening of the whole Canal. M. Lesseps, the chief engineer, has formally notified various Boards of Trade of this fact. The French are particular as to the exact day. A gentleman relates a conversation with an official. "The Canal will be opened in October next," was the remark made. "On the first of October," was the reply, in the tone of one who liked exact statement. But as this is not the first announcement of the kind, people take the liberty of adding on another year. Not often do you find men as punctual to time as Sanford Fleming was with the Pictou Railway.

From Alexandria to Suez, at the head of the Red Sea, is about 240 miles by the present line of railway. At Suez we again meet the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company—the largest, and perhaps the best organized company for steam navigation in the world. It possesses 76 steamers—most of them of very large tonnage, and secures communication between England and all the principal cities of India, China, Japan and Australia. From Suez to Aden, *i. e.*, from one end of the Red Sea to the other, is perhaps the hottest, stuffiest, most disagreeable sail that can be indicated. I had the good fortune to have the coolest voyage of the whole year, and from considering what it is at the coolest, I can form some idea of what it is at the hottest. For several nights the thermometer stood at 86° at midnight. We talk about the patience and endurance of our brave fellows during the Abyssinian war, but we do not begin to understand what they endured till we have had experience of Red Sea heat, in which they had to work and march. Perhaps it may be interesting if I mention now, lest I may forget it, that Lord Napier, of Magdala, presided at the annual meeting of our Mission at Madras, and made an excellent speech full of hearty sympathy with our work—stating that he had been brought up in the bosom of the Church of Scotland, that he regretted that the incidents of a roving life had often for years separated him from her communion, but that he trusted for the future to be able in his new capacity (as Lieutenant-Governor of Madras Presidency) to show the interest he felt in her and her Missions. These professions he has backed up and approved by his deeds. He has granted a free site and \$150 as his "first subscription" to the new native church which we are erecting in Madras.

But this is a digression. Aden is the first point reached of our Eastern Empire. A mass of naked rocks, it answers the purpose for which we seized it as well as if it were fertile as Jordan's Valley. The sole plea on which we took possession of it and erected our batteries was, that it was necessary to our commerce as a coaling depot. The neighbouring Arab tribes could scarcely be expected to see it exactly in the same light, took up a bitter hostility, and for years kept Aden in a state of chronic siege. Gradually, however, they came to perceive that we wished only ground, or rather rock, sufficient to store