

yet yielded to despair, and an important proportion of the French press still upheld M. De Lesseps. But the end was at hand, and in a sequel, which, with cruel irony—provoked, doubtless, by the heedlessness of those whom he would have saved from disaster—he entitles “De Lesseps’ Last Ditch,” Dr. Nelson describes the awakening of France to the gloomy truth, and the abandonment of the undertaking.

Strange that such a fate should, in this 19th century, have befallen a scheme which was first conceived nearly three centuries and a half ago, with hopes of its accomplishment as strong as those which impelled Count De Lesseps to sink so many millions in works on the success of which he had risked his reputation. Nor was it the Panama Canal alone that engaged the thoughts of those pioneers of commercial enterprise in the New World. “Three hundred years ago,” writes our fellow-townsmen, “all the schemes that have received consideration recently, were on the tapis. There was the old Panama scheme, the Nicaragua scheme and the Tehuantepec scheme. These were submitted to Philip II. and his court. Gomera was one of those clear-thinking, enthusiastic men, to whom obstacles were but new stimulants to victory. When he was confronted with the difficulty to be overcome in the canalization of the Isthmus, he said, addressing the King: ‘It is quite true that the mountains obstruct these passes, but if there are mountains there are also hands. Let but the resolve be made and there will be no want of means; the Indies, to which the passage will be made, will supply them. To a King of Spain, with the wealth of the Indies at his command, when the object to be attained is the spice trade, what is possible is easy.’” But Spain’s day of power and glory passed and, save that the soil remained a possession of the Spanish race in America, when, after centuries, the task came to be attempted, it was not Spain that directed it or furnished the means. From time to time the project was revived, indeed, by Dutch, Swedes, English, Scotch and Americans, and finally a great Frenchman, with a name of power, took charge of it. In vain? Not altogether. The experiment, though costly in means and men, will not be fruitless, and, though expectation has been disappointed, communication between the two great oceans is only a matter of time.

Another feather in Canada’s cap. The Parthia arrived at Vancouver on the 10th inst., after a voyage of 12 days and 23½ hours, out from Yokohama—the fastest time yet made on the Pacific. It beats not only the Parthia’s own previous record, but also that of the new San Francisco steamer China; she beat the City of Peking by six days. She had a cargo of 2014 tons, including large consignments of silk and 25 bags of mail matter. Besides six saloon and four intermediate passengers, the Parthia carried 169 Chinese and 80 representatives of other Asiatic nationalities.

The private sealers of the Pacific, American as well as Canadian, are determined to respect no monopoly. The former seem to believe that the question will settle itself even if Great Britain delays or declines to interfere. When the Washington authorities perceive that the privilege is not regarded as valid and fails to pay, they will abandon the principle of a closed sea and throw the northern waters of the Pacific avowedly, as they are practically, open to all nations. The Seal Islands

would then be reserved as breeding grounds, with due protection by international understanding.

Major Serpa Pinto, whose name has been so frequently mentioned in connection with the Anglo-Portuguese territorial dispute in South-East Africa, is not the least distinguished of that valiant race of explorers which, for centuries, has never lacked representatives. Portugal’s great epic was inspired by the feats of her gallant adventurers. And was not Camoens himself a veritable knight of romance, bearing in one hand the sword, in the other the pen, paying court to the Muse, while, by sea and land, he followed the standard of his beloved Lusitania, from which he was an enforced and necessitous wanderer? Serpa Pinto, too, wields pen as well as sword and, in both pursuits, has won more favour from those who hold the places of power than the much-trying author of the *Lusiad*. If, of late, his exalted patrons have changed their smiles to frowns, it is for reasons of State rather than from any depreciation of his patriotic services. Prince Bismarck calls excess of zeal on the part of State officials *furor consularis*. That seems to be the malady from which Major Serpa Pinto suffers. When Mr. Johnson, consul at Mozambique, left the Portuguese explorer to proceed northwards to Lake Nyassa, everything had been satisfactorily arranged. It was after his departure that Major Pinto took the bad turn which has made so much mischief. Portugal, as was foreseen, has had to give in.

The financial statement up to the end of December shows the revenue for that month to have been \$3,053,581 and the expenditure \$1,927,732. For the six months of the fiscal year the revenue has been \$20,004,023, and the expenditure \$14,426,292. The expenditure on capital account in December was \$665,303, thus made up: Public Works, railways and canals, \$328,044; railway subsidies, \$325,710; Dominion lands, \$11,548. The net public debt was \$234,528,123, a decrease of \$579,824 in December.

CANADA’S TRADE WITH THE EAST.

It is reported that the Chinese of San Francisco are founding a Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of forming trade relations with the United States. The great bulk of China’s trade has hitherto been with Great Britain and her colonies. Naturally, Canada has looked for some share of this trade. As to imports from China and Japan, a fair beginning has been made. In the year ending with June, 1888, there was imported into the Dominion merchandise from China valued at \$912,228; and from Japan, merchandise valued at \$1,216,469. But the exports have as yet been insignificant. Some time ago the proposal was made to Mr. W. W. Ogilvie that he should establish flouring mills at Victoria, B.C., so as to meet the demand for Canadian flour in the East. Mr. Ogilvie said that he had already made some shipments to China and Japan of No. 1 hard Manitoba flour, and it had met with gratifying success in the Oriental market. The quantity exported has as yet, however, been inconsiderable, though it seems that the Pacific States have of late been doing a good deal towards the supply of what demand there is. It is only in recent years that China has imported breadstuffs, the great mass of the people living largely on rice of their own raising. Mr. Ogilvie seems to think that, for hygienic and industrial reasons, they are beginning to use wheat

bread as furnishing more stamina than their traditional rice. Washington Territory, Oregon and California have been able out of their surplus to meet the demand, for the supply of which their situation is greatly in their favour. If British Columbia entered into competition with them in that line, it would be manifestly at a disadvantage in having to haul its wheat to the mill at Vancouver or Victoria for more than a thousand miles. At the same time Mr. Ogilvie believes that, other things being equal, the hard wheat flour of Manitoba growth has so clear a superiority over the soft wheat of the coast states that there could be no question as to the victory of the former. The question, therefore, is one of cheap freight rates. At present Mr. Ogilvie does not regard the question as a practical one—at least not sufficiently so to justify the outlay of establishing flouring mills on the coast. When communication is thoroughly established with the eastern countries, it will be time enough to contemplate such an undertaking. Possibly then the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, which has shown so much zeal in its efforts to develop this new and important trade with the East, may offer terms which would make such an extension of the flouring business profitable.

Without being over-sanguine, it is permissible to hope that the forecast thus indicated may be fulfilled. It is not to be expected that a population so enslaved to tradition as that of China will suddenly change its habitual immemorial diet to any great extent. That it has been changed at all is doubtless due to the example and suggestion of those Chinamen who have lived in America and who have experienced the benefit of more generous food than that to which they had been accustomed. The Chinese may be slow in adopting new fashions, but they are shrewd enough to recognize what is likely to serve their interests, and, as a vigorous physique is so much capital to an industrious and ambitious man, once they were convinced that it could be attained more surely by wheat bread than by boiled rice, they would add it to their daily bill of fare, even if respect for usage prevented them abandoning their chopsticks. That our neighbours are sensible of the dimensions which the commerce thus created may gradually assume and will endeavour to secure the greater portion of it we may be certain. They will also, no doubt, turn to account the movement for the formation of a Chinese Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco. But if such a body be created there, it is more than likely that the Canadian Chinese communities will take pattern by their California kinsmen, and the question arises whether such a chamber in Vancouver or Victoria might not be of service in encouraging closer trade relations between their own country and Canada. At any rate, it is reasonable to suppose that the more enlightened and influential of the Chinese residents in the Pacific Province will not be silent when it is necessary to urge on their fellow-countrymen at home the advantages of trade with Canada and the superior excellence of Canadian wheat. Their good will, moreover, may be expected to be proportionate to the fairness with which they have been treated in the land of their adoption.

ONE VOLUME BETTER THAN THREE.—An English novelist, in protesting against that peculiarly British institution, the three-volume novel, cites the case of that most popular book, “Lorna Doone.” It was a dead weight in the three-volume form, and it was at what seemed a great risk that it was at length brought out in one volume—to become immediately a success.