

## CHAPTER II.—POSITION.

## THE FUTURE GREATNESS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

It is well for intending settlers in a country where there is as yet comparatively little population, to consider its Position in relation to future developments not only on the American Continent, but on the Globe.

British Columbia, as has been already stated, according to the measurements the Census districts, contains an area of 841,305 square miles; but according to some authorities this area is 350,000. The latter area may be claimed if the waters of the Province are included in the measurement. This is a large area; a fact which will appear striking if compared with that of some of the great empires and powers of Europe. That of England is 50,933 square miles; France, including Corsica, 204,000 and the great German Empire, including the old Kingdom of Prussia, and the Kingdoms, Duchies, Principalities, Free Cities; and Provinces, united and annexed, is an area of only 208,729 square miles.

A large portion of the vast area of British Columbia is mountainous and unsuited to agriculture; but these mountains are so rich in mineral deposits that they will, in their turn, render more than ordinarily valuable, those very large areas which are suitable for farming purposes. The 49th parallel of latitude forms the southern boundary, deflected a degree to the south in the Island of Vancouver. The northern boundary is the 60th parallel; the western, the Pacific Ocean; and the eastern, generally a line from the 114th degree of west longitude, following the course of the Rocky Mountains, and deflecting to the west, until it intersects the 120th degree of W. long. which it follows to the 60th parallel.

It is of importance to consider the position of the Province with regard to the advantages it affords for the construction of a trans-continental railway. The Canadian line, in the first place, passes over that portion of the Continent known as the "fertile belt," instead of arid or salt plains, not admitting either of cultivation or settlement. And, next, the highest pass through the Rocky Mountains, which the Canadian Railway will take, according to the Report of Mr. Fleming, the line selected by him, was 3,372 feet above the level of the sea, while the trans-continental line through the United States which has its western terminus at San Francisco, has to scale an elevation of 7,534 feet. It is understood that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company have found a more southern and shorter route, the "Kicking Horse Pass," through the Rocky Mountains, than that selected by Mr. Fleming. The gradients of this are not in all respects quite so favourable as those of the "Tête Jaune" (Mr. Fleming's pass), but the gain in distance is about 100 miles and the inclination of the gradients is understood to favour the heavy expected traffic of products from the plains, to be carried to the sea-board.

A comparison of profiles of altitudes of three trans-continental railway routes, the Union Pacific, now completed with San Francisco as terminus; the North Pacific in United States territory, rapidly approaching completion, starting from Duluth at the head of Lake Superior; and the Canadian Pacific—shows commanding advantages in gradients in favour of the last-named. The following interesting and important general statements in this connection, are extracted from Mr. Fleming's report.

"Viewing the Canadian Pacific Railway as a 'through' route between ports on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the comparative profile of altitudes as above given illustrates the remarkable engineering advantages which it possesses over the Union Pacific Railway. The lower altitudes to be reached, and the more favourable gradients are not, however, the only advantages.

"A careful examination into the question of distances, shows, beyond dispute, that the Continent can be spanned by a much shorter line on Canadian soil than the existing railway through the United States.

"The distance from San Francisco to New York, by the Union Pacific Railway is 3,362 miles, while from New Westminster to Montreal it is only 2,730, or 632 miles in favour of the Canadian route.

"By the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, even New York, Boston and Portland will be brought from 300 to 500 miles nearer the Pacific coast than they are at present.

"Compared with the Union Pacific Railway, the Canadian line will shorten the passage from Liverpool and China, in direct distance, more than 1,000 miles.