

discouraging physical difficulties on the route which have been described, the line has been steadily advancing to California, and another from the proposed terminus in that State is being formed to meet it. It is estimated that at the present rate of progress this entire railway will be finished in six years. With a view to the extension of commerce with China and Japan, the lion's share of which already falls to California, among countries on the western shores of the American continent, the government of the United States has just granted a subsidy to a line of steamers about to run between San Francisco and the coasts of Asia. So bold and liberal a measure must bring incalculable commercial returns. Vancouver Island is 200 miles nearer the Amoor river, 300 miles nearer Shanghai, and 240 miles nearer Canton and Calcutta than San Francisco is. Yet we are compelled to stand by and see a neighbouring country, much less conveniently situated to Asia, carrying off the prize that ought to be jealously guarded by ourselves. The young and thriving populations that increase with such fabulous rapidity on the western shores of America will soon be found emulating the zeal and enterprise of ancient nations, in regard to commerce with the East, and that nation which happens to possess the greatest topographical advantages for uniting the two oceans by a railway, and is also quick to improve these advantages, must become master of the situation. The fear cannot be altogether repressed, that notwithstanding the obviously superior advantages presented by our territory for the execution of this noble and desirable work, these may be nullified by our national indifference about the matter, and our designs forestalled by more progressive rivals. Would that the cogent appeal of Lord Bury, some years since (a nobleman who has no equal in the British legislature in acquaintance with this subject), were duly considered by the government and the people:—"Our trade in the Pacific Ocean, with China and with India, must ultimately be carried through our North American possessions; at any rate, our political and commercial supremacy will have utterly departed from us if we neglect that very great and important consideration, and if we fail to carry out to its fullest extent the physical advantages which the country offers to us, and which we have only to stretch out our hands to take advantage of." Through the ignorance and neglect of her rulers twenty years ago, England threw away much rich territory on the north-west coast, and she has still much at stake in the Pacific. She once snatched from Holland the East Indian trade, and if she allow herself to be blinded by past prosperity to the urgent claims of present interest, some rising power may gradually eclipse her commercial glory.

MATTHEW MACFIE.