

*Sun*, the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette*, the London *Times* and the Glasgow *Herald* in confirmation of his views. "In point of fact," says this last journal, in pointing to the possibility of a dearth of timber, "Canada and the United States are busy sawing from under them that far-reaching fortune-making branch, on which, like conquerors, they are now sitting and over-looking the world." If but a tithe of what Mr. Little urges on our attention be true, it is certainly full time that the tree-destroying axe were blunted or the arm that wields it were arrested in its work of blind or wilful destruction.

The retirement of Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Middleton, C.B., K.C.M.G., must have caused wide-spread regret among the officers and men of our militia, and especially among those who had served under him in the North-West. Into the circumstances which preceded his resignation we have no occasion to enter. Enough to say that, with all right-thinking persons, we deplore the unhappy train of events which has prematurely deprived Canada of the services of an officer to whom she owes so much. On the 12th of July, 1884, Sir Frederick (then Col. F. D. Middleton, C.B.) assumed the command of the Canadian Militia, taking the local rank of Major-General. For his services in the North-West in 1885 (in recognition of which the Canadian Parliament awarded him a vote of thanks and \$20,000), he was promoted by the Imperial authorities to the rank of Major-General and made a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. When later he had about reached the limit of age for employment as a Major-General, he retired from the army with the honorary rank of Lieut.-General, and about the same time the Dominion Government extended until 1892 the term of his command here, which in the ordinary course of events would have expired on the 12th of July, 1889. It has been said that General Middleton purposes devoting the remaining years of his life to the preparation of works on military history. There is an ample field for such studies in Canada, and it is a field of which a considerable portion is virgin soil. The War of 1812-15, for instance, has never been adequately dealt with from a purely Canadian and military standpoint, and a history of that struggle by a veteran soldier of recognized ability and thoroughly acquainted with the ground on which it was mainly waged, would be a welcome addition to our Canadian bibliography.

We hear so much of politics, not as the science of government or a comprehensive branch of ethics, or even as the art of general or special administration, but in the looser sense of the *modus operandi* for the conduct of party contests, that parents would probably deprecate any premature initiation of their children into what they may deem at best but a necessary evil. This very deterioration of a word which, in its essence, is allied with civilization and the highest duties of man to man is (as the late Dr. Trench illustrates by other examples) a revelation of great significance. It discloses that declension from a high ideal which the rough and ready expediences of our work-a-day life are almost sure to bring to pass in society as in the individual. It is something, nevertheless, to keep the ideal at least in sight, and we should deem life but little worth living if we did not believe that, in spite of weaknesses and back-slidings, many—perhaps, most—of our public men cherished an ideal of political, as well as of private morality, greatly in advance of that standard which their practice might imply or of which circumstances might permit the realization. A common working ideal they all necessarily hold in the existing law and practice of the constitution under which they live. And the study of this constitution both in theory and operation and also in comparison with other systems, ancient and modern, ought to form a branch of study in every liberal education. In this view we are entirely in accord with Dr. Bourinot, to whose paper on the subject reference has already been made in this journal. "Canada, though a young country," writes Dr. Bourinot,

"compared with the old civilizations of Europe, presents a very interesting field for the student in this department of study. Though not a national sovereignty like the United States, and, therefore, probably inferior to it in that respect as an object of contemplation and reflection for European statesmen, its political history, its fundamental law and constitution, its economic system, its social institutions and the racial characteristics of its people are worthy of the close study, not only of Canadians, but of all persons who wish to follow the gradual development of communities from a state of cramped colonial pupilage to a larger condition of political freedom which gives it many of the attributes of an independent nation, never before enjoyed by a colonial dependency." Dr. Bourinot's whole paper—"The Study of Political Science in Canadian Universities"—which may be found in Volume VII. of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, just issued by Messrs. Dawson Brothers, is worthy of careful attention. What he says of the probable effects of such training in modifying for the better the tone of the political press, is not only true but seasonable.

#### THE HUDSON'S BAY ROUTE.

Faith, energy and perseverance are sure to be ultimately crowned with success, whatever be the obstacles to be surmounted—unless, indeed, the project to which these high qualities are devoted be physically impossible. The conception of a line of railroad from Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay, which would bring our vast and fertile West, with its teeming harvests, into immediate oceanic connection with the Old World, is, as our readers know, no novelty to the present generation. Such a scheme, indeed, is in logical sequence to the course of events under the Hudson's Bay Company's régime for two hundred years before the transfer of the North-West to Canada. It was sure to suggest itself to men of enterprise directly or indirectly associated with the development of Western Canada. As far as the maritime portion of the route was concerned, it would be simply a continuation of the practice that had hitherto prevailed, and would thus be in the natural course of things. It would be simply applying to the new conditions of the country, after being opened up to unlimited colonization a method of transport and travel that had been operated without interruption since the days of the Stuarts. In the Old World—even when allowance was made for difference of climate in like latitudes—there was ample precedent for it in the sub-arctic and even arctic ports and waterways of the eastern North Atlantic and the eastern and western North Pacific. From the first organization of Manitoba it became a fixed idea with a few persons of foresight and speculative boldness that sooner or later Canada should have its Archangel in our northern waters. No time was lost in collecting *data* to show the feasibility of the route during at least as much of the summer as would make it profitable. The Winnipeg Board of Trade had a special report prepared on the subject, which is of historic interest as well as commercial value. It was so highly thought of in England that the author, Mr. Charles N. Bell, was made a member of the Royal Geographical Society. Mr. Bell discharged a task for which historical students are indebted to him, for, with a zeal and industry worthy of all praise, he placed within reach of the general reader facts that had long—in some cases, for centuries—been hid away in books not easily accessible to the public. But his treatise—which bears the appropriate title of "Our Northern Waters"—is much more than a series of gleanings in history. It treats not only of the discovery of the great bay, of the early controversies as to its possession, of the foundation and undertakings of the Hudson's Bay Company, and of the long record of voyages to and fro, but also of the resources of the shores, ocean waters and estuaries—minerals, fisheries, timber, game, including fur-bearing animals and birds of price—and gives a full and intelligible account of the meteorology of the region, with seasons of open-

ing and closing navigation. Meanwhile several other persons had been conducting investigations over the same ground; and the Dominion Parliament, in order to be in a position to give an authoritative reply to so many eager inquiries, appointed a Select Committee to take the whole subject into consideration, and in February, 1884, it began its labours. It was composed of the Hon. Mr. Royal, then member for St. Boniface, now Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, who moved the resolution, the Hon. J. J. C. (now Senator) Abbott, the late Hon. Thomas White, with Messrs. Dawson, Macmaster, Desjardins, and other influential members of the Commons. Dr. Bell, of the Geological Survey, Staff-Commander Boulton, R.N., Mr. Malcolm Macleod, barrister, whose father had resided for years on the Bay as one of the Company's officers, Dr. Walter Hayden, the Hon. Wm. Smith, Deputy Minister of Marine, C. J. Pusey, Esq., of New York, and a number of other gentlemen of official and practical experience as to the subject of inquiry, gave a mass of valuable evidence. The Deputy Minister of Marine presented a voluminous statement obtained from the log-books of the Hudson's Bay Company's vessels from 1870 to 1883 inclusive, and Mr. M. P. McElhinney, of the same department, furnished a careful commentary on the preceding data. The issue of these inquiries at Ottawa and Winnipeg was that Parliament voted \$100,000 for the purpose of fitting out an expedition to Hudson's Bay, which should be in part for exploration, in part for observation—a series of stations being established on the shores of the waters traversed. Lieut. A. R. Gordon, R.N., Assistant Superintendent of our Meteorological Service, was placed in command of the SS. *Nep-tune*, of the Newfoundland sealing fleet, a strong, barque-rigged vessel, built in 1873 at Dundee, of 684 tons gross (466 net), and pronounced in every way suitable for the work. She left Halifax on her mission, on the 22nd of July, 1884. On the 11th of October she was back in St. Johns, and soon after brief summaries of the voyage appeared in the leading papers. At a later date full and careful reports by Lieut. Gordon, the commander, and Dr. Bell, the geologist, of the expedition, were published, and Mr. Chas. R. Tuttle wrote and brought out an unofficial history—"Our North Land"—which covered 600 small quarto pages. All three agreed, in the main, that the terrors of the ice pack had been exaggerated, but the record of fresh experience did not materially change men's opinions as to the commercial value of the route. Those who had favoured it all along found confirmation in the report; those who had less faith in it remained unconvinced. In 1885 Lieut. Gordon made a second trip to the Bay to relieve the observers at the stations, and his report was published in an abstract in that of the Minister of Marine. The detailed account of the station observations was given to the world some months afterwards. They went to show that the ice set fast in the western end of the straits during the last week of October, 1884, and that for all practical purposes the straits remained closed at that point till the beginning of June, 1885. He concluded from the observations that the season of navigation would be rather less than four months. Sometimes, but rarely, the straits were clear in June, and there (as in more southern latitudes) was considerable variability in the dates of opening navigation. The weather at the stations during the winter was not nearly so severe as it had been expected that it would prove. The thermometer, in fact, had never gone so low as it does in the inhabited parts of the North-West.

During the last five years those who have had a practical interest in the question have gathered a good deal of additional information, and it is believed by the more enthusiastic that once the route is in operation, improvements in the construction of vessels for moving through floating ice masses, may be effected which will give a greater mastery over glacial impediments, and ultimately solve the problem of northern navigation. Never venture never have. It is by experiments that have at the time been deemed madness that the greatest victories of science have been won,