

"Mr. Green is now staying with us in camp, having returned from an expedition to the Great Lake with Messrs. Shelley and Bushe. He is just starting again with some of my brother officers, to shoot lions. He proposes returning towards the lake in April. All travelling in that part of the country is just now stopped by a disease which attacks the horses; even here they are dying of it every day. It seems epidemic, and carries them off very quickly. An animal, quite well in the morning, is dead before night: sometimes an hour or two after taken with it. It has the appearance of inflammation of the lungs, and is dreaded by the Boers and farmers as one of the worst scourges they are subject to."

XIII.—*Proposal for a Rapid Communication with the Pacific and the East, viâ British North America.* By Capt. M. H. SYNGE, R.E., F.R.G.S.

Read Jan. 12 and 26, 1852.

THE proposed communication consists of component parts, each of which is in itself complete and independent, opening a new and distinct feature of the country, and forming separately a profitable and reproductive work. Each part is characterised by these distinctive features, and by marks of superiority over competing routes, similar to those which distinguish the entire proposed inter-oceanic communication. Every part of the chain may, therefore, rely on its intrinsic merits, and is capable of separate execution. That execution would, however, be the most profitable, and for every reason the most desirable, which would most speedily open the country and effect the communication the whole way to the Pacific.

An examination of the globe shows that the entire route, as connecting Europe with the Pacific and the East, is shorter in proportion as it is *northerly*. Thus one through the United States is shorter than one through Central America; and one through British America, shorter than one through the United States. Equal facilities existing for crossing the respective transcontinental portions of these routes, it necessarily follows that the shortest can also be most quickly traversed. These and other important advantages belong equally to the several parts which form the route through British America. The comparison presents the same result through every link and feature; but the detailed examination of vast tracts of country which it would require, involves so many points of physical, special, and political geography, that to be at all adequately dealt with they must be treated as separate, though subordinate and related subjects.*

* It must suffice briefly to remark that no route can be carried out within the United States by similar natural advantages. That which is universally allowed to be the best that could be formed there, is longer by the inferior position of the Atlantic seaboard within their territories, and extends to the same termination of

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