

centuries have traversed in company the great plains of North America. There as elsewhere, Faith has been the trusty mediatrix between charity on the one hand, and on the other, ignorance and barbarism. Beyond the Rocky Mountains, then as now, lay between its mountainous girdle and the breakers of the Pacific, that pearl of the Dominion, the Province of British Columbia, more than 2000 miles away from the Provinces of the East. The whole Dominion overflowed with natural wealth; the soil was of surprising fertility; the population was sprung from two of the most highly gifted and most enterprising races in the world, and still, notwithstanding all these advantages, the country was declining. The Confederation seemed to be dying of poverty of blood and consequent lack of vitality! In 1871 the Commons of Canada had, with one voice, voted for the construction of a Canadian transcontinental railway. The preliminary studies for this gigantic undertaking had been promptly begun, and then, all at once, the political horizon grew dark and overcast, the central power changed hands, the works of the transcontinental line almost stood still and this delay was destined to retard for ten years the entrance of the country upon the path of progress. Whether or not the government of the day lacked confidence in itself, certain it is that the financial markets of Europe lacked confidence in the means at its disposal. The result was that when in 1878 the Conservatives resumed control of affairs, the work of the railway had hardly made any progress. The situation was most critical; the work