

friend. Consequently, sooner or later, the time will come when he will find it wise to resign. That time came in 1880, after the really heavy work in connection with the survey and much of the construction had been completed or arranged for. When he resigned he refused an office with equal salary and nominal work.

I have always held (1) that as the C.P.R. was a National undertaking it should have been built and operated by the Government, like the Intercolonial; (2) that the route by the Yellowhead Pass was and is the best known. Mr. Fleming as engineer, with a board of commissioners selected equally from both parties, would have had the confidence of the public; and it can be shown easily that a company cannot build or work such a road more economically than a Government. But both political parties were committed to the policy of construction by a company, and the public—either from profound distrust of the party system or from the somewhat immoral and mistaken fancy that the work might somehow be built and operated at other people's expense—clamoured for a company, and seemed to feel as happy—the people of Winnipeg in particular—when the great contract was ratified, as Mr. Micawber was accustomed to feel when he paid his debts with a note of hand. They are not quite so jubilant now, although the Government was wonderfully fortunate in the *personnel* of the company, of whom nothing but praise can be said, and the future will show still more clearly which policy was the wiser. However, even if a mistake was made, it is no use crying over spilt milk. Certainly the country got the road in one-half or one-fourth of the time in which it would have been built as a Government work. Whether that was wholly an advantage or not, the fact is undoubted.

Since 1880, Mr. Fleming has lived as busy and useful a life as ever, and he has now the satisfaction of being able to devote himself to congenial work without the worry and pressure that is always connected with the public service and political exigencies. He has received honours in abundance from all quarters. Last year Columbia College and University, New York, bestowed on him the Degree of LL.D. in connection with the celebration of its Centennial. In 1880 he was elected Chancellor of Queen's by a majority vote; in 1883 he was re-elected unanimously, a second candidate withdrawing before the day of election; in 1886 no one else was proposed for the office, and so far no one else has been spoken of for 1889. In 1884 he was appointed to represent the Dominion at the International Prime Meridian Conference called by the President of the United States to meet at Washington. There, the representatives of the civilized world adopted the views which he had been long pressing on learned societies with regard to cosmic time and a prime meridian for all nations.

For many years he has devoted thought and money to the question of cable communication between the Mother Country and the Australias through Canada, and at the great conference held last year in London of the representatives of the Mother Country and all the Colonies that are under responsible government, he had the best possible opportunity of entering into details on the subject, and of pressing it on the attention of the public men of the Empire. Sir Alexander Campbell and himself were the representatives of Canada, and on the 6th of May last the Conference agreed to these two propositions:—1st. "That the connection recently formed through Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by railway and telegraph opens a new and alternative line of Imperial communication over the high seas and through British possessions which promises to be of great value alike in naval, military, commercial, and political aspects. 2ndly. That the connection of Canada with Australasia by direct submarine telegraph across the Pacific is a project of high importance to the Empire, and every doubt as to its practicability should without delay be set at rest by a thorough and exhaustive survey."

Like Cæsar, who made campaigns and wrote their history, Sandford Fleming has not only built great works, but has written reports and histories concerning them, characterized by clearness and freshness of style, and accuracy and fulness of detail. His latest book, *England and Canada, or from Old to New Westminster*, has been very favourably noticed by all the best reviews. It, and the *History of the Intercolonial*, are good specimens of his literary work.

I have left myself no space to speak of Mr. Fleming as a man, and it is just as well. While we live, the public is entitled to see only one side of our natures and lives. It is enough to say that those who know him best trust him most. They rely both on his character and his judgment. His brain takes time to work, but it works strongly and surely as a steam engine. Listening respectfully, never dogmatizing, "he is always yielding but never yields," as a shrewd judge of character once remarked. He is true as steel to the country and to those whom he believes worthy of friendship, and my faith is that Canada and the whole English-speaking race has yet something more to gain from his abilities and his thoroughly unselfish devotion.

G. M. GRANT.

By the use of his electric microscope and of silver bromide plates Professor Stricker is enabled to get very fine photographs of living bacteria and other moving cells. He has taken photographs of living white blood-corpuscles with high-power lenses, which showed clearly and distinctly the network-like structure of those bodies.

STEEL lace is a novelty. The lace looks as fine as any Brussels lace, and is equally soft to the touch. "This," said the gentleman who showed the specimens, "is only an experiment, and was turned out of a small Pittsburg mill, and sent to me to show what can be done in that line. In the course of time other patterns will be made, heavier, perhaps, but certainly more tenacious than this piece."—*Court Journal*.

LONDON LETTER.

PICTURE to yourself a great room, three parts unoccupied. At the farther end, facing the door, stands an empty throne, in front of which sit on a long bench the five Lord High Commissioners robed in brilliant scarlet trimmed with gold. Beyond the glittering mace, the Great Seal in its gorgeous embroidered purse, the red round ottoman technically termed the Woolsack. By the side of a square table laden with books and adorned with a silver and tortoise-shell box enshrining the parchment commission, black gowned clerks write, heeding no whispering voice, scarcely looking up from their task through the long half-hour in which we have been patiently waiting in our places for the performance to begin. Two bishops in flowing canonical garments and full white sleeves rustle quickly in, taking their seats bashfully under the fire of every eye in the House near to the handful of peers who alone represent their Order this fine Spring morning. Above the gallery-clock the crowd stirs restlessly: we on the sacred leather benches read our papers and books, or wile away the time idly conjecturing why the place is so empty, and why the faithful Commons are so long in coming. At last my neighbour who has been vainly trying to rivet her attention on the pages of *Richard Feveril* shuts the volume and turns her face with suspicious alacrity to the doors which, swinging wide open, admit a disorderly crowd of men with the Speaker and his Chaplain in their midst. These all group under the gallery, and against the Bar of the House, and above them shine in the stained glass windows Maclise's figures of Chivalry and Law. Then the Speaker bows—being pressed for room he accomplishes this ungracefully—to the five red-robed gentlemen who take off their three-cornered *chapeaux bras* in answer to his salutation, and Mr. Slingsby Bethel, Clerk of the Table, opens the proceedings by reading rapidly the parchment Commission, and then from Lord Halsbury, our Chancellor, at last we hear Her Majesty's gracious words. We are at peace with foreign powers: our recent government of the Sister Island is so far satisfactory. Chivalry and Law, looking down on the Irish Members, are doubtless wondering if these comfortable sentences are being taken to heart: but Law and Chivalry can make nothing of the expressions on the faces of those gentlemen, who at this moment are staring at the quaint figure of the Chancellor sitting squarely, his three cornered hat pushed well to the back of his horse-hair wig. Lord Halsbury has a delightful voice—a great charm this—and most of us pay more attention to the sound than the sense, I am afraid; for when the speech is finished, and bowing anew, the Speaker and his followers retire backwards from our august presence, I hear many a whisper of "What was it all about?" The Lord High Commissioners leave their seats, and preceded by Sergeant-at-Arms and Purse-bearer sweep slowly past, a grand procession indeed, so gorgeous as to make the most democratic among us wish ourselves for once Peers of the Realm. But when the red and gold garments are flung aside, and ordinary looking gentlemen (scarlet butterflies metamorphosed into brown moths) come swiftly out from the Robing Room behind the throne, we hardly recognize those whom but now we gazed on with reverence, and we push past those dark coats and tall hats unscrupulously, whereas if their wearers were still habited in cardinal—who echoes Falstaff's curious dislike of that colour?—they should have made a Royal progress through the great room. In the fresco-decorated lobbies leading to the Commons there are quantities of people watching for this person or that, as their politics direct, and as I loiter past them into the silent half-dark Westminster Hall (in which the public has not been allowed since the dynamite outrage), I listen to all sorts of gossip, most of which you have heard by now in some form or other. But I was told of a custom, as old as the time of the Plantagenets and a question of privilege, with which you may be unfamiliar. The door leading to the Lower House is locked on the first day of Parliament, and the official sent by the Queen or her proxy to summon the Commons must knock three times before he is admitted within the sacred precincts, even though he be the bearer of a Royal message.

Westminster Hall is half full of shadows, and dreary and deserted now, but these venerable walls and high-pitched roof (tempe Richard II., says my antiquarian guide) have seen stranger sights. They remember a certain May day, what time Sir Thomas More was brought from the Tower and sentenced to death here: they looked down on Guy Fawkes and his companions through that week in January during which the Gunpowder Plot conspirators suffered trial for their treason: they have heard King Charles the First disputing on a point of law with his judges: have listened to Stratford's truthful tones, to evil-faced Mohun's protestations of innocence, to the voice of Warren Hastings and the answers of his accusers during the long years (was it not seven?) of the trial. Pepys comes striding in, dressed in his best, to turn over the books on the stalls lining the hall, and little Miss Burney nestles and chatters in her place, armed with a ticket of admission from the "sweet Queen," ready to take notes of Burke's speech or Fox's, for the subsequent edification of Her Majesty and the princesses; and a handsome lad with long auburn hair, who calls himself Boz, and who has bought the *Monthly Magazine* in the Strand, finding one of his sketches accepted, has "turned in here for half an hour, because his eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street and were not fit to be seen there." These, and many more, people this immense dim space with their well-known figures. Protector Richard Cromwell stares about him with his pockets full of law papers, and his heart full of hate for the daughters who are striving to rob him of that Essex manor which stands still, a ruinous farm, not far from the original of Trollope's *Small House at Allington*: the wraiths of Balmerino, Cromartie, Kilmarnock, Lovat, haunt the scene of their trials. Lord Ferrars, hanged at Tyburn in the pearl-gray satin suit he wore on