

under the title of "The Mineral Wealth of British Columbia." A brief outline of the valuable data embodied in that work was given in our issue of the 8th of June.

While the Government was thus attending to the political organization of British Columbia and taking steps to ascertain its multifarious resources, the question of defences was not forgotten. In taking over so vast a tract of country and so long a range of coast, the Dominion authorities assumed no slight responsibility. In the summer of 1872, Col. P. Robertson Ross, then commanding the militia of Canada, proceeded, in accordance with instructions, to make an overland journey of reconnaissance to the Northwest Territories and British Columbia. The account of the journey, on which the organization of the militia in the western province was afterwards based, appeared in the Report on the State of the Militia for the year 1872. Col. Robertson Ross's story of his experiences is interesting for the contrast which the events and scenes described offer to the state of things that prevails at the present day. He travelled first via Lake Superior and the Dawson route to Manitoba, and then crossed the continent, through Canadian territory, to the Pacific coast and Vancouver Island. He tarried some time in Manitoba for the purpose of inspecting the force there—the authorized strength of which was 300 infantry, but which actually only reached the figure of 243 of all ranks. The Colonel made several suggestions for the maintenance of a body of mounted men in the Northwest—a suggestion which subsequently took the form of the Mounted Police. The knowledge then obtainable regarding the Indians was very vague, and some uneasiness was caused at several points in the journey by alarms of hostilities. The Rocky Mountains were crossed via Wild Horse Creek. On his way over the Plains, the Colonel anticipated the verdict of later travellers as to the character of the country, to the value of which he was not insensible. Great herds of buffalo were still to be seen on the approaches to the mountains. Smuggling was common, and the illicit traffic in liquor had demoralized the Indians and endangered the lives of the sparse white residents.

It is needless to say that, though the recent admission of British Columbia to the Dominion gave a special interest to his mission, Col. Robertson Ross was not by any means the first who crossed the continent to the Pacific coast. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir George Simpson, Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle and others had already preceded him to the same goal. But the most interesting of all overland explorations—from the standpoint of British Columbia's settlement, progress and connection with the Dominion—was that of the emigrant party which, by the Leather or Yellow Head Pass, made their way over the mountains in 1862. The emigrants, about 150 in all, separated into two divisions on starting from Fort Garry—the first, which was also the larger, setting out a week before the others by the northern trail to Edmonton; the second taking the south trail. At Edmonton the most of them changed their horses for oxen, a few of which they killed in the mountains for provisions. Of the remainder, some were sold to Indians, others were rafted down the Fraser to the Forks of the Quesnel. A portion of the party took their horses with them (fourteen) to British Columbia. The party, including a woman and three children, passed successfully from the valley of the Athabasca to that of the Fraser, reaching the latter by the Miette in September, and thence continued on their journey till

their destination was reached. In these days, when the journey can be made with ease and comfort in less time than what was once required to travel from Quebec to Toronto, the perseverance and energy of the pioneers of 1862 ought to be honourably remembered.

JAPAN'S DEVELOPMENT.

In the fall of 1890 our neighbours across the Pacific, the Japanese, will witness the inauguration of a political experiment, on which will depend the destinies of their country for generations to come. As our readers are aware, the new constitution, according them a Legislature, with the implied rights, was proclaimed in February last. The National Assembly buildings are now in course of erection, and the first Parliament of Japan will be convened in the autumn of next year. When it is recalled that only thirty-five years have elapsed since Japan broke away from the tyranny of self-imposed seclusion, that had prevailed for centuries, and entered into treaty relations with the Powers of the West, this adoption of the system of representative government must seem one of the most extraordinary developments of an age of surprises. Naturally, we are wont to attribute to intercourse with the western nations—England and the United States, France and Germany—the changes that have since overtaken the political as well as the industrial and commercial life of our eastern neighbours. Nevertheless, Dr. W. E. Griffiss, who has had every opportunity of being well informed on the subject, asserts that this view of Japan's recent progress—especially in the province of politics—is based on a misapprehension, and that, even if we allow for the influence which the powerful civilized nations of the Occident must have exerted on the course of Japan's political thought, the tendency to advance along the new lines was already in existence, and that the revolution was at hand even without the impulse from without. In other words, Japan which, after China, presents the most venerable example of unbroken progress in the world, had, without suggestion from the West, wrought out its own evolution till it was ripe for the last great upheaval and the ensuing reforms.

As in other countries, there has been an ebb and flow,—the tide of progress now advancing, now receding. First, according to Mr. Griffiss, there was a kind of rude feudalism, which, about A.D. 600, became a centralized monarchy with boards of administration. This was changed about the year 1200 into the duarchy, with its elaborate feudal system, which lasted till the uprising of 1868. Since then the internal movement has been stimulated, and, to a considerable extent, directed by forces from outside. Japanese progress has had the advantage of being many-sided—art, literature, science, religious reverence and patriotism, contributing each its share to the onward movement. The arbitrary control of the usurpation, which kept the Empire as a whole in a state of bondage, did not prevent the many communities that composed it—which were practically aristocratic republics—from cultivating the faculties of an ingenious and ambitious people. The "masses" were, it is true, kept in a degraded state, from which they could not rise so long as the traditional despotism continued. But the number of educated persons was larger in proportion to the population than that of the same class under the feudal regime in Europe, so that, though repressed, thought was

not inactive; and, when the chance showed itself, it was translated into action. The presence of foreigners gave an impetus to the national aspirations; but that the first demand of the victorious insurgents was for a parliament, proves that the idea of representative institutions was not entirely new in Japan. Mr. Griffiss, whose article in the *Forum* is well worth reading by those who are interested in the strivings of "Young Japan," dwells upon this fact of its continuous development as a ground of hope for the working of the new constitution. "If," he says, "the new growth were merely a borrowed exotic, transplanted from Europe to Asia, it would be sure to wither like house-top grass. Since, however, its tap-roots lie in all the past, and its central principles take hold on all that is best in the national history, we cannot but be hopeful. The word has gone forth and cannot be recalled. There is no retreat and motion must be forward. As true as it is homely is the native proverb, 'The decree of the Emperor is like perspiration; it never goes back.'" There is no authority on Japan whose opinion is more worthy of respect than that of Mr. Griffiss. We have, therefore, reason to trust that his forecast will not be disappointed. The progress, peace and prosperity of Japan are of considerable importance to Canada, and we shall await with no slight interest the result of the great experiment.

THE KINGDOM OF FIFE.

Now that an Earl of Fife has married the eldest daughter of the Prince of Wales, the traditional name of the county from which he takes his title will be more in vogue than ever. The following passage from the pen of Robert Louis Stevenson tells us something about old Fifeshire towns:—

The Kingdom of Fife (that royal province) may by the curious be observed on the map, occupying a tongue of land between the firths of Forth and Tay. It may be continually seen from many parts of Edinburgh (among the rest, from the windows of my father's house) dying away into the distance and the easterly *haar* with one smoky sea-side town beyond another, or in winter printing on the gray heaven some glittering hill-tops. It has no beauty to recommend it, being a low, sea-salted, wind-vexed promontory; trees very rare, except (on the east coast) along the dens of rivers; the fields were cultivated, I understand, but not lovely to the eye. It is of the coast I speak: the interior may be the garden of Eden. History broods over that part of the world like the easterly *haar*. Even on the map, its long row of Gaelic place-names bear testimony to an old and settled race. Of these little towns, posted along the shore as close as sedges, each with its bit of harbour, its old weather-beaten church or public building, its flavour of decayed prosperity and decaying fish, not one but has its legend, quaint or tragic: Dunfermline, in whose royal towers the king may be still observed (in the ballad) drinking the blood-red wine; somnolent Inverkeithing, once the quarantine of Leith; Aberdour, hard by the monastic islet of Inchcolm, hard by Donibristle where the "bonny face was spoiled;" Burntisland where, when Paul Jones was off the coast, the reverend Mr. Shirra had a table carried between tide-marks, and publicly prayed against the rover at the pitch of his voice in his broad lowland dialect; Kinghorn, where Alexander "brak's neckbane" and left Scotland to the English wars; Kirkaldy, where the witches once prevailed extremely and sunk tall ships and honest mariners in the North sea; Dysart, famous—well famous at least to me for the Dutch ships that lay in its harbour, painted like toys and with pots of flowers and cages of song-birds in the cabin windows, and for one particular Dutch skipper who would sit all day in slippers on the break of the poop, smoking a long German pipe; Wemyss (pronounce Weems) with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone, on his flight from Culloden, passed a night of superstitious terrors.