

enthusiasm, we cannot say; perhaps he was satisfied to suffer, in fulfilment of the superb ambition of opening up a continent to commerce.

The corn merchant had got upon his hobby, and could have talked all night about the rail and its prospects in Canada. 'The progress of the Province outstrips all sober calculation,' said he. 'Population has increased twelve hundred per cent. within the last forty years; wherever the rail touches the ground, an agricultural peasantry springs up. Push it through the very wilderness, say I; there is no surer means of filling our waste places with industrial life; and the Pacific should be our terminus.'

This design has ceased to be thought extravagant, since Professor Hind's explorations have proved the existence of a fertile belt across the continent, through British territory, from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains; along which, if speedily and wisely opened up, must travel the commerce of China and Japan, as well as the gold of Columbia. The nation which constructs this line will, by its means, hold the sceptre of the commercial world. Brother Jonathan is well aware of the fact, and would long since have run a chain of locomotives from Atlantic to Pacific if he could; but thousands of miles of the great American desert intervene, and along the western seaboard there is no port fit for the vast trade, from Acapulco to Esquimalt on Vancouver's Island, except San Francisco, which, for other reasons, is incapacitated.

Grinding, crushing, heaving, the broad current of the St. Lawrence bore its great burden all night along. The same might continue for many days; and Sam Holt was anxious to get home. He determined, in