

roads—one at the South, the other at the north—are necessary, socially and commercially; for by two roads so placed, the markets of Japan, China and the Amoor, will be brought nearer to us by many days' sail than it is possible for one road to bring them. This may sound paradoxical; yet I hope, before I am done, to explain the paradox to your satisfaction.

Let us first consider the importance of two roads in their military aspect. Vancouver Island commands the shores of Washington and Oregon; and whether the terminus of the Northern road be at Puget Sound or at the mouth of the Columbia river, the munitions sent there could be used for no other part of the coast, for Vancouver overlooks them.

They could not, on account of Vancouver in its military aspects, be sent from the northern terminus to San Francisco and the South; nor could the Southern road—supposing only one, and that at the South—send supplies in war from its terminus, whether at San Diego or San Francisco, by sea either to Oregon or Washington. Vancouver would prevent, for Vancouver commands their coasts as completely as England commands those of France on the Atlantic. So complete is this military curtain that you never heard of France on the Atlantic sending succor by sea to France on the Mediterranean, or the reverse in a war with England. The straits of Puen are as close as the Straits of Gibraltar.

In preparing for the national defences on the Pacific, this fact, and the fact that Vancouver Island is in the hands of a foreign power, are well calculated to impress peculiar features upon any system that may be adopted.

But I promised to explain why two roads, one at the South, the other at the North, will bring the markets of Asia much nearer to us than either road, singly, would make them.

Before, however, I go into that explanation, let us clear away some of the obstacles which error has placed in the way of a northern route to the Pacific.

Most men of our age were educated under the belief that parallels of latitude and terrestrial climates are correlatives; that we might tell the temperature of any unknown country or region of country, if we knew its latitude.

Humboldt and Dove exploded this idea with their isothermal lines. For example, they show that the mean annual temperature of North Cape, lat.  $70^{\circ}$  in Europe, is the same as that along the north shore of Lake Superior, in lat.  $50^{\circ}$ . Here is a difference of  $20^{\circ}$  of lat., without any difference in the average annual temperature of the two places.

There is a difference in the length of day and night at the two places, and so far as climate is affected by difference in the length of day and night, climate is to that extent, and no farther, an affair of latitude. But with differences in length of day and night, the relations between climate and latitude cease. The thermometer and hydrometer then become the true exponents of climate. Every region, indeed, tells the whole story of its climate by its flora.

Let us get rid then of our old notions concerning the relations of latitude and climate, and with unbiased minds lay out this north temperate zone, which we inhabit, into thermal bands, and then study the flora of these bands. After we shall have done this, then I think we will be able to agree, at least among ourselves, as to the necessity of two routes to the Pacific. Moreover we can select those routes that will be the best agriculturally and commercially; and when we shall finish with this investigation, you will find that these two routes lie exactly where the best plan of national defense requires them—the Northern route commencing at the western boundary of Minnesota and going to Puget's Sound, with a branch in the course of time, to the mouth of the Columbia—the Southern route commencing at El Paso in Texas, and going thence to San Diego and San Francisco.

Commercial and  
South.

the City of Saint  
the Room of the  
commander M. F.  
Washington.) upon

requested to furnish  
n of the Chamber  
ritten.

Jan. 21, 1859.

of the Saint  
Maury's letter  
of a private nature,  
written in the course  
of a conversation.  
I confidently  
attribute author. Its  
value to be allowed  
not say, with safety,  
wherein presented, with  
the whole question so

ROBERTSON.  
of Commerce.

WASHINGTON.  
January 4, 1859.

simple. Railroad or no  
vote of the nation.  
I have had any doubt  
road.

railways, there has been  
that no one route has as  
of its rivals, and I do

roads—one at the North,  
a defence. At least two