

convinced of its importance, and foreses its manifest destiny. *There is a great inland sea stretching up 200 miles from Cape Flattery, studded with fertile islands, surrounded by pine-covered heights, and nearer, by 800 miles, to China than San Francisco—and nearer, also, to New York. Instead of sage-bush desert and salt plains, there is a fertile belt, under which lies a bed of miocene coal, stretching all the way from Illinois to Washington Territory. Let any one consider the increasing commerce with China, of which we have merely tasted the first-fruits, and acquaint himself with the character of the country behind it, and he will perceive why so much attention has been directed to this part of the republic; he will be satisfied of the wisdom manifested in preserving intact the boundary line which terminates so near it, and discern a reason for the present anxiety to push through the Northern Pacific Railway.*

If ocean steam is ever to become on the Pacific what it has been on the Atlantic—if our relations with Eastern Asia are ever to be what they have been with Western Europe (and why should they not?)—the Puget Sound must become one of the centres of the world's commerce. Ship-building lags in the East, through the difficulty and expense of importing lumber. The United States have never taken the proper position of a great commercial country in this industry. Survey all their coasts, and say where is its natural home. Where can safe harbors be most easily found? Where is timber the most abundant and of easiest access? The eye will at once rest upon the Puget Sound, with its endless windings and openings into the land—with its sheltering islands, and numerous natural harbors, where land, covered by the finest spars of the world, can still be had for the mere pre-emption. The writer has often passed up and down on its unruffled surface, and never did his eye sweep along its bays and pine-clad hills without his feeling something of its coming glory, and wishing to be spared for ten or twenty years to perceive the ships at anchor where now the whir of the duck alone breaks in upon the silence of the bay—to see the wretched "rancheree," where these Indians wallow in filth and lust, transformed into a smiling village—to realize that these shanties of the lumbermen and whisky saloons have become large cities. This impression was greatly confirmed last summer, when he accompanied the Hon. Mr. Seward and his family along the sound. The citizens at all the lumbering-mills and small cities gave right royal welcome to the "old man eloquent," and called for an address. He appeared to have looked through the present, and seized only upon the future. His mind was filled with *that*—the issue of what he saw; for he never addressed them as lumbermen or saw-drivers—he addressed them uniformly as ship-builders. He saw in their saw-dust streets and rude cabins the beginnings of the things that were to be. For as yet but few vessels have been built on the sound, and, at

the time, there was not one on the stocks any where.

That there will be a Northern Pacific Railway terminating somewhere at or near the Puget Sound is certain. The only question is, whether it will be on American or British Territory. The English are not blind to the advantages of the northern route, and are anxious to gain them for themselves. The imperial policy is to unite the North British possessions into one confederation before the feeling of annexation becomes stronger. British Columbia, the colony on the Pacific, insists upon a railway as one of the conditions. Already a company has been formed, and application made at Ottawa for a grant of alternate sections of land along the route proposed. There can be but one northern railway: which shall it be? One that will stretch through the more fertile northern belt, leading up a population to settle on the boundaries, and consolidating American interests, or a railway supported by British capital, and managed in British interests, building up a rival domain on the continent?

On the supposition that it will be American, we give this sketch of the region around the terminal point. We do not propose to discuss the merits of rival claimants, and having neither lot nor plot in any of the proposed locations for the "big cities of the future," give the result of observations during four years' residence near this Mediterranean of the Pacific, but more particularly during a holiday trip last summer with the "Seward party."

In July last Allan Francis, Esq., United States Consul at Victoria, Vancouver Island, a beautiful little British city that looks across to the Puget Sound, gave out that "Seward will be here on his way to Alaska." We hurried up, and prepared a suit of rooms and a reception for him. British and American citizens vied with each other in doing him honor. At last the big ship made its appearance in Esquimaux Harbor, near the city, having on board the Hon. W. H. Seward, F. W. Seward, Esq., and Mrs. Seward; A. Fitch, Esq., William Von Smythe, and Judge S. C. Hastings. This harbor is reckoned the third best in the world, the first being Rio Janeiro, and the second San Francisco. To greet him there was a good Western rush. If he could have eaten a hundred dinners, or drunk a thousand drinks, they were ready for him. As it was, in the evening he spoke a few words on the recent "ice purchase," which he was going up to look at and lay quietly by. Captain Blinn and a few other proprietors of the lumber-mills on the sound were in Victoria, and proposed a "trip up the sound." They chartered the steamer *Wilson G. Hunt*, and we started from Victoria on one of the loveliest July mornings. For you must understand that the climate of this region is equaled only by the richness and beauty of the scenery. From April till October there are clear skies and sunny days. The