

that of the through traffic ; for no road could traverse a more unpropitious region. The fertile prairie stretches westward from the Missouri for only about 150 miles ; but this past, the train hurries for hundreds of miles through a wilderness of stunted grass, which heretofore has supported only buffalo herds and antelopes, and is still so solitary that the timid little deer stand and gaze wonderingly at the passing trains. But the road is developing an industry for its own support even in this the American Desert ; for the herbage sufficient to nourish a buffalo will support an ox or a sheep ; and now, therefore, that transport is offered for the cattle, graziers and sheep-farmers are replacing the wild by tame kine. After crossing the plains the scene for over a thousand miles is even more desolate ; high and bare mountain ridges and bleak plateaux, abandoned to the antelope, are traversed. But at the base of the mountains, a road from the South brings up from Denver the gold and silver ores and furnace stuff of Colorado, and in the mountain another branch supplies the main line with the mineral treasures of Utah ; while, ere the road reaches the Pacific slope it has obtained for transport the bulk of the \$16,000,000 of the precious metals mined annually in Nevada, as well as contributions from Wyoming, Idaho and Oregon. Altogether, 10,000 tons of ore pass monthly over the line, and yet its full effects on the mining interests of the region are only beginning to be felt ; for it takes many a year for the full development of that class of mines, whose success, owing to the low price of the metals they yield, or the low percentage of their ore, depends on cheap carriage.

About as far north of the Union and Central line as it is north of the Texas, is being surveyed and constructed the Northern Pacific R.R. ; and it, moreover, will run almost as near the Canadian border as the Southern will approach the Mexican frontier.

The eastern terminus of the road is Duluth,—a town springing up at the extreme west end of Lake Superior ; but from Duluth a road is under construction along the south shore of Lake Superior to connect at Sault Ste. Marie with the railway system of Canada, whenever that shall be extended so far ; and another is built to St. Paul on the Mississippi, to incorporate the Northern Pacific with the entire circle of southern and eastern roads. Duluth is, however, the natural terminus, as thence, during the summer months, water transport to many parts of the States, to the sea and all parts of Canada, may be effected through the chain of the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and the canals connecting the great water thoroughfare with the Ohio and the Hudson.

From Duluth the road runs for 100 miles or so through the forest of Minnesota before it enters the fertile prairie which skirts the Red River. It crosses this river at the prospective city of Fargo, 242 miles from Duluth, and 150 miles south of Pembina, on the Canadian frontier. Here it was intended by the Pembina branch to tap the trade of the Canadian North-west Territory and of the Hudson Bay. Onward from Fargo the line will run through the prairie of Dakota, land somewhat more fertile than the arid plains to the south ; over the coteau of the Missouri ; across the northern tributaries of that apparently interminable stream, traversing the main river near Fort Rice ; and, after crossing several of the smaller southern tributaries of the Missouri in the next 150 miles, it will enter the valley of the Yellowstone. This valley it will ascend for several hundred miles into the recesses of the mountains of Montana, where a favourable pass, only 4950 feet high, approachable by easy grades from the east, is said to give access, on the western slope of the mountain, to the valley of the Columbia, which it will follow to the Pacific at Portland, a branch running north to the better harbour of Bellingham on Puget Sound.