

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

(CONTINUED.)

(From McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary.)

Another new regulation is of such obvious and unquestionable utility, that it is surprising it was not long ago adopted. By the old law, all articles, the produce of Asia, Africa and America, could only be imported directly in a British ship from the place of their production. This law had been repealed in so far as respected the United States, whose ships were allowed to import their produce directly into this country; but it was maintained with respect to Asia, Africa and South America. And hence, although a British ship happened to find, in South American, African, or Asiatic ports, articles, the produce of one or more of the other quarters of the globe suitable for our markets, and which it might have been extremely advantageous for her to complete her cargo, she was prohibited from taking them on board, under penalty of forfeiture and confiscation, not only of the goods, but also of the ship. This regulation has been repealed; and it is now lawful for British ships to take on board all articles, the importation of which is not prohibited, on meeting with them in any Asiatic, African, or American port. Lord Wallace originally intended to extend the principle to European ports, or to make it lawful for British ships to import all non-prohibited articles from wherever they might find them. But it was supposed by some, that foreign ships might be more cheaply navigated than ours; and that foreigners, taking advantage of this circumstance, would import the Asiatic, African, and American products required for our consumption into the contiguous continental ports, and would consequently restrict the employment of British ships in the carriage thence. We believe that these apprehensions were, in a great measure, visionary. But the law is so contrived as to avoid even the possibility of danger on this head; such of the products of Asia, Africa, and America, as are required for home consumption, being, with a few trifling exceptions, inadmissible from Europe; and only admissible when they are imported in British ships, or in ships of the country or place of which the goods are the produce, and from which they are brought. The only exceptions to this rule are articles from Asiatic and African Turkey imported from the Levant, and ballion.

Besides the restrictive regulations already alluded to, it had been a part of our policy to encourage the employment of our shipping, by imposing higher duties on commodities imported into our harbours in foreign vessels, than were imposed on them when imported in British vessels; and it had always been customary to charge foreign vessels with higher port and light-house duties, &c. This system was always loudly complained of by foreigners; but we had little difficulty in maintaining it so long as the state of our manufactures enabled us to disregard the retaliatory measures of other powers. But the extraordinary increase that took place since the commencement of the late war, in our manufactures for foreign consumption, and the necessity under which we were, in consequence placed, of conciliating our customers abroad, led to the adoption of the reciprocity system. This system was first introduced with the United States. After the North American colonies had succeeded in establishing their independence, they set about framing a code of navigation laws on the model of those of this country. Among other regulations of a restrictive character, it was enacted, that all foreign vessels trading to the United States should pay half a dollar, which was afterwards raised to a dollar, per ton duty, beyond what was paid by American ships; and further, that goods imported in foreign vessels should pay a duty of 10 per cent. over and above what was payable on the same description of goods imported in American vessels.

The law was avowedly directed against the navigation of Great Britain; though as it was bottomed on the very same principles as our navigation laws, we could not openly complain of its operation. Under these circumstances it would have been sound policy to have at once proposed an accommodation; and instead of attempting to meet retaliation by retaliation, to have offered to modify our navigation law, in so far as American shipping was concerned, on condition of the Americans making reciprocal modifications in our favour. A different course, was, however, followed. Various devices were fallen upon to counteract the navigation system of the Americans, without in any degree relaxing our own: but they all failed of their object; and at length it became obvious to every one that we had engaged in an unequal struggle, and that the real effect of our policy was to give a bounty on the importation of the manufactured goods of other countries into the United States, and thus gradually to exclude both our manufactures and our ships from the ports of the Republic. In consequence, the conviction of the necessity of making changes gained ground progressively; and it was ultimately fixed, by the commercial treaty agreed upon between Great Britain and the United States in 1855, that in future equal charges should be imposed on the ships of either country in the ports of the other, and that equal duties should be laid upon all articles, the produce of the one country imported into the other, whether such importation were effected in the ships of the one or the other.

The new States of South America were naturally anxious to establish a commercial marine; and, to forward their views in this respect, they contemplated enacting navigation laws. But this intention was frustrated by the interference of the British Government, who, without stipulating for any peculiar advantage, wisely offered to admit their ships to our ports on a fair footing of reciprocity, or on their paying the same charges as our own ships, on condition that they admitted British ships into their ports on a similar footing. Commercial treaties framed on this sound and liberal principle have since been entered into with most of these States.

The principle of the reciprocity system having been thus conceded in the case of the intercourse with the United States, whose commercial marine is second only to that of Great Britain, it was not possible to refuse acting on the same principle in the case of such European countries as might choose to admit our ships to their ports on a footing of equality.

CANALS OF NEW YORK.

We have prepared from official sources the following table of the Commerce of the Canals for the present season. It presents a very gratifying result of the year's business, and exhibits in strong colours the wealth of our State and the West.

Accompanying the table showing the movement from and to the Hudson for the present season, is a similar one for the movement for the season of 1845.

It will be seen that there is an increase in the tonnage of 172,579 tons, and of \$14,826,461 in the value of the property transported, and the excess both in tonnage and value over previous years is still greater.

The value of the entire movement property from and to the Hudson, is greater by \$1,490,353, than the exports of the United States for the fiscal year ending July, 1844, and greater by \$7,237,815 than the value of the goods imported into the United States for the same time.

These facts speak volumes in favour of the importance of this Commerce, not only to the State, but in a national point of view, as worthy the attention of the General Government.

Statement of the Property which came to the Hudson River on all the Canals in 1845 and 1846, with the quantity and estimated value of each article in Albany and Troy:

	THE FOREST.		QUANTITY.		VALUE.	
	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.
Furs and Peltry...lb..	706,794	817,150			\$873,137	1,021,355
Boards & Scaatl. ft...	237,921,956	250,336,271			4,011,720	4,422,936
Shingles.....M..	72,120	69,822			234,390	255,378
Timber.....ft..	2,492,668	1,798,193			498,535	251,006
Staves.....lb..	139,754,800	106,152,590			688,898	1,513,432
Wood.....cords..	17,696	11,832			86,258	59,160
Ashes.....bbls..	63,668	46,812			1,393,360	1,076,904

AGRICULTURE.		QUANTITY.		VALUE.		
	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.
Pork.....bbls..	45,453	80,093			\$571,673	800,925
Beef....." "	67,699	45,600			507,743	364,800
Bacon.....lb...	1,634,700	4,000,500			118,299	290,032
Cheese....." "	27,512,861	35,560,118			1,921,000	2,844,537
Butter....." "	21,825,455	21,477,657			3,055,564	3,229,633
Lard....." "	3,061,200	6,721,000			215,184	498,810
Wool....." "	9,504,039	8,885,376			2,916,252	2,571,415
Hides....." "	293,009	310,300			36,627	42,613
Flour.....bbls..	2,517,250	3,063,411			11,021,091	15,480,271
Wheat.....bush..	1,620,033	2,950,636			1,911,869	3,666,141
Rye....." "	157,438	321,790			111,102	932,304
Corn....." "	35,293	1,610,119			21,179	1,126,854
Barley....." "	1,137,917	1,427,953			671,371	813,933
Other Grain....." "	1,294,609	1,929,800			491,951	719,474
Bran & Ship Stuffs " "	1,067,665	1,463,232			160,550	220,181
Peas and Beans... " "	66,176	99,800			70,115	95,800
Potatoes....." "	115,596	230,939			58,076	114,686
Dried Fruit.....lb..	369,960	1,592,900			32,477	135,261
Cotton....." "	66,800	415,100			5,177	34,495
Tobacco....." "	670,900	2,609,100			89,588	393,022
Clover & Grass Sds " "	3,161,200	1,091,400			221,244	76,608
Flax Seed....." "	8,303,960	5,237,700			166,079	131,943
Hops....." "	874,200	1,690,500			157,356	185,955

MANUFACTURES.		QUANTITY.		VALUE.		
	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.
Domestic Spirits, gals..	1,588,601	1,426,659			\$114,800	313,690
Leather.....lb..	15,363,925	5,160,564			2,765,507	923,918
Furniture....." "	2,561,624	2,226,114			256,162	223,161
Bar and Pig Lead... " "	223,500	409,800			8,940	19,592
Pig Iron....." "	8,031,218	10,574,740			140,516	182,562
Bloom and Bar Iron " "		10,892,213				265,224
Iron Ware....." "	4,665,383	1,219,091			186,615	46,530
Domestic Woollens... " "	1,879,446	2,324,741			1,910,029	1,953,329
Domestic Cottons... " "	1,579,446	2,347,741			58,628	719,797
Salt....." "	172,963	69,442			147,023	18,035
Merchandise....." "	595,788	3,594,322			88,497	276,372

OTHER ARTICLES.		QUANTITY.		VALUE.		
	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.
Stone, Lime, Clay, lb..	55,341,593	44,200,033			\$83,607	63,170
Gypsum....." "	12,264,800	12,084,100			27,006	26,933
Mineral Coal....." "	47,798,200	18,846,600			119,195	47,116
Sundries....." "	83,237,109	9,841,604			3,329,490	3,633,505

AGGREGATES.		QUAN.		VALUE.		
	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.	1845.	1846.
Forest.....tons..	6,790	\$77,956	6,390	\$68,291		
Agriculture....." "	447,627	27,612,291	618,151	53,662,118		
Manufactures....." "	49,812	6,432,259	46,076	4,815,799		
Merchandise....." "	253	88,497	1,797	276,872		
Other articles....." "	99,321	3,559,653	84,932	3,770,476		
Total.....tons..	1,201,913	\$15,452,321	1,362,319	\$31,105,256		

Statement of Tonnage and Value of all the Property which went from the Hudson River on all the Canals, in 1845 and 1846.

	1845.	1846.
Tonnage.....tons..	224,013	2,916
Value....." "	\$55,453,998	\$64,627,524

Aggregate Movement from and to the Hudson River during the years 1845 and 1846, and the Aggregate value of the Property transported.

	1844.	1845.
Tonnage.....tons..	1,428,976	1,611,535
Value....." "	\$100,936,319	\$113,732,783