

larger interests on the Lakes than the United States. Now ours exceed hers in the ratio of four to one.

What said the London *Times* in January, 1862, in reference to the Trent excitement? 'As soon as the St. Lawrence opens again there will be an end of our difficulty. We can then pour into the Lakes such a fleet of gunboats, and other craft, as will give us the complete and immediate command of those waters. Directly the navigation is clear, we can send up vessel after vessel without restriction, except such as are imposed by the size of the canals. The Americans would have no such resource. They would have no access to the Lakes from the sea, and it is impossible that they could construct vessels of any considerable power in the interval that would elapse before the ice broke up. With the opening of spring the Lakes would be ours.'

This is just what the English did in the War of 1812. They secured the command of the Lakes at the beginning of the war, and kept it and that of all the adjacent country, till Perry built a fleet on Lake Erie, with which he wrested their supremacy from them by hard fighting. Let us not be caught in that way a second time.

There is a party in the country opposed to the enlargement of these canals. It is represented in Congress by able men. Their principal arguments are the following: 1st, that there is no military necessity for the enlargement; that materials for building gunboats can be accumulated at various points on the Lakes, to be used in the event of war. 2nd, that by sending a strong force to destroy the Canadian canals, the enemy's gunboats can be prevented from entering the Lakes. A third argument is, that it is useless to attempt to contend with England, the greatest naval power in the world; that we shall never have vessels enough to afford a fleet on the coast and one on the Lakes; that England would never allow us to equal her in that respect, and that it would be changing the entire policy of the nation to attempt it. A fourth argument which we have seen gravely stated against the canal enlargements is, that the mouth of the St. Lawrence is the place to defend the Lakes, and that, if that hole were stopped, the rats could not enter.

In reply to the first of these arguments, the above quotation from the London *Times* shows that the British Government well know the importance of striking the first blow, and that long before our gunboats could be launched that blow would have been delivered.

As to the second we may be sure that the Canadian canals would be defended with all the power and skill of England; and we know, by the experience of the last four years, the difference between offensive and defensive warfare, both sides being equally matched in fighting qualities.

The third argument is the same used by Jefferson and his party before the War of 1812. He thought that to build war vessels was only to build them for the British, as they would be sure to take them. As to changing the policy of the nation, by increasing our navy, let us hope that it is already changed, and forever. Its policy has heretofore been a Southern policy, a slave-holders' policy; it has discouraged the navy, and kept it down to the smallest possible dimensions, because a navy is essentially a Northern institution. You cannot man a navy with slaves or mean whites;

it must have a commercial marine behind it, and that the South never had. Our navy ought never again to be inferior in fighting strength to that of England. In that way we shall always avoid war.

As to the plan of defending the Lakes at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, we would ask this question: If the blockade of Wilmington was a task beyond the power of our navy, how would it be able to blockade an estuary from fifty to a hundred miles in width?

With these enlarged canals, by which gunboats and monitors could be moved from the Atlantic and the Mississippi to the Lakes and *vice versa*, and by the system of shore defences recommended some years ago by General Totten, namely, strong fortifications at Mackinaw, perfectly commanding those straits, and serving as a refuge to war steamers, works at the lower end of Lake Huron, at Detroit, and at the entrance of Niagara River, these waters will be protected from all foreign enemies. Lake Ontario will also need a system of works to protect our important canals and railroads, which in many places approach so near the shore as to be in danger from an enterprising enemy. It is recommended by the Military Committee, that a naval depot should be established at Erie, as the most safe and suitable harbor on the Lake of that name.

If, as is probable, a naval station and depot should be thought necessary on the Upper Lakes the city of Milwaukee has strong claims to be chosen for its site. There is the best and safest harbor on Lake Michigan, so situated as to be easily defended, in the midst of a heavily-timbered country, accessible to the iron and copper of Lake Superior and the coal of Illinois. Milwaukee enjoys one of the cheapest markets for food, together with a very healthy climate. Finally, she is connected by rail with the great Western centres of population, so that all the necessary troops for her defence could be gathered about her at twenty-four hours notice.

It may be well here to remark, that as yet the Northwest has had little assistance from the General Government. Large sums of money have annually been laid out in the defences of the seaboard, both North and South, while this immense Lake region has had the annual appropriation of one eighteen pounder! Every small river and petty inlet on the Southern coast, whence a bale of cotton or a barrel of turpentine could be shipped, has had its fort; while the important post of Mackinaw, the Gibraltar of the Lakes, is garrisoned by an invalid sergeant, who sits solitary on its ruinous walls.

The result at which we arrive is, that these canal enlargements would at once be valuable, both as commercial and military works. They have a national importance, in that they will assist in feeding and defending the nation. The States interested in them have a population of ten millions, they have seventy-one representatives in Congress, and they have furnished fully one half of the fighting men who have gone to defend our flag and protect our nationality in the field. How that work has been done, let the victorious campaigns of Grant and Sherman attest. Those great leaders are Western men, and their invincible columns, who, from Belmont to Savannah, have, like Cromwell's Ironsides, 'never met an enemy whom they have not broken in pieces,' are men of Western birth or training.