

during those times when sound principles of political economy were hardly understood, and commercial fallacies lay to a great extent at the basis of all her commercial and fiscal legislation. The result of the statesmanlike policy that the mother-country, within a quarter of a century, has adopted towards Canada, in common with other Colonial dependencies, has not only tended to stimulate the energy and enterprise of the Canadian people, but has equally benefited the manufacturing and mercantile community of Great Britain, inasmuch as the provinces are now far larger consumers of British merchandize than would have been possible under the old system of monopolies and navigation laws. Fifty years ago the whole population of all British North America was not equal to one million of souls, whilst it is in excess of four millions at the present time. The total trade did not exceed twelve millions of dollars in value; whereas it may be estimated at very little below two hundred millions of dollars in 1872. This is the natural result of the peace, and the political and commercial freedom which we have now so long enjoyed under the protecting guidance of the parent state.

The commercial progress of Canada has been so fully illustrated of late, that it is superfluous for me now to dwell on the subject of trade in general; and all that I propose to attempt in the present paper is to give some facts and figures to prove the value of her maritime industry. In her extensive range of sea-coast and river navigation, in her unrivalled fisheries, in her wide sweep of forests, and above all in the energy and endurance of her inhabitants, we see the elements which have enabled her to reach a foremost position among maritime nations—equal, in fact, to the country which gave birth to Cartier and Champlain, and far ahead of the Spaniards and the Dutch, supreme on the ocean when the name of Canada was never heard of. For a great change has taken place since the century

when many stately Spanish galleons crossed the ocean from the Spanish Main, and Van Tromp swept the seas with a broom hoisted at his masthead.

The Fisheries have naturally laid the foundation of the maritime industry of the provinces. From the earliest time of which we have any record, fishermen from the Basque and Norman coast have flung their lines on the banks of Newfoundland, and carried home full fares long before a single English vessel ventured into the same seas to prosecute this lucrative branch of industry. But the French settlements on the Lower St. Lawrence, on the shores of the Gulf, or on the coast of Acadie, had but limited opportunities of following the fisheries in the warlike times which preceded the conquest. Louisbourg was then the headquarters of the French fishermen who yearly resorted to American waters, and it is recorded that in the year preceding the capture of that fortified town by the English fleet, under Warren, and the fishermen of New England, under the command of Pepperrell, France had some 600 sail, manned by 20,000 sailors, employed on our shores. For many years after the conquest of Canada the French did not prosecute this branch of industry to any extent; but during the past half century it has revived. Of all the possessions France formerly owned in America, she now only retains the insignificant islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, to the south of Newfoundland, and enjoys certain fishing privileges on a large portion of the coast of that colony. Though the number of vessels varies according as there is peace or war in Europe, yet she has not failed to send out a fleet from year to year to St. Pierre, where a little colony of officials, merchants, and fishermen has been established. The official statistics for 1865 show that 530 vessels were employed in the French cod fishery, with a combined capacity of 65,929 tons, and manned by nearly 11,000 men; and so far as I can learn from sources within my reach, the amount