

## INTRODUCTION.

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The general business of the City of Montreal, during the year 1862, has been spoken of by those best qualified to form an estimate of what has been done in the various branches of trade and commerce, as much greater than that of any preceding year. The aim of the *DAILY WITNESS*, in originally giving the articles which constitute the following pages, was only to furnish some details of the main departments of commerce; and the reprinting of them affords an opportunity for adducing a few additional facts. It would have been a very easy matter to have indulged in lengthy comments upon the tables; that, however, was unnecessary. What has been adduced goes far to confirm the truth of a remark made recently in the *London Illustrated News*, that our city "has established herself as the second port of export on the Atlantic seaboard,—that is, ahead of Boston and Philadelphia." We have no statement of the first-named city at hand; but, according to the annual report of the Corn Exchange of Philadelphia, the trade in Breadstuffs of that city, last year, was:—

ARRIVALS.				SHIPMENTS.			
Wheat Flour, brls.	-	-	970,654	Flour, brls.	-	-	464,290
Rye Flour, brls.	-	-	11,162	Corn Meal, brls.	-	-	70,149
Corn Meal, brls.	-	-	54,116	Wheat, bushels	-	-	1,967,673
Wheat, bushels	-	-	3,059,515	Corn, bushels	-	-	778,525
Corn, bushels	-	-	1,732,121				
Oats, bushels	-	-	1,408,450				

Rendering Flour into Wheat, the arrivals were equal to 11,379,745 bushels, or less than half the receipts in this city, as shown in the following pages; the exports being equal only to 5,418,393 bushels, while for Montreal the quantity was equal to nearly seventeen million bushels, as shown on page 9.

The fact that Montreal occupies a most commanding geographical situation, on the great commercial highway which connects Lakes Superior and Michigan with all the ports of Europe, has begun to attract attention. The St. Lawrence Canals, which form a very small portion of the navigation, are free to vessels of every nation; and the Canadian route to the ocean is superior in this, that the passage of laden boats through the Erie Canal not unfrequently occupies thirteen days between Buffalo and the Hudson,—while a sailing-vessel can pass from the Welland Canal to Montreal in less than half that time.

Another important consideration is that the St. Lawrence route, from the Far West to Europe, is shorter by 430 miles than *via* Oswego and New York city; while Montreal is nearer Liverpool than New York is, by 300 miles. The advantages of sending merchandise and passengers, intended for the North-Western States, must be obvious,—especially so far as emigrants are concerned, for they can reach their destination in less time, be subject to fewer mishaps and annoyances incident to frequent changes of conveyance, and withal travel much more economically, than those who are landed at other Atlantic ports. To make the St. Lawrence navigation as safe as that of the open sea, and most materially to lessen the expense of voyages inward and outward, the River and Gulf only require to have a sufficient number of lighthouses properly placed. A most competent authority says the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, to the north of Newfoundland and Gaspé, are much more free from fogs than the coast of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and there is no reason why the whole route should not be made as safe as the sailing from Boston or New York. Why should not the requisite improvements be made without delay? But, besides the duty devolving upon the Provincial Government to adopt instant measures to enable mariners to choose the shortest route with perfect safety,—*viz.*, by placing lights and buoys at all necessary points of the River and Gulf, including the Straits of Bellefleur,—there is a very weighty obligation resting upon the commercial community of Montreal to make adequate provision for the increased number