

herring that are caught in great abundance on several parts of our own sea coast, are capable of being greatly increased in value by improved method of curing, even as pickled fish. The preparations that have been forwarded this season are slightly cured, and more or less smoked.

There is the split herring, known in Scotland as the delicious Kipperd herring; the bloater, similar in its preparation to the well-known Yarmouth bloater, so highly esteemed in English markets, and the red herring, popular throughout Great Britain, as the poor man's relish. It is surprising that the latter form of smoked herring has not been sooner introduced. The circumstance only proves how trade is apt to run for long periods in certain fixed channels without special adaptation to circumstances or wants. The only smoked herring hitherto known in this country has been the Digby herring, and those prepared in imitation of it, a small-sized fish, so perfectly dried as to keep in all climates and for any length of time. As an occasional relish it is very well, but as an article of food to be much used, it is not to be compared to the larger and fatter herring, the juices of which are not entirely smoked out, and of which hundreds of thousand of barrels are annually consumed in the old country under the familiar name of red herring. Herring similarly prepared, which have at length been introduced in Canada, ought to find a ready sale. At the commencement of any such business, however, there is danger to be apprehended from spurious imitations. Thus, in New York and other parts of the States, an article under the name of bloaters has been introduced within the last year or two, made from herring that have been salted in bulk, and afterwards slightly soaked out, but which are still so impregnated with salt, as to render the fish as unlike the English bloater as can possibly be conceived. Still the article is fitted to keep, which seems to be the sole requirement with the most numerous class of dealers, who are thus led to shut out from the general market a far superior article, simply because it must be handled with more care and disposed of more quickly than the other. In like manner the smoked haddock, such a rare delicacy when properly cured, commands no general sale in New York and other American cities, simply because the preparations offered to the general trade are utterly nauseous. The more delicately cured fish of a Portland curer, command a ready sale at treble the prices given for the others, but it is only among a select class of customers, and the bulk of the fish prepared by this curer come to Montreal, where the taste for the genuine Finnan haddie is so general, that fish of an inferior description can scarcely find any sale. It is to be hoped that what has happened in the States, in the case of Finnan haddies and bloaters, will not occur with us in the case of the different preparations of herring that are now being introduced, and that the dealers will not be tempted to spoil a market which it will be a great benefit to themselves and the public to have established, by accepting spurious imitations of the genuine article.

The duty on smoked fish affords a certain protection, though attempts it is said have been made to smuggle fish of the kind we speak of in bond, as of Canadian cure, though in reality they are got up in the city of Boston, though the raw material has doubtless been caught at some remote period at Newfoundland. It should be understood that it is essential to all fish of the nature of kippered herrings and bloaters, that they should be fresh caught and slightly cured, so as to retain their delicate properties, which the herring entirely loses when salted in the usual way, and especially in the careless manner known as salting in bulk.

CATTLE TRADE OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS.—A Chicago correspondent of the Newark *Advertiser* writes as follows:

The small farmers of the old States have little idea of the immense proportions of the stock business on the prairies. Morgan county, lying between Springfield and the Illinois River, is the home of the heaviest dealers, who own thousands of acres devoted to pasturage and corn fields, where are continually feeding herds of cattle, gathered from Missouri and the surrounding counties. John T. Alexander, since March last, has forwarded to New York market an average of 750 beef cattle per week—sometimes sending as many as 1,350 per week. This makes a total of 34,500 from March to January. Another firm, Alexander & Cassell, ship 250 weekly, often 500. Other Morgan county firms send off from 100 to 300 per week. About 20,000 hogs are also shipped from Morgan every year. The stock exchange business of one banking house in Jacksonville, the county seat, amounts to between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000 annually.

THE BOSTON COMMERCIAL CONVENTION.

REPORT ON FOREIGN TRADE RELATIONS.

THE undersigned, a committee of the National Commercial Convention to whom was referred the subject of "The restoration of the foreign commerce of the country from its present greatly depressed condition," beg leave to report that the limited time of the session of the convention affords but an imperfect opportunity to present the subject referred to your committee with the completeness which its important and comprehensive character demands. Your committee therefore feel constrained to deal principally with statements which will be found fully substantiated by official documents from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, to which we would refer, especially to that branch of his report of 1864 on the foreign and domestic commerce of the United States which relates to the transatlantic steam commerce.

With such statements together with existing facts as to the present depressed condition of commerce so painfully apparent to all, your committee must rely on the convention in a great degree to supply the irresistible inferences and to complete the argument as to measures needed for its immediate relief. In 1838 the British steamer *Sirius* made an experimental trip from England to New York. She was followed by the *Great Western*, which ran for several years, say from 1840 to 1846, almost alone to New York. But the transatlantic steamship trade could hardly be regarded as regularly established until it was done by the "Cunard" line in 1840 and 1841 from Liverpool by the way of Halifax to Boston. A few years prior to the trip of the *Sirius* in 1838 the British Government inaugurated the system of subsidies to her steam commerce by granting large and liberal compensation for the transportation of mails from England to India by the way of Alexandria by a line of steamers known as the *Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company*. For this service, which was fortnightly, as your committee are informed, £230,000 sterling per annum was paid. This compensation was subsequently largely increased until it reached £400,000. The contracts having not long since expired, the Government advertised for bid, and £500,000 was the only bid. The British Post Office Department made its contracts with this company with the proviso that it should submit its accounts to Government quarterly, and if it should appear that the company had not earned ten per cent. per annum clear of all expense, that the additional £100,000 asked for should be added.

Your committee would remark that these figures are not obtained from an official document, but they are from what is regarded as an authentic and reliable source. It is, however, well known that England has recently renewed her subsidy to the Cunard line, and that her policy from the first has been to subsidize her ocean steam commerce to almost every part of the world, until she has covered nearly every route excepting that from San Francisco to China.

We cannot better illustrate the beneficial results to her commerce and other interests, and the corresponding disadvantage to that of the United States, than by quoting from the official report of the Secretary of the United States already referred to, which is as follows:

"The steam marine of Great Britain is intimately related to that of the United States so far as foreign trade is concerned. The increase of foreign shipping of all classes conducting the foreign trade of the United States is almost wholly British, and the successful lines of steamers newly established as well as those which have at any time taken the place of American lines, are also nearly all British. The statistics of British shipping are, therefore, essential to the proper consideration of the changes in progress directly affecting American shipping.

"The first table which follows shows the tonnage of all classes entering British ports for five years to the close of 1863, the steam tonnage not being separated. The most conspicuous fact apparent in this table is the increase of the aggregate of British tonnage of the United States:—

	In 1859.	1863.
British.....	5,388,953	7,299,417
All foreign.....	3,700,587	3,838,529
United States.....	1,077,948	693,337

"The increase of British is near 2,000,000 tons, while that of the United States declines 385,611 tons in five years. A still greater decline is apparent when the maximum year 1861 is compared with 1863, the first giving a total of 1,647,076 tons, and the decline to 1863 being therefore 944,730 tons. This decline is undoubtedly due to the immense number of American vessels sold abroad in 1861, 1862, and 1863, the great majority of which were purchased by the British.

"Thus the increase of steam vessels, which is wholly foreign, combines with the loss of the magnificent fleet of sailing vessels, long the pride of United States commerce, to expel the United States flag from the chief centres of foreign commerce."

Another striking illustration of the effect of steam commerce on the export trade may be found in the experience of England in the establishing a line of steamships from there to Brazil in 1851. In five years from that date the trade with that country increased 300 per cent. Earl Grey is said to have remarked that swift letters bring back swift orders for manufactured goods. England now exports annually to Brazil 32 millions of dollars' worth of her products against only ten millions imported from there, leaving a balance in favor of England 22,000,000. In 1859 the exports from United States to Brazil were 61 millions of dollars, nearly half of which was in flour, and our imports from there 22½ millions of dollars, leaving a balance to be met in our settlement of exchange to be paid for in England in gold. The products exported from the port of Boston to Brazil formerly amounted to a million of dollars, and it has now fallen to \$200,000, and less. We cite this fact as one of many to show the

intimate relations between commerce and the exporting products of the country. Does it not clearly show that facility of transportation by steam largely stimulates the exports of a country to distant markets? It is this well devised system of subsidized steam commerce persistently pursued by England for nearly forty years which has transferred the transportation of the great bulk of valuable merchandise, specie, and first-class passengers and mails from American vessels to a foreign flag; for previous to the war not a successful line of American steamships was running between the United States and England, and to-day the American flag is not borne across the Atlantic by a single American built steamship. Our diplomatic agents and government despatches are conveyed under a foreign flag. But while American steam commerce has thus been driven from the Atlantic by our subsidized and otherwise favored rivals to England and France, it is an important and striking fact that American built sailing vessels without government aid in any form were enabled to compete with foreign sailing vessels in the carrying trade in every part of the world; absolutely taking the guano from the islands of the Pacific to fertilize the soil of England and transporting the products of China and of India directly in successful competition with British sailing vessels into London docks. Indeed, in consequence of the high cost of constructing first-class Indiamen from wood material grown in England proper American ship-builders had already sold newly constructed vessels to England. But the war of the rebellion has changed all this. With our sailing commerce nearly chased from the ocean by Confederate cruisers, aided by the unfortunate views taken by the British government as to belligerent and neutral rights, with a depreciated currency, enhanced price of labor, material, and the cost of subsistence, to which has been added taxation on almost every article of material which enters into construction, and also on all contracts connected with shipbuilding, and also tax after construction, the cost of building and of employing American built vessels is far in excess of those of foreign construction, as will appear more fully in a detailed report made to the Legislature of Maine within a few weeks, to which we especially refer for carefully prepared statistical facts. In proof of the decline of our commerce we quote from the "Official Report of the Special Commissioner of Revenue for 1866":—"Our commerce upon the high seas, at one time so potent a means of acquiring national wealth, and at the same time of exhibiting to the world a proud indication of our growing strength and spreading influence, has fallen to so low a point that while in the year 1853 it was fifteen per cent. greater than that of Great Britain, and maintained a close competition with it up to the year 1861, it had fallen in 1864 to less than half as much and is now probably not over a third. Furthermore, that while in 1860 two-thirds of our imports and more than two-thirds of our exports were carried in American bottoms, in 1866 nearly three-fourths of our imports and over three-fifths of our exports were carried in foreign bottoms. The accompanying tables furnish the data."

In addition to this we are also furnished with the following statements from a member of the New York delegation now present:—

"At the present time there are in New York only 36 to 38 American ships. Aside from those in the California trade only 4 or 5 American vessels. Mr. C. W. Field stated in a public speech in New York that there was not then a single American ship loading for a foreign port in New York. The first named gentleman, who for many years has been practically engaged in foreign commerce, estimates that previous to the war he has seen in New York from 140 to 180 American vessels at one time, and vessels of all nations numbering perhaps 600 or 700 vessels. He further adds that before the war seven-eighths of the sailing vessels were under the American flag, while now about sixty per cent. of the sailing vessels are under a foreign flag. We further ask attention to the fact that Maine in 1859, owned 739,940 tons of shipping; in 1866, 274,468; a decrease of about sixty per cent., and what is true in this instance is also measurably true of other shipbuilding portions of our country as official reports will show.

The decline of our commerce is an admitted fact and must be obvious to all. As to the means by which it shall be restored, different opinions doubtless exist. Your committee, however, assume that the legislation and policy of England which for nearly 40 years has been undeviatingly followed, to her great advantage, not only by liberal encouragement to steam commerce, but by the remission of duties on all articles entering into the construction of her vessels of every class, and still further by allowing her vessels to be supplied with tea, coffee, sugar, and indeed all articles required on shipboard by being taken out of bonded warehouse duty free, while at the same time exactly the opposite policy has been pursued by the government of the United States, should furnish us with a clear precedent in this matter. The commerce of the lakes, equally with that of our river, requires relief. Next to production in vital importance to the natural resources lies the equally important question of *cheap transportation*. In proportion as the cost of building and of sailing our ocean and inland commerce shall be reduced, will it be enabled to transport the products of the soil more cheaply; hence the immediate and direct interest of agriculture in the question. The grain of the West must—especially Indian corn—reach the hungry population of Ireland and of England, as indeed all distant markets, at a very low rate, if it be consumed by them at all. Over a line of nearly 5,000 miles from the place of production, the cost of transportation must of necessity bear so large a proportion to the cost of original production, that if it is not carried at a low rate, the crop will be worth more for fuel, and be burned, in the future, as in the past, under certain relative conditions of markets at home and abroad. But the question of the restoration of the commerce of the country by American built vessels under the American flag, is emphatically and in the highest sense a na-