

the transit of foreign trade; and leave us wholly independent of the result of the respective capabilities of, or rivalry between New-York and Quebec. To us as agriculturists, it will become an object of far greater importance.

ST. LAWRENCE AND ERIE CANAL NAVIGATION COMPARED.—The average freight in *steam vessels*, from Toronto to Quebec, in 1849, was 1s. 6d. per barrel: now a barrel of flour could not be sent from Toronto to New-York for less than 2s. 6d.; we have, therefore, one shilling in price in favour of Quebec—we do not ask any more. The time required to reach Quebec, say four days; to New-York, fourteen days:—to New-York, two transshipments; to Quebec, none. We need not enlarge upon the importance of speed to *our farmers*, in the three months which intervene between the harvest and the close of the navigation,—or to *our buyers*, whose prices are regulated by weekly advices from Europe, and who, with the assistance of the telegraph, the rapids and steamers of the St. Lawrence, will be enabled to fulfil an order before a reaction in the markets take place. If then, as must be admitted, the *inland* portion of the St. Lawrence be incomparably the superior line of communication between the country around the Western Lakes and tide water, the question is, whether this superiority is sufficient to counterbalance the known disadvantages of the *sea route*, and the preëminence which greater wealth, more extensive connexions, and larger markets give to New-York.

Before we can profitably consider the future prospects of the ocean commerce of the St. Lawrence, it will be well to examine some of the alleged evils of the gulf route—and first, that favorite one of the panic makers, viz.: that the St. Lawrence is frozen up “for six months in the year.”

If we take the average of the arrivals of the first ships at Quebec for the last twenty years, we will find the date to have been the 30th of April or 1st of May. So quickly does the ice disappear, that it not unfrequently happens, that the first ship from sea and the first steamer from Montreal, arrive at Quebec upon the same day. For the last twenty years, the average of the first arrival at Quebec from Montreal is the 25th of April. The average date of the opening of the Erie Canal for the same period is the 21st of April, but for the last three years it has been the 1st of May, although during these same years ships have arrived from Britain at Quebec on the 24th of April, and steamers from Montreal on the 17th of that month. The great length of the Erie Canal, the time required to fill it with water, and the preparation necessary after the frost and snow have disappeared, make it difficult to open it for navigation in any season before the first of May. This difficulty will not be diminished by the enlargement of that canal, or increase of business, and we may safely assume the first of May as the future date of the opening of navigation upon the Erie Canal, and practically, the same date for the Hudson River. In point of time, then, the commencement of navigation is equalized at both points; but inasmuch as the Erie Canal is not open at *Buffalo*, until the first of May, a cargo of flour will not reach Albany until ten or twelve days later, while one which leaves Lake Erie by the St. Lawrence will, upon the average of years, arrive at Quebec on the first of May, and find ships there ready to take it to England, or can be sent on in the same craft to Halifax. We have nothing to fear, then, from competition by the Erie Canal in this respect. New Orleans and the Mississippi have an advantage over us in the winter months, but as the food districts are in the north, upon the tributaries of the Ohio and Mississippi, which are closed in winter, there also our positions are nearly equal. The Erie Canal has been closed, on the average of twenty years past, before the fifth of December, on and after which date vessels may every year leave Quebec, the only objections to sailing late arising from cold weather and snow storms, causing difficulty in managing the rigging,—an evil to which all vessels are subject upon a European voyage at this season of the year:—and one which, in the St. Lawrence, could be in a great measure neutralized by a harbour of refuge. Many captains consider that the snow storms are more frequent in October and November than in December, in which latter month the weather is more settled. We cannot see, then, that the St. Lawrence need have one day less of navigation than the Erie Canal. It is true that very few ships have remained in this river after the first of November, but this did not arise from any fear of imprisonment, but out of the exclusive system which has hitherto confined this navigation to a certain number of traders.

which, as they only make two trips in the year, arrive chiefly in May and September, and are under no necessity of remaining later than November. But, if there be freights, we will hereafter have plenty of arrivals from sea in November, and departures in December.

COMPARATIVE NEARNESS TO ENGLAND BY QUEBEC AND NEW-YORK.—Most persons accustomed to the view of maps and charts upon Mercator's projection, or upon the plain surface of the Atlas, are apt to complain of the great *détour* the St. Lawrence makes to reach the Ocean, and imagine that there is a great additional length of voyage to be made, by a ship starting from Quebec or Montreal for Britain, over one from New-York. *Quebec is some hundreds of miles nearer to Liverpool by navigable routes than New-York.* To persons accustomed to these charts, and who have been taught to believe that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, it would appear that the nearest route to the British channel—say from Lake Erie—would be in a *direct* line, and therefore would leave at Buffalo and pass south of Halifax. They would also suppose that New-York was particularly favoured in having a *straight* course, over the open Ocean, to the British channel; whilst Montreal could not “strike a straight line” to that point without running on Gaspe and Newfoundland. Inasmuch as a *straight* line between Quebec and Liverpool would pass some hundreds of miles beneath the surface of the Atlantic (as it would be the chord of an arc upon the earth's surface) it is clear that, although the *shortest* line, it is not the most convenient way of getting there. If a thread be stretched upon a globe, from any point in the British channel to Toledo on Lake Erie, and arranged so as to lie upon the shortest line it will be found to run nearly throughout America, within the waters of the St. Lawrence, not deviating at any point more than 30 miles, and if the eastern end of the thread be shifted to Glasgow or the north of England its shortest position will be found in the Straits of Belleisle, between Newfoundland and the Labrador coast. If this thread be now placed with one end at New-York, and the other at Liverpool, in its shortest possible position, it will be found resting upon the Island of Newfoundland; although upon the *flat* charts this Island appears as much out of the way as Greenland. Kingston is as near to Liverpool and Hamilton as near Glasgow, as New-York is to either by a sailing route. The false idea given to persons by Mercator's projection, arises from the circumstance, that the meridian lines are drawn parallel to each other; thus a degree of longitude at the North Pole, where it is nothing, is drawn as great as at the Equator, where it is seventy miles: again, on those charts the parallels of latitude, at all latitudes, appear to be the shortest routes between points in the same latitude, thus the semi-circumference of the arctic circle seems a less distance than the spherical diameter of the same.

The coast of British America is more than 1,000 miles nearer to Britain, than New-York, because every degree of longitude contains a less number of miles as we approach the poles. Canada has suffered not a little, in the estimation of the world, from the conception of Mercator. When we stretch a thread from the great food-producing region of America, at Lake Erie, to the great food-consuming country of Europe—Britain, and find that the St. Lawrence runs almost upon the line of a great circle, the shortest possible distance, with the most capacious, speedy, and economical mode of communication, we cannot fail to be struck with this remarkably direct channel between the parent and the offspring of the most favoured race of men.

FUTURE TRADE OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.—The valley of the St. Lawrence differs from those of Rivers generally, in being almost *unilateral*. It is the *natural* outlet for Canada—that part of Vermont, west of the Green Mountains—Northern and Western New York—Northern Ohio—Michigan, and a portion of Illinois and Wisconsin. In the more Southern portion of the valley, at Lakes Michigan and Superior, the waters which flow into the Gulf of Mexico approach within a few miles of the Great Lakes themselves; so that of the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, which touch the navigable waters of the St. Lawrence, an important portion of Ohio only forms a part of the valley of this river. But,—with the exception of Vermont, the Eastern portion of Northern New York, and a part of Pennsylvania,—there are no chains of mountains, or broad tracts which divide the countries drained by the St. Lawrence from those drained by the Mississippi, Hudson, and Connecticut Rivers. There are not, therefore,