

the citizens of the United States," whilst it was silent upon the subject of navigating the St. Lawrence. The cases were undoubtedly analogous as regards the *natural* right of navigating similar outlets to the ocean, but in some respects they were widely different. We cannot fail to perceive that, by this stipulation, the two countries claimed the free navigation of the Mississippi from its source to the ocean on the *natural* right alone, for *that claim was thus put forth in the treaty, without any arrangement with Spain, by whom the mouth of that river was then held.* But this feature in the case deserves more particular notice in another connexion.

It must also be observed that the cases were widely different in respect to the supposed relative importance of the two rivers. The situation of the mouth of the Mississippi in reference to the Gulf of Mexico and the West Indies, the continuance of navigation for more than a thousand miles above its mouth at all seasons of the year, and its character as an extensive national boundary, well indicated the future importance of the river, and the wisdom of securing, if possible, the right of freely navigating its waters. But the future value of the St. Lawrence was then estimated by different circumstances. It was ice-bound for one-half of the year. It was contiguous to but one of the States, (New York,) and for but a small part of its northern boundary; and even here the habitation of the white man was seldom, if ever, to be found. We had no commerce, no property, afloat upon this river, unless in the bark canoe and emanating from the small trading posts among the Indians upon the upper lakes. Even this trade was carried on with Montreal, and was essentially Canadian in its character. The geography of all this region was but little understood in our own country, much less in Europe; and some of its natural curiosities were there known very much as wonderful traditions or fables. Detroit existed only as a trading post; whilst Buffalo, (which now rivals even the ancient capital of New York,) Cleveland, Chicago, and Milwaukie, were then unknown. The great valley of the lakes was without people, without commerce. Whilst they were viewed as a waste of waters, their shores were skirted for thousands of miles by one continuous wilderness.

Besides, canals were at this time unknown in our country. It was gravely published in London, about the middle of the last century, in an extensive geographical and historical work, that the Falls of Niagara are six hundred feet in height, and, at the period of the acknowledgment of our independence by Great Britain, they were doubtless regarded as an insurmountable barrier against all connexion by navigation of the upper lakes with the waters of the St. Lawrence. In fact, no human wisdom could foresee that what then seemed to be the work of centuries was destined to be accomplished in one or two generations. Still less could human wisdom foresee that these lakes would so soon teem with a commerce that should demand the use of that highway to the ocean which was provided for it by nature. Had the wonderful realities of the present been thought or dreamed of, and our natural right under such circumstances questioned, at the period of the treaty of '83, can any one doubt that we should have demanded a stipulation for the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, and that such stipulation would have been as readily arranged as that for the free navigation of the Mississippi?

We have submitted the preceding observations for the purpose of showing that the question of our right to the navigation of the St. Lawrence