

IRON.

According to the Customs Returns of the past three years, the values of the various kinds of Iron, imported at Montreal, were :—

DESCRIPTION.	1863	1862	1861
	Value.	Value.	Value.
	\$	\$	\$
Canada Plates and Tinned Plates	213,929	169,033	142,796
Galvanized and Sheet Iron.....	35,586	61,305	47,155
Wire, Nail and Spike Rod	45,715	41,006	41,347
Bar, Rod, or Hoop.....	467,642	401,344	488,825
Hoop or Tire Iron for Locomotive			
Wheels	23,931	17,709	26,637
Boiler Plate	18,712	11,425	6,701
Railroad Bars, &c	14,691	14,676	24,644
Rolled Plate		2,108	4,688
Steel, wrought or cast	119,558	63,791	67,939

The Lachine Canal Returns include the following shipments westward :—Pig Iron, 13,467 tons ; Railroad Iron, 6,764 tons ; Nails, 3,085 tons ; Miscellaneous Iron, 8,683 tons.

Extreme dullness and low prices prevailed during the first six months of 1863. Spring imports had been heavy. The Iron trade in England and Scotland was also very depressed, prices having been gradually declining during the previous six or seven years. The unusual demand for coal and iron miners in the United States induced many of these operatives to emigrate ; a "strike" of sixteen weeks followed, and the result was a large increase in wages to those who remained, causing an advance of 30s. sterling, per ton, on all kinds of manufactured iron in September last. This prevented the filling of heavy orders and contracts for this Province in time for Fall shipment. Another advance of 30s. sterling per ton, subsequently took place in England, accompanied by an additional increase of wages to the operatives, and great firmness on the part of the Iron-masters,—many of them having four or five months' orders on hand.

The natural consequence of all this was an advance in price here, which has steadily continued until now, that all kinds of manufactured iron and heavy hardware are fully 35 per cent. higher. Stocks are quite light, with an active demand,—the high rate of freight, *via* Portland, preventing winter importation. Some large speculative purchases were made in Montreal, in October, at low rates ; the market was entirely cleared of straggling lots of Bar and Pig-Iron, Cut Nails, Tin, and Canada Plates ; and these articles are now held at high prices.

CHINA, EARTHEN AND GLASS-WARE.

There is no special feature to notice in this department of business ; it is quiet and steady, and exclusively in the hands of Importers. The quantity of Earthen-Ware entered in 1861 was considerably in excess of the demand, and in the succeeding year there was a falling off in the trade with that part of the American population, living near the Province-line. There was a manifest improvement, however, last year, and a fair business done. The following table shows the comparative value of Imports at Montreal :—