

century ago—"of American colonies or the West Indian Islands is the monopoly of their consumption and the carriage of their produce." These Navigation Laws have been somewhere well described as intended to effect, for the English navy, what the protective corn laws were expected to do for agriculture—to supply vitality by artificial means, and create prosperity by legislation. When England entered on a new era of political liberty, on the passage of the Reform Act over thirty years ago, she wisely adopted a different commercial policy by repealing the long established regulations and monopolies which had so long depressed and hampered colonial trade and shipping. England has long since recognized the fallacy of the old ideas which prevailed among her statesmen, during the past century, and led to the rupture between herself and her old colonies. England's best customers are her offspring in the American Republic and in her wide colonial dominions. As the extension of their political privileges, a few years ago, opened up a wider career of ambition and usefulness to the people of these countries, so did the removal of all the old monopolies and restrictive navigation laws, almost at the same time, give a remarkable impulse to their trade and commerce. To-day the population of all British America cannot be less than four millions of souls, and its aggregate trade is estimated at about one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, or more than the trade of the United States forty years ago. But no statistics more clearly prove its commercial progress than those which refer to its commercial marine.

THE FISHERIES.

One great branch of maritime enterprise is necessarily the Fisheries. Indeed, the navies of three European Powers,—England, France and Holland,—owe their development to a large extent to this branch of industry. These powers long contended for the whale fisheries of the North, but it was on the coast of North America that the greatest rivalry existed. It is well established that in 1517 fifty Castilian, French and Portuguese vessels were engaged in the North American fisheries. In 1578 there were a hundred and fifty French vessels off Newfoundland, besides two hundred of other nations,—Spanish Portuguese and English chiefly. The French, for a long while, were the most actively engaged in this lucrative branch of national wealth; indeed, at a later date, they were wont to boast that the North American fisheries contributed more to the national power and the development of navigation than the gold mines of Mexico could have done. DeWitt has also told us "that the English navy became formidable by the discovery of the inexpressibly rich fishing banks of Newfoundland." So important indeed are these fisheries considered by the French, that they have always adhered to the rights which they obtained by the treaty of 1763, and under which they have been allowed to retain the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and certain fishery privileges over a considerable portion of the coast of Newfoundland. At the present time there are from 10,000 to 15,000 Frenchmen engaged in this branch of industry within the French jurisdiction, but the catch is by no means