

stitutes the door to Lake Michigan, around which lake lie the States of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, with an aggregate of population amounting to nearly five millions. On its shores are the towns of Grand Haven, Muskegan, St. Joseph, Michigan City, Chicago, Waukegan, Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, and Green Bay, with many others rising rapidly into importance. The commerce of this lake will exceed \$200,000,000 per annum. The great granary of the union has its depots on the border of this lake. It can be defended by adequate fortifications at the Straits of Mackinaw, about three miles wide. Fortifications at the Straits of Mackinaw close the opening or entrance into this great inland sea. When the vast interests thus secured are considered, it is obvious that Lake Michigan, and all its shores and cities, should be defended on the threshold at Mackinaw. The importance of having a great inland sea, like Lake Michigan, converted into a secure harbor, where fleets and navies may be gathered in security; where may be collected magazines of arms and munitions and provisions, can scarcely be exaggerated. Lake Michigan, entirely within our own territory, unapproachable by land, and inaccessible by water by any foreign enemy, except through a narrow strait or entrance, is a position of immense importance, and the policy of closing up its entrance is too obvious to need illustration. Mackinaw should be made the Gibraltar of the upper lakes.

Upon the importance of this locality we insert the following extract from a communication of General Totten :

"As to the stronger works, I consider one at Mackinaw to be indispensable. This will be the principal watching point of the upper lakes. Here war steamers will call to refresh, to communicate with each other, to find shelter, to lie in wait, &c.

"It is hardly to be supposed that a hostile naval expedition coming out of Georgian bay would venture towards the upper lakes, or down Lake Huron, *certainly not into Lake Michigan*, while this point of observation and rendezvous is occupied by our superior squadron. The fort here must be adequate to protect this anchorage, and the defences of the island should be such as to defeat any enterprise designed to wrest it from us by superior force."

The committee are clear in their judgment that, in view of the vast importance of Mackinaw, and the interests there to be defended, the government should take immediate means to close the Straits of Mackinaw against the entrance of any hostile fleet. Fort Gratiot fully commands the entrance to Lake Huron, and should be immediately reconstructed and put in a condition to control this gate to Lake Huron. The lower entrance to the straits or river Detroit from Lake Erie is already well guarded by Fort Wayne. This should be completed and receive its armament. The report of General Totten, in which the committee concur, recommends additional appropriations and defences at Buffalo, to wit : the completion of Fort Porter, on the bluff between Buffalo and Black Rock, and the mounting of its armament, for the protection of the entrance from Lake Erie into Niagara river, and the construction of a tower and shore batteries at the mouth of Buffalo harbor ; also an appropriation for Fort Niagara, the con-