



THE commercial importance of the city of Montreal gradually increased with the development of the free trade in the Far-West, from the fact of its being the headquarters of the North-West Company, an association of wealthy Scottish and French Canadian merchants who, by their activity and enterprise, did much to build up the commercial fabric of Canada. Its position thus established is undoubtedly a permanent one, for, backed by the great lake and canal systems which connect it with Chicago, Duluth and other cities, its influence reaches far into the interior; while the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose lines bring the commerce of China and India across the continent, has also its headquarters in Montreal. Many important improvements have also been made in the harbour of Montreal, which now admits of the largest ships reaching port from the Atlantic Ocean.

A structure particularly worthy of notice, in connection with the river, is Victoria Bridge, spanning the St. Lawrence just above the harbour, and connecting the Grand Trunk Railway with routes to the United States. The extreme length of this bridge is two miles, and, for a long time after its erection, it was regarded as an unequalled triumph of engineering skill. It is composed of one large span in the centre, of three hundred and thirty feet, and twenty-three spans of two hundred and forty-two feet each. The tubes are of iron, twenty-two feet in height and sixteen feet in breadth; supported by twenty-two stone piers measuring three million cubic feet. The cost of the bridge was seven million dollars.

A more modern structure, the Canadian Pacific Railway Bridge, spans



VICTORIA SQUARE.