

late for us. We owe him this explanation for now despatching him briefly in a postscript.

Just such a writer as our quondam friend who cuts so comical a figure in attempting the facetious, the poet must have had in view when he wrote the following lines:

"All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side."

But we must add the following couplet for his own especial edification:

"Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and non-sense meet."

Plagiarising from the *Herald*, our backsliding contemporary seizes the supposed omission in our calculation respecting the freight of timber, and by following closely in the wake of that journal arrives in time at the same conclusion, that is, he attempts to show that we have exaggerated the loss entailed upon the Colony by the operation of the Navigation Laws. That both he and the *Herald*, however, have failed in their attempts, we trust the public will allow after deliberately examining and weighing our foregoing remarks.

The *Gazette* accuses us too of drawing our average of freights from the last three, being the three dearest years. The *Gazette* makes many rash, unfounded assertions, trusting to their passing the ordeal of public judgment without detection. We will allow him the benefit of going back for averages any number of years he pleases,—let them be compared with the New York rates for the past ten years if he chooses to take the trouble to do so. We know what the result would be, though he evidently does not. Is he aware that when freights fell here to 2s. 6d. to 2s. 9d. at mid-summer in the year he alludes to (and it only lasted for a few days), that they rose to a higher point in the fall of that year than they almost ever reached before? Let him make up a table and show the average rate, and if it lessens the general average we have employed in our calculations, we will give him the full benefit of it.

Again, as to the effect produced by British and American vessels competing together for the carrying of American produce, he writes as follows:—

"They tell us that American shipmasters say that a difference of 9d. to 1s. a brl. would induce them to come to the St. Lawrence instead of to New York, as, under some circumstances, they might, and then our English vessels would do the same.

The very people who are saying this are sticking by their own navigation laws to keep British vessels from competing, in conveying their own produce to neutral ports, and are complaining (see Mr. Reverdy Johnson's speech) that, under the reciprocity treaty, British vessels, by their superior cheapness, are driving them out of the cotton trade."

Now this effect, our readers will observe, is precisely that which we want to bring about here. We want a competition here also between British and American shipping, so that both may be made to feel and complain of it. For sure we are that *not till then* will freights reach their natural level in the St. Lawrence.

What signifies all the twaddle the *Gazette* has written as to British ships being able to compete with any shipping in the world—we have never entertained a doubt about it, nor do we think that any disinterested enquirer can. But that is entirely foreign to the point at issue. What we argue against is that the British shipowner should have a monopoly of our carrying trade—that we should be debarred from employing American or other foreign vessels when they can be got cheaper than British. That is the hardship which we complain of. American and British ships compete together in every part of the American Union, and what is the consequence?—freight is at its minimum. But here we are limited to British ships, and the consequence is, that the average rate of freight is extravagant and intolerable as compared with those ports in the American Union with which a comparison can be fairly instituted.

What signifies the *Gazette's* twaddle, we repeat, when the fact stares us in the face that vessels can be got at 2s. per barrel at New York, while the monopolist shipowner is exacting 6s. per barrel here. Will the *Gazette* say that the Canadian would derive no benefit from being allowed to charter foreign vessels, under such circumstances, to come into the St. Lawrence for the purpose of carrying away his produce? He replies, go to Sunderland and you will find vessels there. Granting even that this could be done, would it be of the same benefit to the Canadian? It is too preposterous to be thought of, not to say insisted on, and none but a timeserving print like the *Gazette* would dream of advancing it. New York is within three days of us by post communication, and in a short time the three days will probably be reduced to three minutes or so, by magnetic telegraph. Hence orders could be sent to New York for vessels, and they might be in the St. Lawrence taking in a cargo of produce before even an acknowledgment of the merchant's order could be got from Sunderland—to say nothing of the arrival of a Sunderland "tub" at Montreal, after all the other necessary preliminaries were completed.

But on casting our eye again upon the *Gazette*, we discover a fact hitherto overlooked, and we announce it to the world with due solemnity. It is neither more nor less than the sudden con-

version of our contemporary to the doctrines of the "ECONOMIST." We congratulate him on having a lucid moment. Here are his words:—

"The *Gazette* is no admirer of restrictions at all, and would be very glad if we were not restricted in the choice of shipping!"

Did the last mail bring him a new light, or has he heard of Macgreggor of the Board of Trade's opinion? What wonderful consistency is here displayed!

THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

No. 2.

The Report of the Post-Office Commission opens with a sketch of the history of the Department in British North America, no part of which is of much interest for our present purpose, with the exception of that which alludes to the abortive attempt made in 1834 to reconstruct the department on the basis of Provincial legislation.

Those at all familiar with the legislative history of these provinces will need little reminding on this subject; but for the benefit of those who are not, we may state that in that year, the Duke of Richmond being Post-Master General, a short Act of Parliament was passed authorising the several colonies of British North America to legislate on Post-Office matters, and repealing the provisions of the Imperial Act of the 5th of Geo. III., under which their Post-Office establishment was organized, in case they should all legislate satisfactorily in the case; and the *project* of a long and intricate Post-Office Bill was then sent out to each, with an invitation to its Legislature to pass it *en bloc* into a law. It was added, that as a thing of course the colonies must all have one and the same law; so that no amendment, how trifling soever, could be suffered. The inevitable consequence was, that no one Legislature entertained the project. The House of Assembly of Lower Canada quietly shelved the proposed Bill, and passed another for the organization of a merely local Post-Office, making no provision whatever for Post-Office communication beyond the limits of Lower Canada. A Committee of the Assembly of Lower Canada recommended the establishment there of a Post-Office equally local in its character, but differing in no less than thirty-one particulars from that proposed in Lower Canada. The Legislatures of the Lower Provinces seem to have dropped the project, not unwisely, without notice.

At the time of the Commission inquiry, (1840-1,) Canada, and a small portion of New Brunswick comprising the Post-Offices of Campbelltown on the Ristigouche and Grand Falls and Woodstock on the St. John, were under the charge of a Deputy Post-Master General stationed at Quebec; Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's Island, and the rest of New Brunswick, were under that of a Deputy Post-Master General stationed at Halifax; Newfoundland boasted one Post-Master, at her seat of government, but no out-offices; the Bermudas, two offices, under a Deputy Post-Master General in miniature and a Post-Master.

Of the Newfoundland and Bermuda establishments we need say nothing more. And of the establishment within the Halifax charge, it may be enough to say that the Report shows the utmost possible irregularity to have pervaded all its operations. The Deputy Post-Master General was also Post-Master of Halifax, and had but two clerks, at £100 stg. a year each, to aid him in the two capacities; facts more than sufficient to account for what, under other circumstances, we might have called the state of wonderful confusion in which the Commissioners appear to have found all the arrangements of his charge.

In the Canada charge things were greatly better. We are bound to say that the Report exhibits the Canada Post-Office as a well-managed institution; so far, at least, as the anomalous system under which it was organized admitted. The Deputy Post-Master General had two Post-Office Surveyors, with powers and duties answering to those of the like officers at home, an establishment of clerks to aid him in his own duties, and an accountant and clerks to manage the account business of the department. He wanted more help, to be sure, as the Report shows; but, all things considered, the state of the Department seems to have been quite as good as could be expected, much better than people generally at the time or since have given it credit for being. Its faults were those necessarily incident to such a Department in a new country, conducted by a Deputy under orders from a distant Chief, at once ignorant of its peculiar wants and too busy with larger matters to be able to trouble himself to any good end about them.

As an instance, there was nothing like the regular classification of Post-Offices which has existed time out of mind at home. There, each Post-Master corresponds with a few specified offices only; everything mailed for any distance being sent by him only to the nearest *Forward Office* in the required direction, where it is again sent on in like manner. By this means the contents of a mail-bag are reduced to a moderate number of packages, of which the most