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THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1869.

THE CANADIAN CANALS.

NO. III.

The arrival at Montreal of the splendid propeller, "Her Majesty," from Toronto, with a cargo equal to 4,000 barrels of flour, and its increase there to 6,300 barrels, is a very suggestive fact. Her destination was Halifax, but the necessity of floating through the present canal navigation of the St. Lawrence, had imposed a limit on the cargo with which she started on her trip. Ten barrels of flour are held to be a ton of freight; therefore if the canals permitted such a vessel to load to her full capacity, one third more freight would be carried at the same cost of carrying it, and, accordingly, the normal rate of freight would be one third cheaper, even with such a vessel as "Her Majesty." Starting easterly from Toronto, to proceed to the salt

water, there are two systems of navigation, the St. Lawrence Canals and the river below Montreal. As the Allan steamers now lie at the Montreal wharves, it needs but mention of the fact to establish the extent of the latter. To be precise, however, it may be described as a 20 feet navigation. There has been some unpleasant correspondence on this subject, and doubt has been thrown upon the fact. But after examination of the charts, and what has been advanced on both sides, we deliberately say that there is a 20 foot channel east of Montreal, although it may not be sufficiently marked off by beacons and lighthouses. West of Montreal the limit is established by the canals, viz., the lock of 45 feet wide, with a depth of 9 feet, and a length of 200 feet. Such is the condition between Montreal and Lake Ontario, extending up to St. Catharines, on the Welland Canal. Here the navigation is again changed, to be governed by the Welland Canal, where the lock is 150 ft. by 26 ft. 6 in., but with 10 ft. water on the sills, until Lake Erie is reached. Therefore the navigation of the St. Lawrence is composed of four systems.

1. From the ocean passing Quebec to Montreal: a 20-foot navigation admitting the noble Allan boats of 3,000 tons.

2. The St. Lawrence Canals extending through Lake Ontario to St. Catharines, admitting such vessels as the propeller "Her Majesty." She is 180 long and has 30 feet breadth of beam. In the St. Lawrence Canals she can carry 4,400 barrels of flour only; as has been shown when freed from these restrictions, she increased her cargo one-third.

3. The Welland Canal propeller is a type of this class. She is principally engaged in the Oswego trade, that is, passing from Chicago to Oswego, discharging at the foot of the Oswego Canal into barges, which ascend to Syracuse to take the Erie Canal. There is also a class of vessels which descend the St. Lawrence, but as the depth of the Welland is 10 feet and the St. Lawrence but 9, this class of vessel carries 1,100 barrels of flour, less than she could otherwise do, and from want of draft and general build, such vessels are not fitted for the salt water.

4. The Lake Erie steamers are representative boats of the fourth class. Affected only by the depth of the St. Clair flats, they are magnificent steamships travelling between Buffalo and Chicago, regardless of the storms which sweep these waters.

With a little effort it ought not to be difficult to understand the imperfection of the St. Lawrence navigation, while at the same time, any one who opens the map must see that it is the river which should be the channel of communication for the great west to the ocean. Further, it must be plain to

every one, that the whole system is under the control of Canada, and without effort on the part of the Dominion, the navigation will continue to be, as it is to-day, ineffective and incomplete. It has been said that powerful influences prevail in Montreal against any extension or amendment of the route as a policy hurtful to that City, and it is in that City that opposition would be looked for when the improvement is claimed. We shall not stop to consider if the accusation be true, or if true, that results unfavorable to Montreal will accrue. The latter, possibly, will be considered in its place. Suppose, for our purpose to say now, that we consider that the benefit to Montreal would be incalculable, for the geographical position of that City is, of course, greatly in its favor. But as such opinions are supposed to prevail, we are not surprised to read in the Montreal journals that "Her Majesty" has little business west of that City. The *Montreal Herald*, which is generally written in a fair and thoughtful spirit, and nevertheless the very blue-blood of commercial orthodoxy for Montreal, thus alludes to the departure of this propeller: "From what we know of canal navigation, we have no doubt after the first trip, her owner will find it greatly to his advantage to run this steamer from here instead of Toronto, and have no doubt she would be crowded with both freight and passengers every trip."

The italics are not ours. If we venture to paraphrase this very suggestive sentence, it may read thus, "What is the use of going to Toronto! You only lose time uselessly. 'Whatever you carry, 'canal navigation' will allow you but two-thirds of your cargo. 'You must take your remaining third here. 'And, accordingly, it is better, not to make two bites of a cherry. Receive your three-thirds here—your whole here; Montreal is the natural harbor of ocean-going vessels. It is here—we will follow the emphasis of our extract—it is here that transshipment has been made and must be made."

These facts enable us to establish a basis on which the Canal question really can be argued. Even so far as Canada is concerned, without any reference to the great States of the American Union bordering on the lakes, it may take a short time or it may take a long time to educate public opinion on the subject. But one day that public opinion will be formed, to be uttered in every county west of the Province line, and to be a part of the political faith of every public man of Ontario, that the Canal question must receive its solution. It is the fashion, still in many quarters, to treat any comment on the subject as visionary, as mere Utopian ideas, which "practical" men cannot entertain. It