

## TRADE OF THE LAKES.

The commerce of these great inland seas is acquiring a magnitude and importance which attest the rapidity with which the territory which they drain has been rendered productive. Half a century ago, lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan, St. George, and Superior were entirely without commerce. Almost the only craft to be seen upon them was the Indian canoe. In 1850 their tonnage had risen 215,000, and the value of the traffic to 362 millions of dollars. The first craft ever launched on Lake Erie was built by the French, for the expedition of the celebrated La Salle, so far back as 1679; but more than a century elapsed before any American vessel was launched upon the lakes; an event which occurred in 1797. The first steamer launched in America was built in Lower Canada, to run between Montreal and Quebec. This was about the year 1812, the Legislature of that Province having, in the Session of 1811 granted a monopoly of the route to Mr. Moulson. Mr. Papineau has even yet occasionally reminded that he voted for this monopoly, but we suspect it was a pardonable act in these days. The first steamer on Lake Ontario was launched in 1816; two years before a like event took place on Lake Erie. The first navigable outlet from the Lakes—the Erie Canal—was completed in 1825. Next came the Welland Canal.

The measurements of the lakes are as follows:

LAKES.	Greatest length		Greatest breadth		Mean depth	Elevation	Area.
	Miles.	Miles.	Fect.	Fect.			
Superior.	350	169	903	627	32,000		
Michigan.	320	195	909	575	22,000		
Huron.	260	160	900	571	20,400		
Erie.	219	60	81	565	9,000		
Ontario.	180	35	500	232	6,300		
Total	1,555				90,000		

A new survey of the lakes is now in progress by the American government, but it is not likely that the result will show much variation from the above measurement, the result of previous surveys. The area drained by these lakes is estimated, according to Mr. Andrus' report, on the trade and commerce of the British American Colonies, at 335,515 square miles. The natural outlet of these lakes, and of the produce of the surrounding country is the St. Lawrence; and the navigation from Lake Ontario will admit vessels large enough to cross the Atlantic, as actual experiment has proved. A direct trade from the chief ports of Lake Ontario to England may be counted upon as a feature in the future trade of British America. To what extent this trade may eventually attain no one can form any conception, but the saving of that transshipment which is unavoidable on any other route, must encourage and stimulate this direct trade.

A noticeable feature in the shipping of the lakes is the gradual substitution of steam for sailing vessels. One-half of the tonnage of the lakes will soon consist of steamers. In 1851 the proportion was 71,000 tons of steam against 134,000 tons of sail. In the new vessels lately built, the tendency is observable of steamers to usurp the place of sailing vessels on the lakes. The size and capacity of the steamers recently built, are far greater than formerly. Less than a dozen years ago, the first class lake steamers of those days did not ordinarily make the trip from Buffalo to Detroit and back in less than a week or ten days. Now it is performed with ease in three. It is on Lake Erie of all the others that the finest steamers are to be seen, and the port of Buffalo is we suspect more frequented by steamers than any other on the lakes. Within the last few years, great improvement has taken place in the build and arrangements of steamers on Lake Ontario. The new boats are larger, swifter, and more commodious than the old ones, but they are by no means equal to the American boats on Lake Erie. While the class of boats on Lake Ontario has been improving, those on Lake Erie have continued to maintain their superiority.

The tonnage of the lakes, in 1820, amounted to only 5,500 tons; in the next ten years it rose to 20,000 tons; in 1840 to 75,000, and in 1850, 215,787 tons. The ratio of increase has thus been much greater every succeeding decade.—But the present hardly gives any idea of the vast

commerce of which these lakes are destined to become the scene in future. It is estimated the American States which border on the lakes, are of themselves capable of sustaining a population of 22,000,000. Add to this the commerce that will grow up from the Canadian shores of these inland seas, and one may form some conception of the future commerce of the lakes.

Whither will that commerce tend? Will any artificial channels, however gigantic, be anything like adequate to a commerce so prodigious? It will doubtless be shored by numerous outlets to the seaboard, by the various railroads, the St. Lawrence, and the Erie Canal.

When it is considered that these lakes, for so great a distance from the boundary between Canada and the United States, how important it becomes that this commerce should be as free as possible, consistently with the raising of a revenue from customs for the support of government! A few weeks will suffice to tell with what success the treaty negotiations for a reciprocal relaxation of useless and burthensome restrictions between Canada and the United States have been conducted, and in what temper the matter will be viewed in by Congress, which has just assembled at Washington.—*Leader.*

## MONTREAL TRADE FOR 1853.

The editor of the Montreal *Witness* is a merchant as well as an editor, and the information he gives in the following article may be relied upon:—

"The trade of Montreal has upon the whole been larger, we think, last season than any previous year, and perhaps quite as satisfactory. In Groceries, with the exception of the tea sale, the spring trade was not large, and there was a period of unusual inactivity during the summer months; but from the beginning of September to the end of the season there was a very extensive and satisfactory business done. Hardware has been comparatively scarce, and in demand at advancing prices during the season, and the scarcity and demand become more and more marked towards the close. Upon the whole the Hardware business must have been a very profitable one.—In Dry Goods, stocks were heavy, and many kinds in superabundance both in spring and fall; nevertheless, the demand continued good during the summer months, so as to diminish spring stocks materially, and the heavy auctions within the last six weeks have materially diminished the superabundant fall stocks. Upon the whole, the dry good business done has been unusually large, and the greater part of it at a fair profit, but there has been, as is frequently the case in large markets, a portion sold at or under cost, and the stocks for the winter trade are heavier than usual. The importation of American dry goods has in a great measure ceased this year, and the greater part of the supplies of Canada have come from Europe. The boot and shoe trade has been very extensive, and very good this year in Montreal, everything indicating that this will be a great branch of business here. The manufacturing interest has been enterprising and flourishing during the year, and new factories of various kinds have been rapidly constructed. The India Rubber Company has done an extensive business, and woollen and cotton factories are constructing or partly finished, which have been very busily employed so far as they are yet in working order.

The produce business, under almost constantly rising markets, has been very large, and generally speaking, very profitable; and the lines of ocean steamers now projected to run to this port, will doubtless greatly increase its produce business in future. Bank stocks have, under the influence of general prosperity, gone steadily upwards, and the large additions made during the year of banking capital have been all absorbed by the legitimate wants of business, money being now as scarce or scarcer than before these additions took place. Mining stocks experienced a favourable turn, especially Montreal Mining Company Consols, which rose from 2s 6d, less than nothing per share, to, we believe, 85s. This great advance, however, has not been wholly sustained, the price having considerably receded after the payment of a

dividend of 5s per share. Railroad stocks are much better than they were a year ago, but still they are not favorite investments, and are current only at heavy discounts. Real estate and rents have experienced a rise during the year, which is more indicative of prosperity than any of the other points to which we have alluded. The spirit of speculation in building lots is also beginning to manifest itself, and many public and private improvements are going on with great vigor. Steamboats and sailing vessels, whether inland or ocean, have been it is understood doing a lucrative business during the year so much so as to demand a very large increase of tonnage and passenger accommodation for the future. The railway expenditure, on account of the Grand Trunk and Tubular bridge which was calculated on by many as an element in this year's prosperity, has scarcely commenced yet, at all events, near Montreal; but doubtless when that is added to the high prices of farm produce, there will be a still further impetus given to all kinds of material prosperity. The only serious draw back to the foregoing very pleasing review, is, in the first place, the very short crops in Lower Canada, and in the second, the fact, that the high prices of food and fuel will leave the inhabitants of cities very little to expend on anything else."

## RUSSIAN PROWESS.

There seems to be much diversity of opinion among those who have had opportunities of forming an intelligent judgement on the subject in respect to the relative valor, military discipline, and warlike skill of the Turkish and Russian armies, and the probability of the Sultan holding his own against the Czar in the existing war. The London *Morning Chronicle* publishes a letter from Sir Charles Shaw, a British officer of repute, who seems to know quite as much concerning the efficiency of the Russian troops as any one who has undertaken to enlighten the world on the subject. He thinks the military strength of Russia is grossly exaggerated, and expresses something like a soldier's contempt for the corps of serfs and savages who are supposed to endanger the security of Western Europe. He gives substantial reasons for regarding the military strength of the Ottomans being far more considerable than has been heretofore generally believed. He points to the Circassians—themselves half barbarians, and insignificant in numbers—who, for now twenty years, have defied the utmost power of the Czar, routing his best generals, or holding them at bay; to the Poles of 1830, who with raw levies, amidst revolutionary disorganization, withstood the veteran troops of Diebitch, and were with infinite difficulty subdued by the overwhelming forces commanded by Paskiewitch; to the Turkish war of 1828, when Mahmoud's new and undisciplined forces, the successors of the Janissaries, met the invader with such courage that the victory was only obtained over them by bribery and purchase the Governor of Varna being bought by gold to yield that all important fortress; to Bonaparte's campaign of 1812, when the Russians were found incapable of defending their homes and firesides, until the ice-blast came to their aid, and half a million of Frenchmen were suddenly swept out of existence, the victims not of Russian patriotism, but of a Russian winter; to the march of old Suwarrow—the greatest general Russia has yet produced—to the Alps, where Massena met and sent him packing home again, cured of his conceit and shorn of his laurels. Sir Charles Shaw bears testimony to the beneficial results of the new system of discipline now fully adopted into the Turkish armies, and considers that if a fight takes place between the "regular" troops, the Turks will be found, in equal numbers, "at least equal to the Russians;" while he pronounces their light troops or irregulars, more than a match, at any time, for the Cossacks.

**GREAT WESTERN RAILROAD.**—The Galt Branch of the Great Western Railroad is to be opened on the 15th January, for the carriage of freight, and several days earlier for the carriage of passengers. The fare from Galt to Hamilton, 35 miles, will be 3s. 9d.; and the carriage of a barrel of Flour, a shilling, currency. Wheat will be carried at 3d. currency per bushel.—*Patriot.*