

## Marseilles as a Free Port

INVOLVES A RIVER, SEA, AND CANAL ROUTE FROM LONDON TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.—WILL SERVE MORE COUNTRY THAN HAMBURG.—THE FACILITIES OF MARSEILLES, HAMBURG, AND MONTREAL COMPARED.

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The "New York Times" says: With the opening on May 7 of the great canal connecting Marseilles with the River Rhone came the announcement that Marseilles is to become a free port in direct competition with Hamburg. The object in view when designing the canal was to connect Marseilles, the premier French port and one serving numerous industrial establishments, with the centre of France, by a waterway sufficient to deal with a larger amount of goods of greater bulk than could be carried by the existing railway lines. There being a number of French canals connected with the Rhone and its tributary, the Sonne, the new waterway will put Marseilles in direct communication with a large part of Northern Europe and permit a more effective distribution of those products which come to the French port from countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

Hamburg and Bremen are the only great German ports. They lie seventy-five miles apart, on the coast of the North Sea, and, under normal conditions, compete for the foreign trade of the common German hinterland. Their communication with the provinces of East and West Prussia is

mostly by sea; the waterways and railways have little to do with these regions. In the trade with the rest of Germany east of the Elbe, says Professor Edwin J. Clapp of New York University, Hamburg predominates because of the possession of the Elbe and the rivers with which it is connected. Hamburg exercises in Austria a similar preponderance for the same reason. The Elbe flows into the North Sea at Hamburg, the Weser at Bremen, the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Emden, while the Rhine does service for the three foreign ports of Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Antwerp.

The Marseilles canal, which threatens serious consequences to Hamburg's trade, is one of the important public works that were carried on despite the war. The waterway connects Marseilles with Aries on the Rhone, and for part of the distance runs under a tunnel under the North range of hills to the northwest of the great port. It also connects London with the Mediterranean by an almost straight line, making Marseilles the greatest gateway to the East and the central clearing house for all North African trade. Fifty miles long, it has taken twelve years to build, and cost about \$20,000,000. The scheme