

THE EDITOR'S REMINISCENCES OF THE YEAR 1826.

THE SHIPPING INTEREST.

The following letter is from the Liverpool Courier, of the 18th of Oct. 1826. When we were first assured, by the Paper containing this important document, our organ could not permit us to give it insertion; but having been since obliged to do so again, and as the subject may be new and interesting to all our readers, we do not doubt esteem it a very acceptable apology for any thing that we could say under the present head.

NAVIGATION LAWS,

And Mr. HUSKISSON'S SPEECH.

To the Editor of the London Courier.

SIR—I think it is hardly possible to read Mr. Huskisson's speech on our navigation laws, without being alive to the great ability, intelligence, and intimate knowledge of the subject it displays, as well as to the manly candour with which his opinions and views are stated. Your readers are, no doubt, generally aware, that this speech was delivered just before the close of the last Session, when most of the members of both houses had left town, that it has therefore been since revised, and lately published, for the purpose, I presume, of meeting the complaints, and refuting the reasoning of those ship owners and their advocates, who complain of the relaxations and concessions that have been made, in our navigation laws, to the northern nations of Europe, within the last eighteen months.

In treating this most important subject, Mr. Huskisson has taken a wide and luminous view of the origin and progress of those laws, the benefits they conferred, with the effects they produced, and the cause that led to and rendered necessary the alterations which have taken place in relation to our intercourse with the United States, the Brazils and the New Governments in South America, which he applies to the concessions lately made to the northern powers. It is not my intention to follow him over the whole of this ground, but to confine myself, in a great measure, and to draw attention to your readers, to the treaties lately entered into with Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, which, unless counteracted by other measures, appear to me pregnant with ruin to that large proportion of our commercial marine which has hitherto been engaged in the carrying trade between the United Kingdom and the ports of the Baltic.

There are those who, in treating this subject, have gone so far as to impugn to the motives of government; to charge them with a wilful disregard of our shipping interests, and a disposition to sacrifice them at the shrine of those principles of "Free Trade" which they have fearlessly adopted, and applied in other cases with much advantage to the public interests. These are not my opinions. Whilst Mr. Huskisson fully admits the importance of our shipping interests, he contends for the necessity, which he says, led to these concessions under a choice of difficulties, and in doing so, I think it impossible to doubt the sincerity with which he advocates and supports them; but on the contrary, I believe no man can be more desirous than he is to promote the best interests of the country, by every measure he introduces, though in the present instance, I think he has been led into error, and induced to come to conclusions, than are not borne out by his facts, or the reasoning on which he grounds them.

Our right honorable representative begins and concludes his speech by stating, that our commercial marine was the foundation of our power, that commerce and navigation were the two great elements of our strength, wealth, and political importance, that their interests, though generally united, were not always identified, that protection to shipping was a measure of the first necessity, and therefore he admits, that when these two great elements could not be reconciled, commerce must yield and give way in navigation. In these sentiments I most cordially join. We depend only on our navy for protection and conquest, and that navy can only be manned and made effective, by our commercial marine; notwithstanding that this resource was of greater magnitude during late eventful war, than at any former period, it was at last so exhausted as to leave the mercantile shipping almost dependant for their crews on foreign seamen, landmen and boys, and even when it was found inadequate; for it is well known, when several of our ships of war came to anchor with those of the United States, some of them were captured, in consequence of the acknowledged incompetency of their crews, in which the want of men was made up by landmen and boys. However, they may threaten to diminish the source of our power and influence, it must be our duty to guard against, with the most determined vigilance. Our navigation laws have been means which originated with, and upheld our commercial marine; it is therefore, as a great national question, and not as one of individual interest, however important they may be, that I believe it to be our duty to consider and discuss the changes in our navigation laws.

As regards the concessions made to the United States, they were in some degree, warranted from us by existing circumstances. When provisions have been wanted in our West India Colonies, the vicinity of their ports afforded a prompt supply. Their markets had long been the best and most congenial to us, and we have been in a great measure dependant on them for the supply of articles of produce and raw material, particularly cotton, which were not to be obtained in sufficient quantities from other quarters, whilst they only looked to us for a supply of our manufactures, and for which they paid us with their produce. Had we preserved, in the restrictive conflict, the evils to us would have been heavy and permanent, whilst they would have been stimulated to increase the home manufacture of their raw materials, for the supply of their immediate wants, to the exclusion, or at least, prejudice of ours. The expense of ship-building, with them, though rather less than with us, was not materially so, and that of navigation much the same. We, therefore, had reason to suppose, a system of reciprocity would not exclude us from a participation in the carrying trade between the two countries, whilst to maintain a good understanding with the United States was, in every point of view, of the greatest importance to us. Where so much was to be preserved without material sacrifice, I think it cannot be denied, that the concessions were unavoidable and wisely made; yet the results of our shipping interests have been far from satisfactory, or such is the nature and connexion between ship and merchant (America) in the trade, that although we seem entitled to look for an equal share, yet four-fifths or more is carried on in their bottoms! Similar concessions to the Brazils and the South American Governments, were measures of greater safety, and next to nominal in their consequences; our trade with those countries has hitherto been, and must continue to be, carried on in British bottoms, from their want of both means and inducements to create shipping, or attempt competition; but as regards our intercourse with the north of Europe, the case is, indeed, widely different, as I shall endeavour to show.

In considering this branch of the subject, Mr. Huskisson has urged, in support of the concessions made by the late treaties, that a perseverance in restriction on our part was producing, and would be followed up by, countervailing restrictions on the part of those powers. The injuries we should sustain from a conflict of this nature, by enhancing the cost of our imports, narrowing our exports, and impelling their trade into other channels.

The unimportance and supposed inferiority of the shipping of the northern powers, referring particularly to those of Norway and of Prussia. The necessity that he urges as at present existing, from the nature of our corn laws, for employing their shipping in preference, when supplies of foreign grain are required. The superior quality of Baltic timber placing us in a state of dependence on them for supply, alleging that the general intercourse is not more important to them than to us.

That the seamen of those countries form a resource in war for manning our commercial marine. That with the increase in our shipping, up to the conclusion of the last year, the proportion employed in the Baltic trade had also increased, and during that year the demand exceeded the supply. And further, that the distress which has lately prevailed, and been so much complained of by our ship owners, could not be imputed to the concessions made under the treaties in question. In the last position I readily concur; as yet these concessions can hardly be said to be in full operation; and, up to the year 1825, the restrictive, or rather protecting system, remained in force. Towards the conclusion of 1824, the excessive accumulated capital, and the difficulty of finding beneficial employment for it by ordinary means, led, as we all know, to the most unbounded enterprise and speculation in every branch of our trade and commerce which caused a great increase and unusual demand for British as well as foreign shipping, and afforded full employment for both; this had not been the case from the conclusion of the war, when various causes (most correctly detailed by Mr. Huskisson in his speech) led to an increase of means, and a facility of despatch, which exceeded the demands of our trade, though they had been gradually extending themselves into new channels. Rapid advance in prices, was produced by the speculations of 1825, these brought forward excess of supply beyond demand, and the consequences were the ruinous results that followed, and which are too recent and well known to every mercantile man to require further notice from me; but the fact of increased employment for our shipping in 1825, as well as the want of it which succeeded, may, I presume, be safely dismissed, as unconnected with the question under consideration.

Our importations in Prussia consist of timber and corn, with linseed and a small quantity of hemp and flax: our exports are salt, a little colonial produce, and a few manufactured goods, the whole exports being of very little importance or amount. From Sweden we take in beer, tar, and iron, whilst our exports are almost nominal; and, with the exception of corn, when our ports are open, we have very little intercourse with Denmark. But all these countries possess materials and facilities for ship building, with the means of navigation, of the most favourable kind; and by these treaties we have admitted them into a participation in the carrying trade from our possessions in India to other

countries, an intercourse only lately conceded to British shipping by the East India Company, as well as to and from our colonies, and to be the carriers of certain importations from the south of Europe to the United Kingdom, for which they have nothing to give us in return, that I am aware of, whilst, from such a competition, uncalculated, as I consider it, the employment of British shipping threatens to be much broken in upon, and British interests materially injured. These facilities and advantages for ship-building we cannot compete with, and in evidence of this fact, I have only to refer to Mr. Jacq's official report to the Board of Trade, dated in February last, in which he furnishes a statement of the cost of a Danzig ship made to him there, Danzig being one of the most considerable ship building ports in Prussia. He states the price for a vessel of 580 tons register to be under £5 per ton, without the rigging, and about £9 per ton rigged and fitted for sea. The cost of such a vessel in Liverpool in the first case, would not be under £13, and in the last, nearer £20; nor can ships, similar in quality to those of Danzig, be sent to sea, from the most favoured building ports in this kingdom, under £15, being in the proportion of 5 to 3 in favour of the Prussian. Mr. Jacob has also supplied a statement of the cost of navigating such a vessel during a voyage to and from England, for which a period of three months is allowed, and a crew consisting of only twenty in all, is taken; their average wages are about 27s per month, and the whole supply of provisions does not cost quite 6d per day for each during the period named; whereas it is notorious that whilst such a British ship could not be navigated by fewer hands, the wages of the crew are more than double this amount, and the increased cost of provisions at least in the same proportion: the per centage rate of insurance is also the same on both, which increases our disadvantage, in as far as the Prussian has less capital to cover, whilst the duties and port charges on both are now similar. The case, therefore, comparatively stands thus: The Prussian ship costs £5,200 the British £8,700,— difference in favour of Prussia £3,500, on which the premium of insurance to and from England may be taken, including stamp duty at 40s per cent., or £69 12s. The wages and provisions for the Prussian, Mr. Jacob states at £221; to take the English at double is a very low calculation; it would not be sufficient from Newcastle or Whitby, much less from London or Liverpool; but taking it so, and the port charges, at the loading and discharging ports, being now equal on both, at £100 on each, the expense, without insurance to the Prussian, would be £221; to the British ship, with the insurance on extra value, £411 12s., being within less than ten per cent. double the amount, whilst the interest on capital employed, and the depreciation in value from age, and wear and tear, would hold good in the proportion of 5 to 3 against us. In the ports of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark the comparative cost of building and navigation are still lower, and more to our disadvantage; from all which I think it must appear evident to every one, that it is impossible for us to maintain a competition under such disadvantages.

[To be Continued.]

MELANCHOLY SHIPWRECKS. Advocate, Jan. 2, 1827. On the 14th of December last, the schooner Industry, Lowren Fox, master, and Robert Temple, mate, belonging to the Port of St Andrews, sailed from thence for Windsor, having on board a cargo of boards and iron—passengers, J. L. Des Barres, Esq. Comptroller of the Customs, of Prince Edward Island, and Mr. Palmer Andrew Inglis, of Windsor: she arrived at Eastport the same day, 15th, two other passengers joined the vessel, Mrs. Flegg of Windsor, and Mr. Robert Currie of Horton—same day made sail, wind was w. stood up the bay all night. 16th, light winds from the eastward—stood to the northward all day and night, 17th, light winds from the eastward: now being off Quaco continued plying to windward all high water, waiting an opportunity to enter the harbor—put in and remained at anchor till 12 o'clock that night. 18th, light winds from the west—made sail at 1 o'clock, a. m. whilst standing up the bay struck on the Quaco ledges, at nearly day light, the tide being then on the ebb; on the flood, the wind sprang up fresh from the westward, when all on board thought it advisable to take to the sea, each taking with them a small quantity of clothing neglecting provisions. Endeavored to make Advocate Harbor, but the wind having hauled so much to the southward the boat would not weather Cape Cingicut; were then obliged to stand for a small cove at the mouth of Cumberland bay, where the boat landed, in a heavy surf, about 9 o'clock 19th, wind e. a heavy snow storm, rain, and ice, led to the boat again, but from the inclemency of the weather were obliged to put back. Captain Fox and Mr. Inglis now started for Apple River through the woods, both remained anxiously waiting their return, 21st, Mr. Inglis returned to the boat and said Fox had perished in the night—Mr. Inglis's fingers were slightly frozen, 22d, very heavy rain, 23d, intensely cold and heavy snow, 24th, weather still very cold, 25th, weather more moderate, about 12 o'clock launched the boat, but she immediately filled and dashed to pieces in the surf; all the crew were now abandoned of leaving the cove by water, 26th, Mr. Currie started from the cove for Advocate Harbour, and by all night in the woods. 27th, very heavy rain—Currie still endeavoring to find Advocate, but from fatigue was obliged to lay all night on the beach. 28th, part of the day moderate, the latter part very cold, accompanied with heavy snow; at dark Currie reached within half a mile of the settlement; could proceed no further, his feet being frozen. In this state he laid down, where he was discovered by Mr. John Blinckhorn, one of the inhabitants, who happened to be passing by by chance who procured assistance and led him to a neighbouring house. 28th, at an early hour a party of five men set out in search of the sufferers at the cove—the party stopped all night in the woods 30th, the party in search arrived at the cove at about 9 o'clock with some bread, the only food seen by the sufferers from the time of their landing—on same day four of the party returned to Advocate for a boat 31st, boat arrived at the cove, all embarked and landed at Advocate same day. All here except Mr. Des Barres are confined to bed.

The Eastport Revenue Cutter went on shore between Moorepecky Head and Little River, in a S. E. gale, and all on board (23) perished.—H. R. Gaz. Jan. 24.

Boston Jan. 12. Extract of a letter from the Capt. of the Schooner Seven Brothers, to his friend in Connecticut:

"I fell in with the wreck of the British brig Rival, with a load of fish bound to Jam. and took off the mate and three seamen. They had been 36 days on the quarter deck, the vessel being full of water, and both masts gone by the board. You cannot picture to yourself their situation; they were a complete rack of bones, and naked; their clothes had washed from them; their legs were swollen to an enormous size, and full of running sores. For 11 days previous to my taking them off, they had made use of their own urine, as a substitute for water, and the blood of a shark they had taken. They looked like a blood thirsty set, their heads full of clotted blood, which they had sucked from the shark. Sir H. Ward, Gov. Gen. and Commander-in-Chief of Barbadoes, with a salary of 30,000 dollars, gave them, yesterday, two dollars each, by their giving a receipt for it.

MONTREAL, Dec. 18. Remarkable Circumstance.—On Tuesday last the body of a young woman was conveyed to the English burying ground for interment. When the funeral party were about entering the gate a respectable medical gentleman of this city was coming up; upon observing him the relations of the (apparently) deceased, stopped the procession, and begged that Dr. R. would examine the body, as, from the colour of the face, they suspected that vitality was not really extinct. On examining the body in the dead house the Dr. was decidedly of the opinion that she was not dead. The face is as fresh as ever it looked—the lips are red, but there is no pulse or animation since Tuesday. The body is kept in the coffin in the dead room which is heated to a high degree that putrefaction may be caused; but since the time when the body was placed there, there has been no change.—Yesterday forenoon her mouth was of a blackish hue in the evening it became red. Several physicians examined the body daily.

Since writing the above we have heard that putrefaction has commenced.

A melancholy accident happened on the Keswick Ridge, Parish of Douglas, on Saturday last. A young man was felling a tree in the woods, when just before it began to fall, a little boy who was with him (his brother, both sons of Capt. Reed) got upon one of the limbs which branched in a direction where no harm could have been apprehended—but unfortunately, when the axeman made his last blow, the axe glanced off from the tree, flew out of the young man's hand, and fell down below the shoulder blade of the little boy; and, dreadful to relate, the whole of the axe was buried in his flesh. We have not yet heard whether he boy is in imminent danger.

P O O R C O P Y