

THE

SUPREMACY OF THE SEAS,

OR FACTS, VIEWS, STATEMENTS, AND OPINIONS

RELATING TO

The American and British Steamers

BETWEEN THE U. STATES AND LIVERPOOL.

FROM AMERICAN AND BRITISH SOURCES.

WITH THE MEMORIAL OF THE PROPRIETORS OF THE NEW YORK
AND LIVERPOOL LINE OF AMERICAN STEAMERS.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY GIDEON AND CO.

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III A memorial having been presented to Congress, relating to the American line of Steamers from New York to Liverpool, it is deemed proper to present, in connexion with the same, the American and British views on the great question of supremacy of the seas, which, on both sides of the Atlantic, is now supposed to be involved in the competition of the New York and British lines. The articles here presented will be found to embody a great mass of interesting and instructive facts, and may enable the reader to form just opinions and views respecting the claims of said memorial, as well as upon the pending national contract.

MEMORIAL

OF

E. K. COLLINS AND HIS ASSOCIATES,

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America.

The undersigned, contractors for carrying the United States Mail between New York and Liverpool, respectfully ask the attention of Congress to the statements and the petition of this their memorial.

It is now about four years since your memorialists entered into a contract with the Secretary of the Navy for building five steamships, to be employed as a mail line between this country and England. At that time England enjoyed undisputed supremacy in the steam navigation of the Atlantic, and monopolized the carriage of the passengers and letters of the world. In the interval that has since elapsed, your memorialists have built four steamers of the largest size, with accommodations for the comfort of passengers far exceeding every thing of the kind before known; of a speed that compares favorably with that of the steamers of the competing English lines, and which they attained only after ten years' experience; notwithstanding the inexperience and consequent inferiority of their engineers and firemen, the steamers of the American line have made the shortest passages to the westward, and, with but two exceptions, (and those of three hours only) the shortest passage to the eastward, that have ever yet been accomplished. It is admitted on both sides of the water, that the ships and their steam-machinery, are equal to the best of British build and manufacture. This success has been attained at very great expense, and under very disadvantageous circumstances.

The manufacture of machinery, much larger than had ever before been built in this country, was disproportionately expensive, (much larger than was anticipated) and the materials employed in it were better and higher-priced than were ever before used for the same purposes. The cost was still enhanced (in comparison with that of the British lines) by the high prices of labor; and the result is, that when the line is completed, so great will have been the original outlay that the insurance alone will amount to \$228,000, being considerably more than one-half the sum agreed to be paid by Government for the transportation of the mails. Add to this, that the American line suffer dis-

advantages from the inexperience of its engineers and firemen, besides paying them 50 per cent. more than is paid by the English steamers; and it will hardly be necessary to add, that your memorialists cannot maintain a successful competition with them except upon the grant of such aid from our own Government, as on the basis of tonnage will correspond to that which the English admiralty extends to the Cunard line. Even on the same terms, the system of maintaining steam-packets convertible into war steamers, is recommended by its economy; for the cost to Government of laying up in ordinary such a steamer as the Baltic, or the Pacific, with interest on the outlay, deterioration, &c., would be \$150,000 per annum; as may be ascertained by reference to the accounts of the steamer Mississippi.

Your memorialists therefore respectfully solicit from Congress an extension of the time in which to refund the money loaned to them by the Government, so that it may be repaid 10 per cent. annually; that amount to be deducted from the last quarterly payment in each year.

They also pray that authority may be given to the Secretary of the Navy to increase their annual compensation, having regard to the tonnage and dimensions of the steamers employed, and to the average per ton allowed to the other American lines, by their existing contracts.

Your memorialists further pray that the steamers, in time of peace, may be placed under the exclusive control of your memorialists, and be officered by them, as they apprehend that they can in no other way secure that entire responsibility which is indispensable to the perfect efficiency and safety of the service.

Your memorialists respectfully represent, that they have entered upon this enterprise with no exclusive views of commercial profit, but on national grounds, and to prevent the undisputed supremacy of the seas from falling into the hands of a rival power. The contract of your memorialists calls for ships of 2,000 tons burthen. Your memorialists were soon persuaded that with steamers of this size they could never compete successfully with the improvements and increase of the British line; and they determined to augment their bulk to about 3,000 tons. The enterprise was commenced by an incorporated company, who were the assignees of the original contractors. Of the stock but \$1,100,000 was subscribed, and the difference between that and \$2,500,000, the entire amount which has been expended, has been made up, with the exception of the Government advance of \$385,000, mainly by the directors of the company. Any portion of this stock may be obtained at par by any one who is disposed to purchase it.

Your memorialists have little expectation of deriving pecuniary advantages from this contract, even with the solicited alterations. They are merely anxious that it should be put upon grounds which will enable them to meet the extraordinary efforts of the British steamers and the British Government and people, with an efficient and successful competition. The question has assumed a national interest. If it is understood that the American line will be sustained by the American

Government, to the extent necessary to place it on an equal footing with the British steamers, your memorialists have no doubt that, on this route, to which all the energies of Great Britain, commercial and governmental, have been directed, they will be able to achieve a complete triumph. If this aid is withheld, there is no doubt that British capital and experience, backed by the assistance of the Government, will outstrip all American competition.

Your memorialists have said that they have not entered upon this enterprise with the mere expectation of pecuniary advantages. They now declare that, if their petition should be granted by the Government, they will, at any time within six months after the passage of the act which they solicit, surrender their contract, with all its incidents and advantages, to the Secretary of the Navy, or to any individuals that may be indicated by him, on the repayment to them of the actual disbursements that have accrued in its execution. They desire merely that the monopoly which has hitherto been enjoyed may be wrested from our commercial rivals, and that the supremacy upon the ocean, which will result to the most efficient steam-marine of the world, may be at least shared with Great Britain by the United States. They believe that on this ground they will not appeal to the American Government in vain, but that all the necessary legislative aid for the accomplishment of this most desirable object will be readily granted by the representatives of the American people.

AMERICAN VIEWS.

From the Washington Republic, February 11.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SEAS.

We observe that Mr. YULEE presented a few days since, in the Senate, the memorial of the contractors for the *New York and Liverpool mail steam line*, praying for some modification of their contract, with additional aid from the Government, to enable them to compete successfully with the British steamers. It is to be inferred from the memorial that, under the present arrangements, the American line cannot be sustained. The question to be solved is, whether or not the end in view is of sufficient importance to induce the extension of further assistance.

In consequence of our progress in the art of navigation, we had, a few years since, established between Europe and America the finest line of sailing packets that had ever crossed the ocean. Such was their reputation for safety and speed, that they very nearly engrossed the trade between the two continents; and especially between the United States and British islands. The CUNARD line of steamers was established for the purpose of wresting from us this material source of wealth and prosperity. So important was the object, that the British government endowed the enterprise with an immense outlay of capital, amounting, with subsequent grants, to nearly a million of dollars annually. The experiment proved highly successful. The vessels were excellent, and conducted with exceeding judgment and skill. For a period of ten years only a single vessel was lost, and the arrivals and departures attained nearly the exactitude of land conveyances. The inevitable results were, that the letter carriage, yielding thousands of dollars annually, with the transportation of bullion, passengers, and the finer and costlier kinds of merchandise, were almost wholly engrossed by the CUNARD line. Thus, not only was a large item of our best commerce taken from us, but the high road of travel and mail communication with the old world was transferred to the hands of our rivals. At the same time it was obvious that the two countries had changed positions—the Americans had lost their ascendancy, and yielded it to Great Britain.

The American, or Collins' line of mail steamers was established with a view to reverse this state of things; to recover the commerce which we had created, but which had been thus forced from us; to restore it to its natural and legitimate channels, and, in short, to assert and maintain American ascendancy where it had before existed. The enterprise attracted great attention on both sides of the Atlantic, and especially in England, where it soon became a theme of national interest and inquiry. When the American steamers got under way, and

demonstrated not only our capacity to excel in beauty of model, but to contend successfully in the race of speed, the people of the three kingdoms seemed to start as from a profound lethargy, and to cry out that the sceptre of the seas was in danger of being wrested from the accustomed grasp of Britannia.

From this time the British press teemed with articles calculated to excite the fears and rouse the pride of the nation to meet what they deemed an important crisis. The beauty, speed, and success of the American craft generally, were portrayed in vivid colors; in some cases they were even exaggerated, as a means of straining the national spirit up to the emergency. The columns of the London *Times*, *Chronicle*, *News*, &c., either lightened with ominous prophecy, or thundered with disastrous fulfilment. Many of these articles have been spread before the American public. We quote from another paper devoted to maritime affairs, and therefore a high and technical authority on this subject—the London *Nautical Standard*, January 4—for the purpose of showing, in precise terms, the train of British thought, feeling, and policy, developed by the competition of the American line of Atlantic steamers. It may be well to premise that the editorial motto of this paper is as follows: “*Whosoever commands the Sea, commands the Trade of the World; whosoever commands the trade of the World, commands the Treasures of the World, and consequently the World itself.*” It is through such spectacles that the British people read such passages as the following:

“Many times has our voice been raised, as a warning to our commercial men, to put their house in order, and not wait until it be too late. We saw coming events casting their shadows before them, and predicted that their supineness would, if not aroused in time, be their ruin. We put before them facts which were, from time to time, submitted to our consideration, not, as it has been said, with the view to frighten them, but only and solely to awaken them to their real position.

“*A people, born as it were yesterday*, has, from its own origin and intuitive powers, already succeeded in seizing a large share in the trade of the world, and, if left to itself, would in a short time have monopolized the whole commercial transatlantic shipping connexions between the old and new continents. Our warnings have been heard at the eleventh hour. We are glad and rejoice sincerely that it is so; it is not too late yet. It will now depend on the measures to be adopted if England will maintain that preponderance she has so long enjoyed, or if she will sink from the first rank in naval nations to play a secondary part.

“Now that the spirit of the British race seems to arouse from its slumbers—now that security has proved to be a snare covered with fine appearances, but deceitful and delusive to the highest degree; now that we have seen what could be done by energetic perseverance, what other nations can do, we awake to the sense of the danger that surrounds us, and wonder that we have been so long before perceiving our true situation. The whole commercial transactions of the States could not, by

any stretch, provide for more than half the present tonnage afloat, or actually building. The manifest intention is to trade abroad and to supersede other nations in the carriage of goods, *to give employment to seamen, and to create by that means a mercantile navy, which, in case of war, might immediately produce a powerful manned navy, for aggressive purposes on the foreign and colonial possessions of European States.*

“But if, as we anticipate, the English nation, now awakening from her dreams of security, sees her former supremacy perilled by her long undisturbed indolence; if Englishmen, now seeing their true position and the encroachments made on their trade, resolving to shake off the trammels of old traditions or prejudices, set fairly and heartily to work; not only we do not despair of a successful issue, but, on the contrary, *we predict to them a complete restoration of those high privileges which they were once wont to consider their rights.*”

Here, then, is a glimpse at the mighty rivalry which has been excited, and is now openly avowed on the other side of the Atlantic. It is perhaps as keenly felt here, though not so vauntingly expressed. It is pushed by British writers quite beyond commercial competition to the question of armed supremacy upon the sea; and the traditional jealousy and hereditary pride of England is excited by intimations that the Americans cherish the audacious scheme of usurping her birthright as legitimate Queen of the ocean!

It is of a competition thus national, and thus existing between the two great maritime powers of the earth, that the American steamers have come to be considered, in some sense, the pivot or the hinge. It was in the track of this line that England supposed she possessed high advantages, being more accustomed to the turbulent waters of the north Atlantic; more trained to battle with its tempestuous seasons; and especially more familiar with the rocky and foggy coasts at the eastern extremity of the line. It was here, also, that the British government had bestowed its largest and most effective pecuniary aid.

It was well reasoned that, if the Americans could beat here, they could beat anywhere or everywhere. Hence the intense interest with which the rival lines on this route are regarded. The American steamers, upon their arrival in England, have been the subjects of the most careful and critical examination. Every trip they have made has been registered, timed, scrutinized, and compared, with anxious exactitude. The decision is still pending, and the issue of the conflict is likely to depend upon the course adopted by our Government in relation to the memorial already alluded to.

If the American line shall be forced to abandon their enterprise, the rich commerce wrested from our packets by the CUNARD line will be continued in British hands. Nor will this be the end. Most of what remains on this route will also be taken away, and English merchants will reap, at our expense, the benefits of the business naturally developed under the auspices of an improved navigation. Our mails, our Government despatches, and the best means of intercourse, will be in

their hands, under circumstances at all times humiliating, and, in case of national excitement or collision, of serious inconvenience or mischief.

This American Atlantic line has been viewed in this country as destined to be the beginning link in a grand chain of communication, extending through this country to California, and thence to Asia. The importance of such a line, in a national point of view, cannot be overrated. But if the Atlantic portion shall fail, the basis of this entire enterprise is annihilated. What has happened upon the Atlantic is likely to take place on the Pacific; and we shall doubtless see the richest commerce, between California and the eastern coast of Asia, engrossed by some British Cunard—triumphing by aid of government patronage over the best efforts of American enterprise. Nor are the effects likely to stop here; it is quite evident that the far-sighted British merchants and politicians do not intend it shall stop here. If the American line is crushed, the British are the victors before the world. What a moral effect must this have to discourage our commerce, and to stimulate that of the British! Must it not drive capital, courage, and enterprise from one to the other? And let it be remembered, this is not a common case of mere private competition. The government purse of Great Britain is pledged to its support; and with this mighty power added to their triumph, will not an ascendancy be gained by them which years cannot recover? It is quite evident that these things are profoundly pondered by British statesmen; and we cannot doubt that the cloud now hanging over the American line is looked to as the very threshold of that era in which they are to enter upon the success they contemplate and covet. We believe, indeed, that they calculate upon the inaction of Congress, and deem this an assurance of our failure and their success.

It is not possible to measure the effect of such British triumph upon our navigation, generally. Our steamers to Bremen and Havre, already threatened by low and losing fares from the CUNARD line, may speedily find direct British competition in the field. A race will be run for the ascendancy in the boundless trade of the Pacific now opening before the world—not on this side, in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico alone—but along the whole length of the western coast of our continent. Since the opening of the California mines, from Oregon to Valparaiso, a quickening impulse has been imparted to commerce. The Sandwich Islands have acquired new importance; Central America has become the theatre of gigantic schemes, for connecting two oceans, hitherto kept asunder by the landmarks of the Almighty. Peru has been awakened from its slumber of centuries, and Chili has suddenly sprung into the active area of commercial competition. A flourishing trade, with its vivifying influence, has been called into existence along a coast-line of three thousand miles, by our people and our enterprise. It belongs to us to hold the mastery of this traffic, not only that we may reap its harvest, but that we may impart to the countries with which it is connected our political and social sympathies. Yet British

competition is certain to meet us here; and it is a question whether we are to contend with a people who have mastered us upon the Atlantic, and who, therefore, bring to the struggle upon the Pacific the conscious power and energy of conquerors.

Such are some of the public considerations which are forced upon the mind by the possibility that the American line of steamers may be compelled to surrender. It is impossible to consider it as a mere question of individual capital and private enterprise. Both Britain and the United States have made the competing lines, to some extent, national, by direct government patronage; the vessels of both are, contingently, government ships, and that, too, for naval purposes. Even if we treat the American line as a private interest, and refuse to sustain it on that ground, we leave it to be overborne by the national purse and policy of Great Britain, and in a contest which involves our own national interests to the extent of uncounted millions.

To these general views it may be well to add a few particular facts as to the American line. Within the short compass of three years, this company has built and put into operation four steamships, of an aggregate burden of 11,000 tons. The vessels are acknowledged to be the finest models that ever floated. Their passages are among the shortest ever known. They have met with neither hindrance nor delay, except in the winter passages; here, a want of experience has caused some irregularities, which are, however, now provided against. One vessel is missing, and her fate being unknown, she cannot be made the basis of calculation here. It may be said, in general, that the American line has at least demonstrated our capacity to sustain a successful and triumphant competition with the British line, and thus to maintain the credit of our navigation before the world.

In the progress of this enterprise the American company have met with unexpected difficulties. It has been necessary to construct machinery, and to devise, make, or import tools of larger dimensions and more massive form than existed in the country before; all of which may hereafter be useful, if not essential, in the event of war. The qualities of the various kinds of iron have been tested and the best ascertained; thus enabling future machinists to construct engines that may be relied upon for the severest ocean service. They have, as above suggested, acquired by experience a knowledge of the peculiar difficulties of winter steam navigation upon the north Atlantic, and ascertained the means of countervailing them. They have thus, at great expense, made extensive experiments, and largely advanced the knowledge and means essential to success in steam navigation.

Other difficulties have been experienced which are more annoying. "The contest," says the Philadelphia North American, "is not a fair one, and, so far as the steamships are concerned, the rivalry is conducted on the side of the British on such principles, and with a resort to such expedients to secure the advantage, as show the importance attached by them to the struggle, and their determination to be victors at every hazard and at any cost. In a commercial aspect,

the rivalry has been pursued by them in a pitiful, huckstering spirit, which has infected the press, the public, the very Government, as well as those directly interested in the British ships. A great many sly means have been used to prejudice the character of the American ships by the circulation of unfounded rumors of defective machinery, accidents, &c.; the post office authorities threw, as long as they decently could, the weight of their official influence against the American ships; and the immediate managers of the English lines have always been ready with the small device of reduced freights to drive away shippers."

A few days since, in an article on this subject, we made statements analagous to these. They were questioned by the *Albion*, a *British colonial gazette*, published at New York, and one relating to the unfairness of the British press was somewhat flatly denied. We did not allude to open statements; for we were fully aware that, in general, the American steamers have been praised by the London papers. We had in view such insidious paragraphs as the following from the Liverpool journal of October 12: "*The Atlantic is under examination at New York, and the Arctic is to take her place.*" Both statements were utterly without foundation, and could only have been the work of invention; the sinister import is too obvious to leave a doubt on the subject. If the New York *Albion* will consult its Liverpool namesake for the last six months, we are assured it will find abundance of similar statements and rumors, fully bearing out our assertions. The Latin quotation of the *Albion*, with its context, importing that the misfortunes of the Collins' line had drawn us into an "ebullition of spite," were too natural and national to provoke a reply. The material parts of our article are confirmed by the above extract from the *North American*, and, indeed, by the small criticisms of the *Albion* itself; for surely it would not have confined itself to fishing for minnows, if more substantial sport had been at hand.

We have been drawn into a much more extended notice of this subject than we intended. We cannot conclude, however, without observing, that it seems to us that a more inopportune occasion could hardly be selected than the present for resting upon any half-way and inadequate measures of competition. Nothing is more apparent than that wise policy, and the feeling of the people demand a national spirit, tone, and action on the part of the Government. No State document ever received a more hearty response from the people than Mr. WEBSTER'S late letter to the Austrian minister; and we believe that the encouragement of no branch of national interest on the part of Congress would be more heartily approved throughout the country, than that which aims at our maritime independence of Great Britain. Our past experience and past history have taught us all to regard this as linked alike with individual prosperity and national power, peace, and renown.

From the Philadelphia North American.

THE EMPIRE OF THE SEAS.

The rapid growth of the American steam marine—the indications furnished by at least the summer passages of the New York steamships across the Atlantic—in connexion with the proof, seen in the well known voyage of the *Oriental* from Hong Kong to London, of the superiority of American over British sailing vessels, have produced no little alarm among the patriots of the fast-anchored isle, who dread the transference of the empire of the seas, so long maintained by England against the world, to the hands of their enterprising cousins of the new world. It is very certain that a struggle for commercial supremacy is going, and has long been going, on between the two countries; and it is, perhaps, also certain that the victory would be speedily acquired by American energies over British pride and British capital, were those energies properly fostered by Government, and not exposed to suffer, as they do, from the continual discouragements of an unfriendly and unnatural revenue system.

The contest is not a fair one; and, so far as the steamships are concerned, the rivalry is conducted on the side of the British on such principles, and with a resort to such expedients to secure the advantage, as show the importance attached by them to the struggle, and their determination to be victors at every hazard and at any cost. In a commercial aspect, the rivalry has been pursued by them in a pitiful, huckstering spirit, which has infected the press, the public, the very Government, as well as those directly interested in the British ships. A great many sly means have been used to prejudice the character of the American ships by the circulation of unfounded rumors of defective machinery, accidents, &c.; the post office authorities threw, as long as they decently could, the weight of their official influence against the American ships; and the immediate managers of the English lines have always been ready with the small device of reduced freights to drive away shippers. The following extract from a speech by Mr. Butler King, of Georgia, delivered in the House of Representatives as far back as July 19, 1848, will be remembered as showing that this latter game was resorted to, at that early period, against the first American steamer which visited Liverpool:

“ In the discussions which have been occasioned by the appropriations to meet the contracts for this mail service, it has been argued that it is quite unnecessary for the Government to contribute in any degree to sustain it; that private enterprise, if left untrammelled ‘ by Government schemes and legal enactments,’ would sustain itself against all foreign competition. To show the fallacy of this reasoning, it is only necessary to state a few facts connected with the recent voyage of the steamer ‘ United States’ to Liverpool. The price of freight from Liverpool to New York, as established by the Cunard line, is £7 sterling per ton, and the price of passage £30 per head. While the United States was in the dock at Liverpool, the agents of the Cunard line, to

prevent freight and passengers going in her, reduced the price of freight to £4 per ton by the 'Hibernia,' and to £2 1s. by the 'Niagara,' and they offered to take passengers as low as £12 per head.

"It was announced at the same time, in Harnden's Liverpool circular, that the old rates would be resumed immediately after the departure of the American ship. The British line, sustained by the Government, was enabled to adopt this course with impunity in competition with a ship sustained by individual enterprise alone; and it must, I suppose, be admitted that our citizens, if not aided in undertakings of this sort by their own Government, would be quite incapable of competing for any length of time with so powerful an opposition. This being the case, it must be apparent to any one who will investigate the subject that, in a very short time, the most valuable portion of our carrying trade would pass into the bottoms of these British mail packets."

The more recent case of the Franklin will not be forgotten, where the similar artifice was attempted—to the honor of the French shippers, without any success—of offering to take freight from Havre to New York at ten dollars a ton, against the thirty dollars or upwards, the regular rates, asked by the owners of the Franklin.

In our efforts to place American steam navigation on a safe footing, we shall, doubtless, have to contend with this sort of policy, and with all the interested prejudices of our English rivals—who have the merit of sticking by each other in every contest, even when justice is not altogether on their side—until we have overcome both, as we shall ultimately do. In the mean while, the moral that lies at the bottom of the controversy should not be overlooked. In the British view, national safety is interwoven with the idea of marine supremacy. Every steam packet now built in England is a steam-frigate added to the British navy. Every American steam packet should be regarded as a similar addition to the American navy. Every thing should be done by us to stimulate the increase of American steam ships, and to direct their construction so as to render them capable of being employed, whenever necessary, as arms of the national defence.

From the Washington Republic.

THE SUPPLY OF FUEL TO THE COLLINS LINE OF STEAMERS.

Owing to the concurrence of two of the steamers of the Collins line recently running short of coal, and the painful anxiety which is felt respecting the absence of a third, rumors prejudicial to the owners and managers of the line have crept into circulation. We find in the New York *Herald* a communication from an engineer, which corrects some of these erroneous reports, and furnishes some explanation of the reasons which caused the Baltic and Arctic to put into Provincetown and Halifax to replenish their fuel. We presume that every American feels a proper pride in the reputation which our steamers have acquired for speed, and

a solicitude that their management should also be unexcelled. Renewed efforts were necessary to win us the palm for the one, and untiring energy and diligence will assuredly never be wanting to secure us the meed for the other.

It is only those who fail to profit by experience who are justly censurable for neglect. None of the Collins line of steamers, we are informed, have ever put to sea without an abundant supply of coal; but that supply has proved insufficient in two instances, from a misapprehension which could only be corrected by long observation and scientific inquiry. This misapprehension was in largely increasing the fuel on encountering a gale, the reverse of which, it appears, is the proper practice, and that which is pursued by the British steamers. Sir Edward Belcher, of the British royal navy, has communicated the fact that, when steamers are heading a gale, it is necessary to check the draft in order to preserve or increase the heat, because experience, he says, has demonstrated that the immense volume of cold air which is poured into the furnaces at such a time, with an open draft, though it increases the combustion of the coal, yet chills the gases, and prevents the generation of an amount of heat which could be obtained from a more moderate fire with the draft partially cut off. Moreover, it is ascertained that in certain cases even an increased physical momentum of the vessel is a positive disadvantage, inasmuch as by it the vessel is driven with such force, when descending a wave into the recurring wave, that her average speed is greatly diminished. We have no doubt the Collins line will be prompt to avail itself of these and other valuable suggestions which are derived from experience; while, at the same time, it is plain that the owner and directors should be exculpated from all criminal intent or indifference in the matter referred to. We subjoin the communication of the *Herald*:

“*The Collins line of steamers.*—The late passages of these steamers being such as to induce, with the public at large, impressions unfavorable to the capacities of these vessels for western passages in the winter season, it is but justice to Mr. Collins, to the directors of this line, and to the American public, who have manifested so much interest and satisfaction in the hitherto performances of the pioneers of this line, that they should be set aright as to the cause which has led to the late interruptions in the homeward trips of the ‘Baltic’ and ‘Arctic.’

“All of the vessels of this line consume fuel, *pro rata* for the power of their engines, in a less quantity than any marine steamers yet constructed in any country; and they also have capacity for the stowage of it, commensurate with their consumption, in a proportion greater than has ever yet been attained or allotted to a steamer for a like length of route. Their deficiency, then, has not arisen from the causes that have compelled other Liverpool or European steamers in western passages to put into Halifax, viz., undue consumption and insufficient capacity; but it has arisen from an undue estimate of the severity and difficulties of western passages at this season, and too much preference being given to freight; added to which there was an error in the manner of working

the furnaces of the Baltic, which was not discovered until the consumption of coal had been such as to compel her to put in for a supply. Probably the same error has been fallen into with the management of the boilers of the Arctic.

“ There is another difficulty that these steamers, in common with all American steamers, are subjected to, and that is, the inexperience of their firemen. The importance of this point is one that cannot be appreciated by the public ; but it is one pregnant with more loss of time and waste of fuel than I dare venture to assert with any confidence of its general credit. It has been said, and with truth, too, by those connected with the Cunard line, ‘ Give us your vessels and we will beat you a day;’ and they might have added, and save ten tons of coal per day.

“ Of the capacities of these vessels I am as cognizant as an intimate knowledge of the mechanical details of all of them, and a witness of the performance at sea (and in heavy weather, too) of one of them, can make me, and I have the fullest conviction of their unsurpassed qualities in speed and endurance. The recurrence of the error which has led to the Baltic and Arctic running short of fuel has already been guarded against, and they will assume and maintain the position they have the elements for, and which is one that will meet the fullest wishes of the country which has produced them.

“ Of the Atlantic, a knowledge of her capacities as a sea boat, and of her endurance as a structure, induces the opinion that, having become short of fuel, or her engines, probably her wheels, having failed her, she had been compelled to put back when near to this coast, and had not arrived in season to communicate with the Arctic, prior to the sailing of this vessel on the 11th instant. If, however, neither of these causes has led to her non-arrival here, the failure is not from weakness, or insufficient sea-going qualities, but is one arising from causes not confined to this line, or American steam navigation.

“ ENGINEER.”

From the Washington Republic, January 28.

THE COLLINS AND CUNARD LINES.

From the commencement of CUNARD'S line, as every body knows, it was favored by our whole country. New York and Boston vied with each other, at the very outset, in offering it civilities and facilities. When the first of the line arrived at Boston, the occasion was celebrated by high festivities, in which the city authorities and leading men of the State participated. The officers were fêted and feasted, and CUNARD himself became the hero of the day. From that time to this the American feeling toward the CUNARD line has been generous—not to say magnanimous. For the first five or six years a series of untoward accidents occurred, crippling several of the vessels, and delaying or inter-

ing their passages. One of them—the Columbia—was lost on her way from Boston to Halifax, and the large number of passengers escaped a watery grave, almost by miracle. But in all these cases no spirit of hypercriticism was manifested here; on the contrary, excuse and apology overlooked every accident, and explained away every failure.

When COLLINS's line commenced operations this state of things still continued, the rivalry being regarded here mainly as to its tendency to improve steam navigation. If our national pride led us to wish for the triumph of the American steamers, every man in the country would have looked with disdain upon any attempt, on our part, to gain an advantage not due to superiority in skill, courage, or energy. But how has this liberal spirit been met in England? It is now well known that a series of tricks has been resorted to there, for the purpose of cutting off the patronage of the COLLINS steamers, and diverting it to the Royal Mail line. This is done by false statements in the newspapers, and injurious rumors spread over the country in various ways. Some months since, when the passengers were about to set out from Paris for Liverpool, to embark in the Pacific, a story, utterly without foundation, was put in circulation, that she had broken her bed-plate. The passengers, deceived by this story, of course waited a few days, and took their departure in the CUNARD steamer, which followed. Insidious statements, of a similiar kind, have frequently been set afloat at the critical moments when the American vessels were about to depart; and we are informed that some of these have been traced to interested parties. That such is their origin, the times at which they appear, and the system with they are propagated, leave little room to doubt. The general feeling of local interest, and the national prejudice in England, give these rumors an abiding, not to say fatal, effect. Well knowing that the reputation of a ship, in which men risk their lives and their property, is of the most delicate character, and may be ruined by the lightest breath of rumor, the operators in this case have found it both convenient and easy to poison the railways and thoroughfares of England with their slanders. A gentleman interested in the COLLINS line, travelling in England a short time since, was told by an intelligent stranger whom he met in one of the cars, that the American steamers were built of green timber, and were already falling to pieces. Another gentleman, being lately in London, was kindly and gratuitously advised by a bank clerk—a total stranger—not to take passage in any American steamer, as they were universally considered unsafe!

Such is a specimen of the artifices now practised in England against the COLLINS steamers. The Bremen and Havre lines have been less the objects of this species of warfare, because they are less direct competitors of the CUNARD ships. Yet, as the Franklin was recently taking in her freight at Havre, in order to strike a fatal blow at her success, the CUNARD line announced that they would take freight from that port to New York for ten dollars a ton, which was about one-third of ehafair rate. This was done while the shippers from Liverpool were

held to the ordinary prices of thirty or thirty-five dollars a ton. We rejoice to say that the agents of the Franklin disdained to enter into this corrupting competition, and even the shippers at Havre scorned the bribe. The Franklin came with a full freight, at regular prices, leaving the CUNARD line fully exposed before the world, as to the spirit with which it is conducted, and that too without even the solace of success.

We note these facts, not for the purpose of provoking retaliation in kind, for we hope and trust the Americans will never descend to this unworthy species of warfare. We notice it only to keep our countrymen apprised of the character of those with whom we have to deal in the impending competition, and, indeed, in every competition with British agents.

Though we have no doubt of the final issue of this rivalry in steam navigation, we conceive it proper to make a few suggestions, which may moderate our expectations of immediate supremacy. It must be remembered, that, from the beginning, steam navigation was mainly employed by us upon our rivers. These, hundreds or thousands of miles in length, traversing the very depths of the country, naturally became the theatre of our first triumphs in this noble discovery. It was glory enough that we were able to convert these into the great thoroughfares of travel and trade, ere yet the old world was fully awake to the new era which had begun. Our steamboats, thus confined to shallow waters and influenced by the spirit of the country, soon became subject to a keen competition for speed. The swiftest boat was, of course, deemed the best. All the genius of our artisans was bent to this species of excellence, and accordingly we soon led the world in the celerity of our steamers. Our boats, in their very models, suggested by their length and lightness the predominant purpose of their construction. The arrow in its flight, or the outstretched swan skimming the wave, were favorite images associated with our steamers, and gave name to some of the most popular and successful boats.

It is true, indeed, that our river navigation—at first a matter of thrift and convenience—speedily became also a matter of luxury. While sailing up or down the Hudson, the Ohio, or the Mississippi, some of the finest scenery in the world was added to the advantage of unrivalled speed in the passage. Thus by degrees our steamers were converted into floating palaces, with the sumptuous decorations of architecture, and the gustful allurements of the table. All this, however, was rather incidental, the main idea of excelling in speed still continuing to prevail.

It was just the reverse, in Great Britain. Here the most renowned rivers are but little larger than our mill-streams. Her steamers were to traverse the turbulent waters, which never cease to foam and thunder around her rocky coasts. It was from the very beginning a battle of might with might—of human will and strength against the wonted mastery of the deep. It was not, as in the old navigation, a contest in which the wind was seduced into coquetry with the sea—the trick of

the rudder teaching the ship to glide over and avoid, rather than meet, the shock of the waves. A new power, dug by man's arm from the bowels of the earth, and linked with iron by man's invention, was to impel the vessel in the very teeth of the wind, and against the very breast of the embattled billows. It was a strife worthy of the descendants of the Sea-Kings of other days. In a superstitious age of the world it would have been regarded as an impious waging of war upon the gods. How would these things have rung in the sonorous numbers of the Father of Poetry?

Yet such was Britain's apprenticeship in steam navigation. While the motto of our steamers was *go ahead*, her's was of necessity *go sure*. And thus for five and twenty years the people of the British islands have been trained in one set of ideas regarding steam navigation, and we in another; and what is specially pertinent to the purpose of this article, for this period of time, she has been establishing foundries, erecting ship-yards, building engines, and rearing practical engineers, exactly suited to meet us, and perhaps defeat us, in the contest which has now begun, as to superiority in one line of ocean steam navigation.

Nor is this superior experience, in navigating the turbulent waters of the northern seas, the only advantage in the hands of our rivals. Her immense mineral resources, especially her inexhaustible beds of iron and coal, lying contiguous to each other, and near to navigable waters, with the low price of labor by which these are made cheap and abundant at any required port, place a power in her hands decisive of a contest which is not met and sustained by corresponding or countervailing advantages, added to indomitable perseverance.

And to all this we must add, that John Bull's long and heavy purse is put at the disposal of our British competitors. As the haughty Brennus, while Rome hesitated about the golden ransom she was to pay, put his sword in the scale, exclaiming, "wo to the conquered;" so Britain casts the might of her money into the issue. The government aid given by England to the CUNARD line is twice or thrice that bestowed by Congress upon the COLLINS steamers; and to what she has given she stands ready to add more. The applicants need not go to Parliament; it is only necessary to satisfy the Board of Trade to insure additional millions for this object. An English gentleman, recently discussing the subject, adduced this fact as insuring the final triumph of the CUNARD line, particularly as he counted upon the supposed reluctance of an American Congress to grant money to this and kindred objects!

Yet, fully appreciating all these advantages on the side of the British steamers, we have no fear as to the result. In river steamers we surpass all other nations; in ocean steam navigation, in the milder latitudes, we are also without a rival. No other ships can compare with our lines to the south, to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Panama to San Francisco. In summer navigation of the northern Atlantic, Collins' line is at least equal to Cunard's; if there be an advantage it is on our side. We now speak only of speed; in comfort to passengers, in taste and general ar-

rangement, we have an admitted superiority. In the winter navigation—the only point in which our inferiority can be pretended—two of COLLINS' line have run short of coal, owing doubtless to a want of experience as to the use of it on the part of the engineers. For the first eight years the CUNARD line stopped at Halifax, and always took in coal, which is only what these two ships have done, each in one instance. Even such accidents will not be likely to occur, after this experience.

We have little space in which to consider the aspect which this question of superiority in steam navigation bears upon the prospects of our own country and Great Britain. Of the six hundred ships of war forming the present British navy, about one hundred are steamers, bearing the titles of Adder, Avenger, Basilisk, Bloodhound, Bulldog, Firebrand, Fury, Goliah, Spitfire, Terrible, Viper, Vixen, Volcano, &c. To this euphaneous list must be added her mail steamers. Such a force is doubtless sufficient to master the other navies of Europe; and thus, if America were out of the way, Britannia might still assert and sing her dominion of the waves.

That in this condition of things John Bull is chewing the cud of bitter fancies there can be no doubt. We regret to see, in the British press, a train of ideas and suggestions which, if indulged, may again crimson the ocean with the blood of the two kindred nations. The time is past when mankind will endure the idea of an iron Gibraltar steaming over the world, and making every flag that flies the play thing of Britain's iron will. This notion of supremacy of the seas—of triumph on the one hand and humiliation on the other—should never go beyond commercial rivalry. And it should be the effort of all good men to divest this, as far as possible, of any embittering tendency. Yet it is certain, that by the manner in which this subject is discussed by leading papers in England, that statesmen there are looking beyond commercial superiority to their ancient maritime dominion; and it is equally clear, that in the greedy pursuit of this object, the people of England are returning evil for good toward this country, in respect to the existing competition. The British steamers to our own ports have met with universal favor; our steamers to British ports have been the objects, and to some extent the victims, of conspiracies, to which the press have been, in certain instances, a party!

☞ These are but a small portion of the articles which have appeared in the American papers, on this subject, concurring in and enforcing these views. It may be added here, that it appears from parliamentary documents, that the CUNARD line now returns to the British Government, in the proceeds of the mails, the full amount of the sum advanced to them, which is about £185,000 annually. Thus it operates only as a loan. Were the American Liverpool line so far encouraged by our Government as to put it on a level with the other American lines, it is believed the operation would be the same as above stated in respect to the CUNARD line; that is, the product of the mails would probably restore to the Government the full amount of its advances.

BRITISH VIEWS.

From the London Daily News, October 11.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SEAS—COLLINS AND CUNARD.

Racing is the great passion of the Englishman. Horse-racing, boat-racing, foot-racing, donkey-racing; no kind of racing comes amiss to him. Wherever the Englishman goes he must have his races. There are regular boat-races at the Cook's strait settlements, in New-Zeland, and there is a race-course at Sierra Leone.

A race is even now "coming off," on which England has a stake of terrible magnitude. We allude to that race of an indefinite number of heats, now running on the Atlantic, by CUNARD'S and COLLINS' ocean steamers. The stake is neither more nor less than the ascendancy on the seas. We use the word not in a silly and obsolete sense of those who used to dream of any one nation asserting by force of arms a mastery in maritime affairs over all other nations. Henceforth there can be no sovereign nation; the great community of nations is and must continue a republic. But even in republics there are individuals who possess more wealth, more power than others. England is still the first citizen of the community of nations; the flag of England is still the foremost on the ocean. If England loses the Cunard and Collins race, it will be an event of bad omen for her maritime pre-eminence. French pageants at Cherbourg, Russian demonstrations on the Baltic, can only alarm old women in and out of petticoats. Pre-eminence at sea must belong to the nation which possesses the most numerous and best appointed mercantile marine, and the most important branch of the country's mercantile marine will ere long be its ocean steamers. If it be true that an American steamer has beaten our fastest and finest vessels on an Atlantic voyage, it is high time that we had a more searching inquiry into the state of our ocean steam communication than was vouchsafed by Mr. Henley's committee.

According to the New York accounts, the American ocean steamer Pacific made her last voyage from Liverpool to New York in 10 days $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours from wharf to wharf. We suspect the time was a little longer. A writer in yesterday's *Times* states, that the Pacific left Liverpool at 2 p. m. on the 11th September. The New York papers state that it reached that city at 5h. 45m. p. m. on the 21st ult. Add 4h. 45m. for the difference of the time occasioned by difference of longitude, and we have 10 days $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the length of the passage.

The English ocean steamer Asia is said to have made her last homeward voyage in 10 days 7 hours. Allowance must, however, be made for the greater speed with which, owing to the set of the currents, the voyage from America to England is accomplished, than the voyage from England to America. The Asia's outward voyage to New York was accomplished in 10 days 11 hours 36 minutes, mean steaming time. From this, we are told, must be deducted 5 hours for the detour by

Halifax. But this allowance is in excess; the increased distance is not the only element to be considered; the less resistance from oceanic currents on the Halifax route ought also to be taken into account.

On the whole we are disposed to admit that the Pacific, not the Asia, has made the quickest passage yet made between Liverpool and New York. It is, however, a neck and neck affair. In July last the American ocean steamer *Atlantic* made the voyage from New York to Liverpool in ten days, eight hours, twenty minutes, only one hour twenty minutes in excess of the time taken by the *Asia*.

We are anxious to state the facts correctly, for there is an evident and not unnatural straining on the part both of English and Americans to make out the best case for their respective steamers. Even on the assumption that the victory is still doubtful, the result cannot be very gratifying to our national pride. *CUNARD'S* company have had ten years' practice; the first experiment in Atlantic steam navigation, on the part of the Americans, was made last year by the *New York* and *Bremen* steamers. The *Pacific* and *Atlantic* are the first steamers launched by the *COLLINS'* company. Yet one of these trial ships, if it have not beaten, has equalled the matured production of *CUNARD'S* company. Is there any thing in the history of our ocean steam navigation that can account for this?

Some ten years back, Government unable or unwilling to carry the mails across the Atlantic, granted a contract to Mr. Samuel Cunard, which that fortunate gentleman is understood to have sold at a great premium to a Glasgow company for the conveyance by steam-vessels of her Majesty's mails between Liverpool, Halifax, and Boston. In 1846 this contract was renewed for ten years from the 1st of January, 1848; and, in expectation of the American competition which has since arisen, leave was given to omit Halifax, and make the voyage direct from Liverpool to New York. Both the original contract and its extension were given without any competition. The owners of the *Great Western* and other steam-vessels, who had risked their money in establishing the practicability of making the Atlantic voyage, were unceremoniously brushed aside, and the contractor has had a virtual monopoly of the steam communication between the United States and this country for the last ten years. For this service the country pays 140,000*l.* per annum.

Following the example of the English government, the United States granted in 1848, to a New York company, a contract for carrying the mails to Liverpool; and their two first vessels, the *Atlantic* and *Pacific*, made their appearance this year, to be followed next spring by the *Arctic* and the *Baltic*. The *CUNARD* company, thus put on their mettle, constructed the *Asia* and the *Africa*, which were also placed on the station this year. The result of the contest, as far as it has been carried, is stated above.

"We are ten years before you in ship-building," said a Yankee skipper, the other day; "and ten years behind you in machinery; in five years more we will be ahead of you in both." To prove *JONATHAN* wrong we shall have to get up some competition at home, and not wait

to be taught the old lesson that there is no such thing in nature as an improving monopoly.

Cunard's Company commenced with vessels of 1,100 tons, and engines of 350 horse-power. They have, step by step, reached 2,300 tons and 900 horse-power. But the size and power are the only things changed; the model has remained the same. The *Asia*, of 2,300 tons, is an enlarged edition of the *Britannia* of 1,100 tons, and goes bowling down the Mersey, carrying a sea before her enough to swamp a revenue cruiser.

The American steamers are of larger tonnage and less power than the *Asia* and *Africa*, but of exquisite model. They are "ten years ahead" of the *Asia* and *Africa*, as far as the hulls are concerned, and as far behind in the engines. They slip down the Mersey with scarce a ripple at the bow, dividing the water like a Gravesend steamer. In accommodation, ventilation, and general arrangement, the American vessels are far superior to anything that has been before seen in this country.

It will doubtless be said that we attach too much importance to the success of our transatlantic cousins. We shall be told that "one swallow does not make a summer; one extraordinary passage is not a fair criterion." We shall be advised to wait for a twelvemonth before we give an opinion. In spite, however, of these and other wise saws that may be poured out, we confess that to us the voyages of the *Atlantic* and the *Pacific* look like "the handwriting on the wall" to our rulers, which it behooves them to lay to heart.

From the London Atheneum, Jan. 4.

THE GREAT NATIONAL CONTEST.

In an age like this, when the real rivalries and contests of nations are carried on, not so much by regiments and frigates, as by means of the shuttle, the railway, and the steamboat—it is curious and important to note the progress of different countries in those practical arts and sciences which more immediately promote these friendly national contests.

European statesmen have all watched with wonder, and not a few of them with alarm, the tremendous accession of power which the rapid development of railways, telegraphs, and steam navigation in the United States has given to the people of North America, an accession of political and material influence in the affairs of the world, which seems to stand in almost startling disproportion to the mere weight of the masses of population. The Brazils, by nature far richer than the northern States in all the raw materials of power, have no more voice in determining the direction of great historical events than a petty German or Italian principality. Belgium, covered with railways, and dotted with manufactories, has already more active influence in Europe

than the once powerful and magnificent kingdom of Spain. Science multiplies the resources of nations in an extraordinary degree; and older games of ambition are so far gone out of modern fashion, that statesmen, with the true instincts of the future about them, care less and less about drilling regiments, and more and more about promoting science.

The trials of strength in this noble contest lie at present chiefly between the two great divisions of the Anglo-Saxon race. England, by insular position, and America by her geographical remoteness, stand tolerably free from the wear of intellect and waste of material means which are daily seen in the political struggles of continental Europe; and they are, as regards each other, therefore, on equal and fair terms of competition. With the shuttle England might be conquered, even while her hearts of oak defied the world. A French army on the coast of Devonshire or Kent might prove a passing evil; but a combination of natural and mechanical advantages secured to the workshops of the United States, would be utter and irretrievable ruin. Thus far, the shuttle of Manchester beats the shuttle of Lowell; hitherto, the steam vessel of Liverpool has outsped that of New York.

But the forces are so nearly matched as to lead all the charm of an uncertain issue to the struggle. Especially is this the case with the ocean steamers. In river, lake, and coast navigation, America has long carried away the palm of victory. The boats on the Rhine, the Elbe, the Clyde, the Thames, and the Scheldt, are not for a moment to be compared with the "floating palaces" on the Hudson, the Delaware, and the Potomac, either for rate of sailing or for magnificence of fitting up. We have been credibly told of vessels steaming down the Mississippi at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour! But in ocean navigation, longer practice and equal enterprise still keep us slightly ahead of our energetic descendants. We are proud of our rivals—as they are proud of our rivalry. To the general reader at home, it is next to impossible to convey an adequate idea of the interest which the contests between the English and American mails excite in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Each run is carefully noted and compared; fears are excited, hopes raised, by every voyage; and half a dozen hours in the length of a trip of three thousand miles is thought a considerable variation.

The struggle for mastery at this moment lies between the English mail Asia and the American mail Atlantic; and the recent voyage of the *Asia* was the quickest ever yet performed. This passage from New York to Liverpool was made in ten days four hours and five minutes, being four hours and fifteen minutes less than the best voyage eastward made by the Atlantic. The New Yorkers are building still more powerful vessels for this line of service. The prize is a great one. The fleetest vessels must carry out letters, orders, news, Government despatches; and, having the prestige of scientific excellence and success, will generally command a choice of the passenger traffic. In this rivalry

the Americans possess a great advantage over us, in being less fettered in their action by Government jobbing and monopoly.

From the Halifax (N. S.) Chronicle.

THE UNITED STATES MAIL STEAMER ARCTIC.

This magnificent ocean steamship arrived in our harbor yesterday morning, after a very boisterous passage of thirteen days from the Mersey. She left Liverpool on the 11th inst., with thirty-five passengers, a large and valuable freight, and had on board when starting about one thousand tons of coal. The captain finding the supply of fuel decreasing rapidly, very prudently bore up for this port. This adds one more to the thousand and one proofs of the desirableness of making Halifax harbor, if not a terminus, at least an intermediate packet station. In common with many other citizens, we had the pleasure of visiting this, really splendid ship yesterday. We are happy to bear testimony to the civility and attention extended by the Arctic's officers to all who enjoyed the privilege. Nothing can possibly surpass the magnificence of this the first of the Collins line, that has yet paid us a visit. So many descriptions of these vessels have already been published, by those infinitely more competent than us, that any recapitulation would be altogether superfluous. Every thing on board, including the mammoth engines, is in the most perfect order. The interior arrangements of the Arctic far, very far, surpass in elegance any thing of the kind previously seen in Halifax.