

GREAT LAKES A KLONDIKE OF COMMERCE

More Ships Sail the Detroit River than Enter London or Liverpool - One-Third of the Population of the United States Dependent on the Great Lakes.

The enormous traffic of the Great Lakes is well brought out in an article in *Ainslie's Magazine* by Arthur J. Stringer, who writes:

"The Great Lakes have become a great artery of our richest commercial blood. One-third of the population of the United States is dependent on these lakes for their export and import trade. This waterway taps the richest and most prosperous agricultural territory on this continent of ours, together with our most productive mines, and it is worth while noting that within a radius of 400 miles of Cleveland lies one-half of the population of the United States. It is a well-established fact that deep-water transportation is, and necessarily must be, far below the cost of transportation by rail; indeed, it is computed that the cost of water transportation by steam, when the voyage is of any considerable length, is about one-quarter the average cost of transportation by train, while by sailboat it is only one-eighth of the latter. As this question of transportation determines to a great extent the existence or the non-existence of a possible industry, and enhances or diminishes the value of every article of export in proportion to its efficiency and economy, the battle cry of the West for 'twenty feet of water between Duluth and the sea' is no great problem to account for. In the year 1888 there passed through the Sault Ste. Marie canal no less than 1,234,661 tons of Canadian freight, alone having a value of \$300,000,000, while American ships moved some 168,000,000 tons through the same waters for the same length of time.

THE "SOO" AND THE SUEZ.

The total traffic through the locks of this 'Soo' canal, for less than eight months, is five times as great in number of vessels and slightly less than twice as much in actual tonnage as passes through the Suez canal during an entire year. Through this same Suez canal, which boasts of carrying the commerce of the world, there passed, during last year, 8,000,000 tons, while there floated through the locks of 'Susan Mary' a tonnage of 16,500,000. The stupendous proportions of the traffic on our Great Lakes may also be realized from the fact that more ships sail the Detroit river than enter either the port of London or Liverpool. A greater number of passengers, on the other hand, pass through this same river than do in and out of the port of New York, the great gateway of the New World. In fact, the total number of passengers carried annually by the lake fleet falls very slightly short of 200,000,000. The city of Buffalo, which claims the largest grain elevator in the world, does a business in the transshipment of grain and flour which exceeds that done by any other city in existence. Cleveland, with the exception of the Clyde, is the most extensive ship-building center of the present day. The nether shores of the lower lakes have been necklaced with a collection of the busiest and most prosperous manufacturing centers in the

United States, and so much so that today our country's commercial center of gravity will be found to fall somewhere along the northern portion of Ohio, Mill and foundry and factory in all these cities depend on the great iron freighters that steam north with coal and bring southward their cargoes of timber and grain and iron, and it is in the possibility of such economic exchange that lurks the secret of Uncle Sam's mercantile greatness.

WE FEED THE WORLD.

"It is in just this, too, that lies the secret of how the United States has taken such a generous hand in the feeding of the world. It is an accepted fact with shippers that Liverpool makes the price of cash wheat, and that every cent saved on the cost of delivering American grain at Liverpool means so much money to be paid to the owner of this wheat at the time it is sold and shipped. So Duluth, in a commercial sense, is placed by the Great Lakes two thousand miles closer to Europe than is, let us say, St. Louis. The Canadian government has recently realized this fact, and although they have heretofore allowed American vessels to carry ninety-six per cent of the traffic of the Great Lakes, they are

now perfecting a deep waterway system from Port Arthur to the Gulf of St. Lawrence that promises to threaten even the business of the port of New York and the comparatively diminutive Erie Canal. The last link of this enterprise of the Canadian government was forged by the opening of the Soo-Langes Canal, and by its operation it is expected that the cost of transporting lake freight to this water will be reduced to such an extent that there will be a saving of from one to two cents a bushel on wheat. The Canadians have expended over \$22,000,000 to secure their fourteen feet of water between Port Arthur and Montreal, and in comparison with this \$20,000,000 expended by the United States seems relatively insignificant, especially when one remembers the surpassing extent to which our commercial interests are involved in such deep waterway improvements. Our greatest interests in this connection, of course, are in the iron and coal exchange, which takes place between Ohio and Lake Superior ports.

IRON AND STEEL.

"It is an unappreciated but indisputable fact that the Great Lakes lie at the root of America's present supremacy in the iron and steel market of the world. It has been actually the reduction of lake freight rates on these two essentials of life—and commerce, that has brought about by improved facilities for loading and discharging cargoes, the increased tonnage of lake vessels, and the improvement of rivers and harbors, that has allowed the American steel worker triumphantly to invade the English markets.

"But as the increase in population of the United States demands new fields for labor, as the West fills up and develops and the future commercial

growth of the country is found to lie in the direction of the foreign market, it is on this great, though somewhat neglected, artery of commerce between Duluth and Buffalo that the economist of the future will place his finger to find the true pulse of American progress. Much has already been done, but it must not be forgotten that diminutive canals are a brake on the wheels of commerce, and that before the United States dominates undisputed the markets of Europe, it has a river and harbor bill to make law, and before Uncle Sam, in the face of the fiercest competition, shall become the maker of bread and iron for the world he must look to his lakes!"

THE MASSACRE OF MAJUBA HILL.

England in the course of her history suffered—as does every fighting nation—many defeats, but never one so humiliating to her national pride as her defeat at Majuba Hill on February 27, 1881, by the rude Boers of the Transvaal. That she then accepted that defeat was due to the existence of a Gladstonian cabinet in England and the ever-present desire of that party for peace at any price.

It is to avenge that defeat—Outlander's grievances and suzerainty complications notwithstanding—that Great Britain is now in the field in South Africa with the pick of her army and her most trusted generals.

February 27, 1881. It was on that day that General Sir George Colley, an officer of experience and undoubted personal bravery, after a forced night march took up a position on the summit of Majuba with his force of six hundred British soldiers. Since his defeat by the Boers at Laing's Nek on January 21 his communications had been constantly attacked by the burgh-

ers, and on taking up the highly important strategic position on Majuba he determined to once more assume the offensive. The Boer forces filled the valley commanded by the hill and when they discovered the position taken by the British forces they manifested every symptom of panic and made what at first seemed a general movement to retreat. They, however, did not do so. The counsels of General Joubert and Smidt prevailed, and the Boers settled down to preparations for an attack.

On the English side overconfidence and the inevitable panicky feeling that always seizes a soldier when surprised by a daring movement such as that made by the Boers contributed to the day's defeat. To General Colley and his officers the position on the summit of the hill appeared impregnable. Its flat saucer-like top commanded the plain on every side, and no thought seems to have been given to artificial fortification.

The Boers, however, knew that the sides of the hill which rose precipitately from the plain were scarred by deep cliffs and gullies. Up these Joubert determined to send a band of his picked men and to cover their operations the men in the valley opened a brisk fire on the soldiers on the hill. So accurate was the shooting of the Boers that the English soldiers kept under cover as much as possible, only rising now and then to return a volley. Little harm was done by this long-range firing on either side, and so confident of their security were the British soldiers that with every volley they hurled taunts at the enemy in the distance. For six hours this firing continued—that was the length of time it took the two hundred and fifty Boers to attempt the ascent to climb the hill. Once there, one party of sixty burghers occupied a small peak standing on the skirt of the summit,

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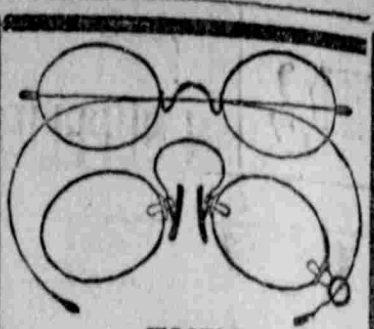
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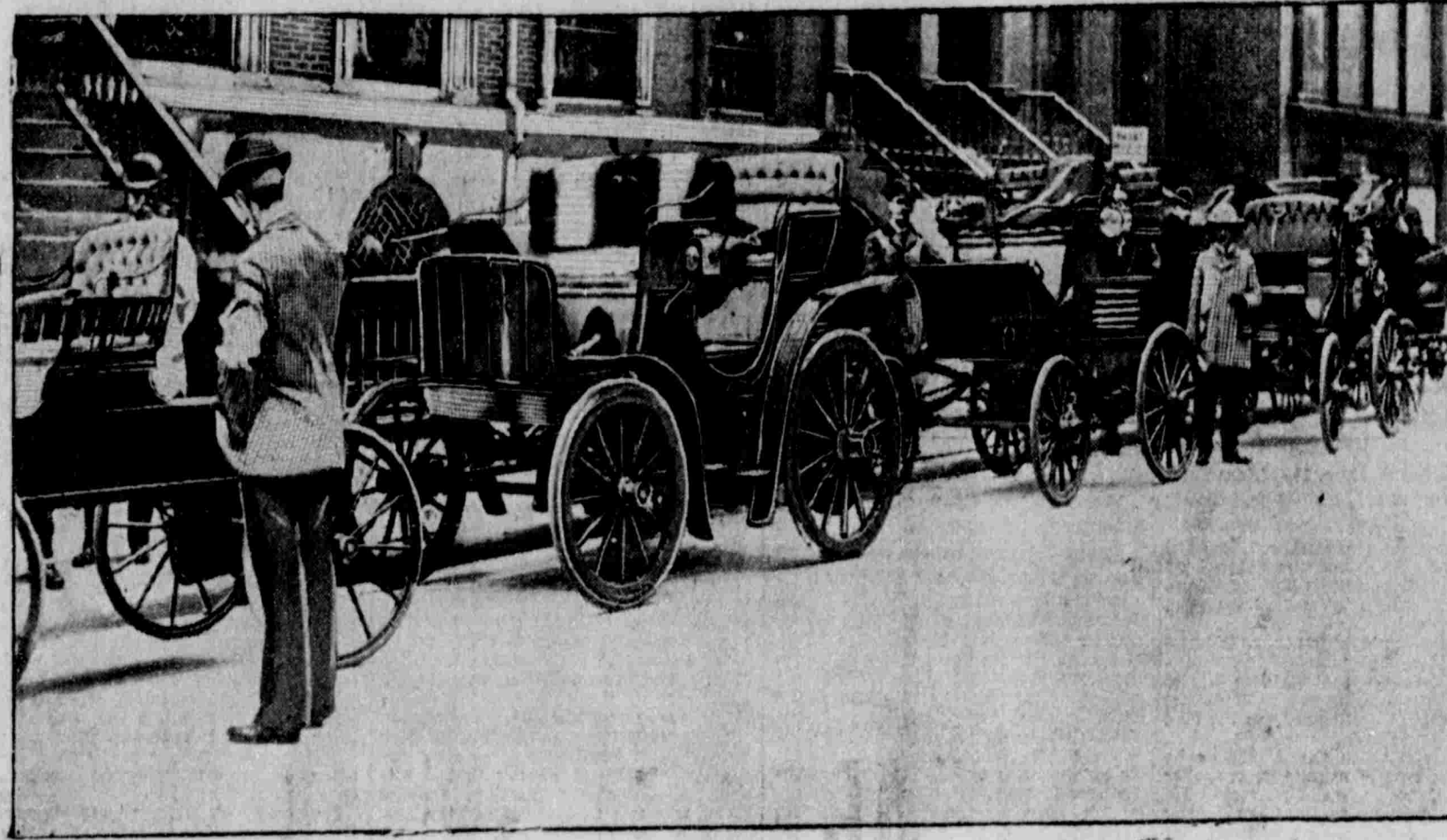
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