

AMERICAN MARINE

THE SHIPPING QUESTION IN HISTORY AND POLITICS

BY

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PREFACE.

EVERY workman should know his own trade well. Having been for fifty years a student of ships and navigation, I have felt that it was needful to know the causes that have contributed, first, to the upbuilding, second, to the decline, and third, to the ruin of our shipping interest in the foreign trade. In pursuit of this information time and patience have been well spent, since there was no other way out of darkness into light.

The necessity for a work on American Marine has long been felt by its friends. While there have been a few pamphlets and an essay or two published, books of the kind requisite have not been produced. This may have been because shipbuilding, navigation, and foreign trade form so broad a field that few acquire the practical knowledge, or can command the time needful for their composition. Moreover, a writer on the subject of the present work can find so little in libraries, and must look for so many facts outside of books, that his task is one mainly of investigation and original thought.

It is only by a rare course of business experience and a fortunate succession of circumstances that the author has found an opportunity to be the first in the field which this volume is an attempt to explore and explain. In early life he was the projector and co-editor of the only magazine in the United States ever devoted to the interests of shipbuilding, engineering, navigation, and commerce, — 1854–58. The insight then enjoyed has ever been remembered. Though many trade experiences have intervened since that time, the impressions

PREFACE.

received in regard to the shipping business have been not only deepened, but increased in number.

Light is for distribution. No longer young, it may be full time that some of the facts which the author has learned be given to those who shall follow him; while it is certain, any light that his efforts can cast upon the "Shipping Question" cannot be thrown too soon for the country's good. Making no pretensions to literary skill, but sensible that men of letters are also men of ideas, he trusts that his facts and figures have sufficient eloquence to make their way. In this age, facts make their own best arguments; nevertheless, it has seemed useful to impress their teaching, since all readers have not time to spare for study. In all that has been undertaken, the object has been the arrival at truth. The author has not searched for support to theories of any kind. If he has argued for "protection" to shipping, it is because he sees that it is necessary for the reinstatement of that great interest. He believes that this action would be for the public good. A prosperous marine in the foreign trade would be advantageous for each and all of our people. Every loyal citizen must want an American marine. How to obtain it seems clear enough. The concluding chapters discuss the legislation required.

That this volume shall arouse our nation, and inspire a vigorous public sentiment, which shall demand the enactments essential to the full enjoyment of our maritime rights, of solid prosperity and real independence, is the earnest desire of the author.

WILLIAM W. BATES.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- I. The National Interest in a Marine.
 - II. The National Economy of Shipping of our Own.
 - III. The National Interest in Maritime Pursuits.
 - IV. The Naval Arts and National Progress.
 - V. American and British Navigation Laws.
 - VI. The Evolution of British Maritime Power.
 - VII. The Early Shipping Policy of the United States.
 - VIII. Declension under Reciprocity Policy, 1830 to 1860.
 - IX. Effects of the War and Free Trade since, 1861 to 1891.
 - X. The Question of Tariff Legislation.
 - XI. The Free Importation of Ships.
 - XII. The Unity of Interest in Shipbuilding and Ship-owning.
 - XIII. True Economy in Ship-owning.
 - XIV. Durability of British and American Built Shipping.
 - XV. Foreign Marine Insurance Power and its Iron Rule.
 - XVI. Sailing-Ship Performance.
 - XVII. Pacific Coast Commerce and Navigation.
 - XVIII. The Marine Insurance Business in the United States.
 - XIX. The Marine Insurance Business as conducted in Foreign Countries.
 - XX. Imperfection of our Tonnage-Tax System.
 - XXI. The Load-Line Question.
 - XXII. The Cost and Economy of Shipping.
 - XXIII. A Department of Commerce.
 - XXIV. The Bureau of Navigation of the Treasury Department.
 - XXV. The Tonnage Bill and Estimates for Bounties.
 - XXVI. Transportation under Protection and Free Trade.
 - XXVII. Methods of Protecting Shipping.
- Appendix.

Index.