

## IV. LIVERPOOL.

## ITS TRADE AND HARBOUR FACILITIES.

The great maritime city of Liverpool, with its well-organized harbour and magnificent equipment of docks, sheds, warehouses, and appliances, is so well known that little need be said of it by way of description. The city, which this year celebrated the seven-hundredth anniversary of its foundation, cannot claim the same antiquity as some other British cities; but its comparative modernity only serves to accentuate its growth to a position of the first importance. This position it has attained chiefly through the enterprise displayed by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, in making the port accessible and safe, and in providing a system of docks which for extent, systematic construction, and completeness of equipment is without equal in the world. The natural difficulties in the way of this achievement were very great, and the fact reflects all the greater lustre on the genius and perseverance of those who constructed the works. There was originally little or no shelter for vessels in the Mersey. Ships anchored in the stream and always ran considerable risk in bad weather. In 1655, Liverpool's shipping record for the year was 15 ships, of an aggregate tonnage of 268, or under 20 tons each. In 1700, the total entrances and clearances were 102 ships of 8,619 tons; in 1800, this had grown to 4,746 ships of 450,000 tons. It was about 1708 that the first really notable step was taken in the development of the Port of Liverpool, by the construction of the first wet dock ever made in the world. This dock, the idea of which was conceived by a Mr. Steers, cost £15,000, and had a water-area of 3 acres 1,890 yards, while its entrance and basin occupied a further space of 1 acre 2,897 yards. Since then the progress of the port has been remarkable, as is shown by the following tabulated statement of the shipping at different periods, with intervals of twenty years, from 1826 to 1906:—

| Year. |     |     |     |     |     | Vessels. | Tonnage.   | Dock Dues received. |    |    |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|------------|---------------------|----|----|
|       |     |     |     |     |     |          |            | £                   | s. | d. |
| 1826  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9,601    | 1,228,318  | 131,000             | 19 | 0  |
| 1846  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 19,951   | 3,096,444  | 213,423             | 16 | 2  |
| 1866  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 21,720   | 5,581,322  | 631,268             | 6  | 4  |
| 1886  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 20,598   | 8,370,723  | 884,533             | 19 | 7  |
| 1906  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 25,773   | 16,147,856 | 1,305,509           | 12 | 0  |

It will be noted that since 1866 the increase of tonnage has been much greater than the increase in the number of vessels—this being due to the rapid development of large-sized steamers. The Port of Liverpool is now second only to that of London, and the city occupies the position of being third in point of population in the British Isles. The increase in the amount of dues collected becomes all the more remarkable when it is stated that in the year 1895–96 a reduction in rates was made which amounted, on business done, to about £50,000 per annum, while during the succeeding year a sum of £40,000 was remitted on imports of cotton.

The impediments to the navigation of the Mersey, in addition to the lack of shelter already referred to, included a troublesome bar and numerous sandbanks and shoals in the river. These difficulties have been grappled with and overcome. The bar has disappeared—it and the various channels in the river being kept clear by constant dredging—and for a distance of fourteen miles from the bar to the docks the river is most efficiently lighted and buoyed.

*The Docks.*

The Liverpool and Birkenhead docks are too many to enumerate in detail. It may suffice to say that the totals are as under:—

| Docks and Basins. | Water-area. |        | Lineal Quayage. |        |
|-------------------|-------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
|                   | Acres.      | yards. | Miles.          | yards. |
| Liverpool ...     | 417         | 3,820  | 28              | 1,033  |
| Birkenhead ...    | 165         | 795    | 9               | 932    |
| Totals ...        | 582         | 4,615  | 37              | 205    |

In addition there are two docks, belonging to the London and North-western Railway Company, with a total water-area of 14 acres 2,494 yards.

The following particulars of the Canada Docks and Basin, where the New Zealand steamers are usually berthed, may be of interest:—

Canada Lock: 600 ft. long; entrance, 100 ft. wide; water-area, 2,018 yards; lineal quayage, 467 yards.

Canada Basin: Entrance, 390 ft. wide; water-area, 9 acres 2,805 yards; lineal quayage, 846 yards.

Canada Dock: Entrance, 90 ft. wide; water-area, 24 acres 1,409 yards; lineal quayage, 1,345 yards.

Canada Dock, Branch No. 3: Water-area, 7 acres 1,625 yards; lineal quayage, 802 yards.

Canada Dock, Branch No. 2: Water-area, 6 acres 2,560 yards; lineal quayage, 732 yards.

Canada Dock, Branch No. 1: Water-area, 7 acres 2,313 yards; lineal quayage, 823 yards.

*Graving-docks.*

There are sixteen graving-docks on the Liverpool side of the river, ranging in length from 286 ft. to 930 ft.—their total length of floor being 11,067 ft. 4 in.