

is some freight carried also on the railways but the average amount conveyed on all these roads is but about 25,000 tons per annum.

The produce of the coal mines of Belgium is about 3,500,000 tons per annum. A great deal of iron is made in the country, and the soil is as productive as that of the very best parts of England.

The produce of the soil, the mines, and the factories, are carried on the canals. The branch roads leading from the mines cross the great railways, and deposite the coal in the canal boats. Some 600,000 tons of coal are carried into Flanders and Holland, and about the same amount into France, by the canals, and the rivers rendered navigable for canal boats, leading in those directions.

The canal from Charleroy to Brussels was opened in 1833, and conveyed 175,000 tons of coal.

The canal of the Sambre and the Oise was opened in the beginning of 1839.

On the subject of new canals, I may state that the experience of Europe in the use of modern railways has by no means set all such projects aside, though nearly all available ground has been long since occupied.

In the month of August last, tenders were to be received for the construction of the canal from the Scheldt to the Meuse, the expense of which was estimated at one million of florins.

A law was passed at the last session of the French Chambers, appropriating the sum of 7,000,000 for the Marine and Rhine canal, between Vitsy and Nancy; and 6,000,000 besides, for a lateral canal to the Garonne.

In England, the old Birmingham Canal Company opened a new canal some thirteen miles in length, the route of which does not deviate materially from their old line, and the object of which is to relieve the locks on their work from the pressure of the boats which constantly throng the canal. There are five magnificent lines of rail road leading out of Birmingham, one of which runs parallel with this canal, and each of which may be regarded as the competitor of some one of its great arms. But these rail roads do not subserve the purpose of relieving the trade, which consists mainly of those coarse commodities that require the economy of canal transportation.

In regard to the important but vexed question of the relative economy of railway and canal transportation, there would be little difficulty in deciding it to the satisfaction of all minds, if we could bring the problem down to a mere question of experience and results actually obtained. But it is now rarely presented in this way. On the one hand, we have the known and admitted cost of freighting on canals, and this we have to compare with the *estimated* cost on certain works on which it is essential almost for their existence to make the estimate low. It is a comparison of facts on one side with surmise on the other.