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## The Week,

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BEFORE the remarks in our last issue on the threatened breach of faith by the Government in the matter of reciprocating the removal of duties by the United States from certain natural products were before our readers, Sir Charles Tupper had announced in the Commons that the action demanded by a fair interpretation of the section of the Tariff Act in question had been resolved on. This is as it should be, and, without inquiring too curiously into the influences which led to the change of attitude, we may congratulate the Government on its frank recognition of the error, and its prompt withdrawal from an untenable position. At a time when British Statesmen are vying with each other in the warmth of their expressions of regard for the great nation of their Kinsmen in America, it would be doubly culpable for our own leaders to give any occasion for a suspicion of unfriendly feeling, not to say bad faith towards our neighbours. Sir Charles Tupper's manly and cordial despatch will go far to remove any unfavourable impression that may have been made by the previous debate.

THE debate on Unrestricted Reciprocity came to an end on Saturday morning. The majority of fifty-seven against Sir Richard Cartwright's resolution settles the question pretty decisively, so far at least as the present Parliament is concerned, though the agitation in the country will probably be kept up. From the nature of the subject the progress of the debate brought out little that was new in the shape of argument. Next to the unexpected announcements by the Finance Minister of the change of attitude of the Government in respect to the free admission of those natural products made free by the United States, the most interesting features in the later stages of the debate were the speeches of the silver-tongued Quebec orators. The palm of eloquence seems, by general consent, to have been awarded to Messrs. Laurier and Chapleau. Even the meagre reports of their respective speeches in the newspaper columns show that in the graces of finished oratory each of these gentlemen outshone his English competitors. This may be due in part to national characteristics, in part to the fact that the speaker in a foreign language is naturally and almost necessarily more precise in his choice of words and forms of expression than one to whom the colloquialisms, inelegancies and inaccuracies of his

mother tongue are but too familiar. But whatever the source of their comparative excellence the French province may justly be proud of its Parliamentary orators.

By what slender threads hang the issues of peace or war in Europe. If the current statements can be relied on, the marriage of a single maiden to the man of her choice is all that is needed to bring together the terrible armaments of Russia and Germany in deadly conflict. Hence, according to the despatches, the poor Princess Victoria is to be sacrificed like Iphigenia of old on the altar of her country. The late despatches in regard to the alleged hostility between Prince Bismarck and the present Empress bear evidence of unfriendly inspiration against the latter and need, evidently, to be received with caution. That Emperor Frederick is less disposed than his father to leave the virtual dictatorship in the hands of Prince Bismarck is however, very probable, in view of the well known liberal tendencies of the former before his accession. That he should sympathize with his wife and daughter in a case in which the life-happiness of the latter is probably considered at stake is but natural. Nor can it be easy or agreeable for the Sovereign of the great German Empire to be obliged to forbid the nuptials of his daughter through fear of offence to any foreign potentate. If he has opened a direct correspondence with the Czar he has taken the straightforward and manly course, though the prospect of overcoming the dislike of that rather vengeful Autocrat to the man he drove from the Bulgarian throne can scarcely be hopeful.

LORD HARTINGTON'S speech at Carlisle a couple of weeks since seems to have caused some uneasiness in the minds of his more Conservative allies. The gist of the remark which has been taken by both parties to indicate a new departure on the Irish question was to the effect that he had not the smallest objection to a wide extension of local self-government, on such lines as those of Mr. Ritchie's Local Government Bill, to Ireland, so long as it did not involve the principle of a Parliament in Dublin. On the side of Lord Hartington it is pointed out that though the Local Government scheme is to be applied for the present to England alone, its extension to Scotland, and ultimately, in the event of the requisite changes in the state of popular feeling, to Ireland is inevitable. But, as *St. James's Gazette* points out, Lord Hartington's speech brings into bold relief the new advantages which the Local Government Bill gives the Parnellites in their Home Rule struggle. "It was glaringly evident," says the *Gazette*, "before Lord Hartington spoke that the Parnellites could put Mr. Ritchie's Bill to great use; and that it gives them ground of advantage where none existed previous to the introduction of that Government measure." The article goes on to show the very serious dilemma with which the Government would be confronted should Mr. Parnell and his friends come forward with this offer—"Give to Ireland at once the same measure of local self-government that you Conservatives and Unionists think England needs, and we will be content. If England need as much, we need more; but only grant us this now, to-day, and you will hear no more of National Leagues and Plans of Campaign." The answer must be Yes or No. If Yes, the Parnellites would have in every county Board a legally constituted and formidable machine for promoting their aims. If No, the Government would be placed at once in an illogical and untenable position. Hence the *Gazette* greatly wonders at the introduction of such a Bill as Mr. Ritchie's at the present time.

THE Local Government Bill now under consideration by the British Parliament does not differ very materially from the forecast given in these columns a few weeks since. Speaking somewhat generally it is a measure for transferring the administrative authority hitherto vested in the appointees of the Crown to County Councillors elected by the people. The chief or only exceptions, in regard to what may properly be termed administrative work, are educational and poor-law operations, and, in part, the control of the police. Logically the transference of power in regard to these matters, so far as they are matters of administration, must shortly follow the successful inauguration of the municipal system, and this seems to be contemplated. The Crown retains the appointment of all officers whose functions are judicial, coroners only excepted. The Councillors, whose members will vary with the counties, are to be elected by the