

BRITISH CONNECTION AND CANADIAN POLICY.

No. II.

I have already endeavoured to show that the Canadian National Policy of 1879 resembles two former events of importance in our history in this particular—that it was a conceding to our people of something which already they saw their American neighbours in possession of, which they desired for themselves, but had before been unable to obtain. The concession of Responsible Government gratified the popular desire that taxation and representation should go together in Canada as in the United States, and came just in time to prevent a general movement towards seeking under the American system what had till then been denied under the British. Confederation, again, came in good time to gratify in some degree the rising feeling of nationality by bringing it home to the popular mind that we did not need to look south of the lakes for the only example of a nation in this region of the continent, but might find one, or at all events “the making” of one, nearer home, in our own provinces. Similarly our commercial legislation of this year, following the popular verdict of September last, has given the world to know that we do not require to annex ourselves to the United States in order to obtain the benefit of a trade system adapted to our circumstances, but that we are quite capable of devising and carrying out such a system for ourselves—“on our own hook,” as the saying is. I argue that in the latter case, as in the former two, the effect must be, not to create either cause or occasion for annexation, but on the contrary to “block” the annexation game by taking away the motive for it. I ask, Were not Responsible Government and Confederation both measures designed to perpetuate British connection by satisfying *at home* certain popular desires which otherwise might have supplied the motive power for an annexation movement? Another measure there was, which should not pass unnoticed—the Protectionist tariff of 1858 for Old Canada, consolidated in 1859, which gave commercial satisfaction to two Provinces, although troubles of a personal and political character, incurable by commercial legislation of any kind, were even then brewing, and came to a head in 1864. In recent years the desire of the Canadian people for Protection, or at least for fair play in the matter of trade, was greatly stimulated by the spectacle of the Protection enjoyed by our neighbours over the border, just as half a century ago the desire for Parliamentary Government was stimulated by the spectacle of its enjoyment by a people of our own race living at our doors. The plain, reasonable effect of the last concession, as of the former ones, is to strengthen British connection by rendering it comfortable instead of disagreeable to the Canadian people, and, as I have before pointed out, to defeat annexation by taking away the motive for it. Those who condemn our Reform Commercial Policy of 1879 as an unwise concession to popular pressure, must on the same ground condemn the granting of Responsible Government, because the former, like the latter, was essentially a measure for contenting the people of Canada by giving them what they wanted at home instead of leaving them under the dangerous temptation of learning to look abroad for it.

It seems to me a most extraordinary absurdity, the very caricature and exaggeration of unreason, to argue that the satisfying of popular desires is likely to create dissatisfaction, and to send us on the road to Washington instead of remaining contented at home. Could we obtain the opinion of the conventional “intelligent foreigner,” with judgment unbiassed by Canadian party prejudices, it would surely be to this effect, that British connection must be strengthened and not weakened by correcting a condition of things under which enterprising Canadians were continually having it forced upon them, by comparison of figures, how much better off they would be if these Provinces were States of the American Union. But I have still to deal with those who anticipate, as the proper effect of the National Policy, not that we will seek to dissolve connection with the Empire, but that the mother country, indignant at our striking back at the hand that has fed us, will cast off Canada as an ungrateful child. Admitting that by Protection we have made things comfortable for ourselves, we have at the same time made them quite the reverse for our kin beyond the sea. Giving us the benefit, whatever that may be, of free markets in Britain for all that we have to sell, will they be content to see our markets lost, or in great part lost to them, through Canadian Protection? And will they much longer tax themselves for the defence of so ungrateful a colony?

Let me take the latter objection first. It has been well answered by the *London Spectator*, in an article which appeared shortly after news of our tariff of this year reached England, and from which I take the following:—

“The question is—What can be, and ought to be, expected from a country wrongly convinced, no doubt, but still convinced of the superior wisdom of protection, in deference to the mere feelings and wishes of another country, united to it by ties of race and empire? We maintain that it is just as absurd to expect from such a dependency the waiver of a protectionist policy of great importance, in deference to the supposed interests and the clear wishes of the Mother Country, as it would be to expect from the Mother Country the clear waiver of her own free trade policy, in deference to the supposed interests and the clear wishes of her colonies and dependencies. It is not politics, it is not common sense, to look for such sentimental sacrifices in such a region. A State which has made up its mind, however wrongly, that a protectionist policy is essential to its prosperity, is just as little to be expected to make great inroads on that policy in deference to the wishes

of the Supreme Government, as the Supreme Government ought to be expected to make great inroads on its Free Trade policy in deference to the wishes of dependencies. But it may be asked: ‘Is nothing more owed by the colony to the Mother Country, who takes the military responsibility of the Empire, than is owed by the Mother Country to the colony, who takes upon herself nothing of the kind?’ The answer is,—that in the first place, we have done all in our power of late years, and perhaps very wisely,—to make our colonies feel that they must as far as possible at least, depend upon themselves for their own military defence; and next, that the kind of return which we ought to expect for our provisional protection from invasion, is their similar willingness, of which we have had plenty of evidence, to supplement our military resources, in case of a great war, by their aid. It is not reasonable to expect that our colonies should express their gratitude for our protection by what they think commercial sacrifices. That is a thoroughly mercantile view of the relation, and a very false one too. For loyal defence, loyal assistance is the natural return. For loyal sentiments in the Mother Country, loyal sentiments in the colonies is the natural return. But to expect Canada or any other country to buy our protection by adopting a commercial policy which, to her seems ruinous, is at least as unnatural as to expect that private devotion should be requited by money, and love by wealth. Let us leave Canada at liberty to make her own blunders, and also her own discoveries as to those blunders, without complicating the matter by reproaches which are out of taste, as well as out of season.”

A few years ago, somebody writing to the *London Times* said that the great colonies would be towers of strength to England in time of trouble, if they did nothing more than furnish *men* to help in fighting her battles, she finding all the money herself. In the great wars of three-quarters of a century ago, England spent millions upon millions subsidizing armies of Russians, Germans and Spaniards in the struggle with Napoleon; why may she not, with more reason, subsidize regiments of her own sons in the colonies, if these be willing to take the field for her? But are they willing, and what service could they do, if called upon? Both these questions, I believe, are favourably answered by the highest military authorities. The readiness of Canadians to volunteer for the defence of the mother land is not at all a matter of doubt at headquarters in London; there it is counted upon as a certainty, should the occasion for it arise. Canada could, and would, furnish a respectable contingent of men, tolerably well trained to arms, and with capable officers to lead them, too; but she could scarcely undertake to pay any considerable part of the expenses of a great war. This much she can do, and will do, however, she will stand the cost of military schools, and of a volunteer and militia system under which an efficient force of officers and men together will be always ready, at short notice, to go where they are wanted for England's defence. It is not to be claimed that our militia system is already perfect, but measures for its improvement are under consideration in high quarters, and are attracting attention in England.

At a time when Canadians are denounced as disloyal and ungrateful, on the grounds of a false theory of colonial obligation, their thanks are due to the *London Spectator* for its able statement of what our duty really is—the return of loyal assistance for loyal defence—without any calculation of mercantile interests interfering. If possible, let some arrangement be made, by which we shall know exactly how much money we must spend each year, in order to keep ourselves in such a condition of readiness that our help will be worth something to England when the day of trial comes. But let the old mischievous notion that we are to render commercial tribute in return for military protection be dropped, and let us hear no more of it. This old notion of colonial duty means this, in effect, that we must not take the proper means for developing our resources, for fear of not running sufficiently in debt to the mother country. Once the right view of our duty is fairly understood, the charge of ingratitude will drop, having nothing to sustain it. I must leave for another occasion the consideration of the commercial aspect of our new policy, with reference to British commercial interests.

Argus.

A LOST LEADER.

Nowhere in the grand old Book is there a more pathetic touch than the lines which record the death of “the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.” The utterness of the loss so simply indicated goes straight to the heart. The limits of pathos are reached. If it were possible to intensify the effect, it could only be by accessories such as those with which the past few days have familiarized us.

The picture of grief and desolation presented at Chiselhurst is heightened by the reflection that the mother is a widowed queen in exile, and that her lost son was the representative of a cause, the triumph of which through his agency has been the dream of her declining years. In losing him the widow has lost all—even “the medicine of the miserable, hope!” And the brightness of the hope built upon the young Prince in the mother's heart, who can realize?

Individually the Prince had qualities which make his loss deplorable. That he was popular with his comrades was not much—Princes with a great future before them are likely to make friends. But there were no doubt many amiable and endearing traits in this young man, many indications of capacity, and, above all, the soldierly quality of courage—to which, unfortunately, his loss may be attributed.

There were in the Prince many of the points which Longfellow has so happily indicated in the hero of one of his minor poems—he who had