

Competition is no unheard-of enormity, nor are efforts of one trader to under-sell his neighbours unheard of in Montreal, if what my friends have told me is true. Would "Argus" be prepared to urge on Mr. Blake, or on the Legislature generally, the necessity of stopping the practice of under-selling by taxing every trader who attempted it? The only persons who have in the past been guilty of suggesting any such interference with the freedom of the trader are the demagogues who manage trades unions. It may be, however, that "Argus" will support this view, and even show its justice; but if so, let him by all means do so clearly. If I understand the transaction aright, the American manufacturer is meantime bent on giving the Canadian consumer goods worth \$5 at \$2.50, which seems to me to be equivalent to presenting the Canadian consumer with \$2.50—viz., the difference between the price he demands and the one that would be fairly remunerative to him. The Canadian consumer then has (or would have were it not for the Tariff) two dollars and a half more in his pocket when he purchases from the American than he would have had he purchased from the Canadian. To my unpractical mind it would seem the interest of the Canadian consumer to encourage this benevolence of the American as long as possible. To be sure the American expects that when he has driven his Canadian competitor out of the field, he will raise his prices to such a figure as will *recoup* him for all his loss with interest. It seems then a case when goods are for the present low, but are certain to rise indefinitely in a very short while. Most traders in these circumstances increase their stocks as largely as their capital will admit. If the Canadian consumers were doing this they would render it impossible for the enterprising Yankee to reap any advantage from the defeat of his Canadian competitors. Of course the existence of the Tariff hinders this so far, from the increase of price that the impost necessitates. In my ignorance I might be inclined to regard the questions of Tariff as one where the interests of the consumer and of the manufacturer are opposed, and as the consumers are incomparably more numerous than are *any given class* of manufacturers, to imagine that the interest of the majority must prevail and the Tariff be abolished. The Tariff prevents the Canadian consumer getting the full advantage of the low price at which the American is selling, and prevents him checkmating beforehand the American's attempt to raise the prices when he shall have driven the Canadian from the market.

But need the Canadians be driven from the market? I shall tell you a story of what I understand happened in Montreal some fifty years ago. There was then an old merchant, whom we shall call "Smith," who had won a position for himself in the soft goods trade. A young firm, whom we shall name "Brown, Jones and Robinson," determined to drive Smith from the market by underselling him. One class of goods which every small trader was obliged to have, they sold at a loss, sold it in fact cheaper than it could be produced in Manchester. It was close upon the fall (there were no railways then) so the freezing of the River St. Lawrence meant the end of all importation. Old Mr. Smith did not, as was anticipated, lower his prices below those of "Brown, Jones and Robinson." No; he employed his less known assistant to buy in the stock the young firm had of this indispensable, till they were sold out. They could not renew their stock, and had that winter to do a quiet trade. Could not some such tactics as the above be used against the American? But here again the tariff of Canada and the United States hinders. Were it not for this the Canadian manufacturer might quietly buy up all the goods the American sends over the border, and (as the American maintains his old price at home) by re-exporting them into America, undersell the American in his own market. I do not see that the only alternatives are protection or Customs' union (*Zollverein*) with the United States. Absolute Free Trade might be declared.

Again it may be my natural obtuseness or defective education, but I feel I must agree with Mr. Blake and hold that the labourer in Canada has as much a right to be protected against the importation of competitors as the manufacturer. It is certain that when labourers are many in proportion to the work to be done wages are low, and everything that tends to increase the number of labourers tends to lower wages; therefore the Canadian labourer has as much right to be protected against competition with immigrant labourers, as Canadian manufacturers have to be protected against American competition. He thinks he answers this by saying that some years ago there was a remarkable difference between the remuneration of labour in Devonshire and Lancashire. Originally that was caused by difficulty of travelling. The difference has been perpetuated, perhaps, to some extent by ignorance, but at present the difference of the remuneration of the Devonshire agricultural labourer and that of the same class of labourers in the north of England is almost *nil*, when the cost of travelling between south and north is taken into account, not to speak of difference of rents and perquisites in the two places.

"Argus" begins next to prophesy that Protection will prevail universally, but stops and promises another article, which will in all likelihood have been published ere this reaches Montreal. Universal Protection—that must mean the absolute cessation of all commerce on the one hand, and on the other the growing of sugar canes in Manitoba and of cocoa-nut palms in Lower Canada. If "Argus" can prove that these are among the things that are coming on the earth, it will amaze your correspondent.

Stirling, Scotland.

J. E. H. T.

THE "SPOILT CHILD" AS A WIFE.

The ex-wife of the Rev. Dr. Newman Hall came of an excellent family, was the only child of a distinguished physician, and was represented in the evidence at the divorce suit as having been from early childhood "a spoilt child." A few years since another divorce suit made a far greater sensation in England, for the parties moved in the innermost circle of the plutocracy, and the lady was what ex-wife Hall happily is not, the mother of children. The Hon. Mrs. Gurney, wife of one of the wealthiest bankers in London, was depicted at her trial as a "spoilt child," and her maiden and matronly misconduct fully verified the description. She had many advantageous offers of marriage. One of them came from an excellent clergyman, the Hon. and Rev. J. F. Pelham, now Bishop of Norwich. The "spoilt child," writing to a female confidante about the proposal made to her by this respected gentleman, remarked, "Just as if I would marry a thing like that." An officer in the army next presented himself, a humble suppliant at the "spoilt child's" feet, but though in the abstract she might say, "*Ah, que j'aime le militaire,*" the warrior's sword clanged through her ancestral hall on the thigh of a rejected suitor. An amiable and generous banker was more successful, and became the father of her children, some four or five in number. But there is satiety even in wealth and the salons of fashion. The Hon. Mrs. Gurney was, like Mrs. Newman Hall, of a "horsey" turn of mind. She found, like Mrs. Newman Hall, her affinity in an uncouth stable boy, redolent of the sweet perfumes of the stable. "Physical affection" is the admirable physiological term applied to this divine afflatus by the counsel in the Hall case; it seems to feed and grow on the aromatic whiffs of the livery stable. After much long-suffering and forgiveness, Mrs. Gurney obtained a divorce, and her children have lived on to blush at their mother's name.

The "spoilt child" has abundant opportunities for inflicting upon the husband—however strong, noble and manly, as Newman Hall is—the meanest and most irritating of petty tortures. She can fly into a rage about nothing, and raise a domestic tempest so resonant that the policeman shall pause thereat upon his beat, and knocking at the door, ask what the disturbance is about. When her husband is writing for the press, or for the pulpit, Madame Virago, *née* Mademoiselle "Spoilt Child," can upset the inkstand, read or sing aloud in mockery, tell him she hates religion, destroy his manuscript, and then tell him she is going to the livery stables to meet her dear and sympathizing friend, the hostler, who, she insists, shall be forthwith invited to become a daily visitor at the house.

There is an Episcopal minister in England who, like Dr. Hall, has obtained his divorce. He also blighted his life through marrying a "spoilt child." In fighting about the children she delights to abuse the judges, and one of them good naturedly told her the other day, "I don't mind how you abuse me when the Court is over, but you must kindly wait until then, for your language to me here renders you liable to punishment."

A well known Latin hexameter verse tells us:—

"Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi sed sæpe cadendo;"

"The drop of water hollows the stone, not by force, but by constantly falling." As another proverb puts it, "The last straw breaks the camel's back." A few years since a horrible tragedy resulted from the same sort of incessant aggression and annoyance on the part of a wife, which must have made Newman Hall's life a weariness to him, and which has compelled him, in his sixty-fourth year, to seek finally the intervention of the law. In this case also the parties concerned were a clergyman and his wife, and the poor murdered woman was a "spoilt child." The Rev. John Selby Watson, Head Master of Stockwell Grammar School, London, was a fine classical scholar, and had translated Xenophon, Thucydides and other authors for Bohn, the well-known publisher. His unhappy wife could never let him rest. She persecuted him with her mocking tongue and frivolous behaviour, with her unrelenting ill-humour and homely contradiction and perversity, until one evening, sitting over his Greek texts in his library, she goaded him beyond control, and with one blow, as he swore solemnly, he killed her. Horror-stricken at what he had done, he hid the body in a closet, where it was discovered by the servant. His death sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

No word of justification can be said for him; yet so much as this may be said with truth, that the man who marries a "spoilt child" sows for himself a harvest of misery and regret, of suffering and humiliation, for which divorce may be a medicine, but death is the only cure.

Caustic.

FLIRTATION.

Dear reader, please be confidential about it and let us go back together to those palmy days when we *did* enjoy a flirtation. We don't now, of course; for some of us are married men, do not own ourselves, in fact possess nothing except the right to possess our souls in patience. Others of us have got so old, so gloomy, so altogether bacheloric, that opportunities for flirtation are not so frequently vouchsafed us as—well, as we could wish. Yet there *was* a time