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Comments

ON THE

Cartoons.



THE "LOYALTY" GAG.—The great Conservative party ought to form a black flag procession in acknowledgment of their abject poverty of ideas in the present campaign. The depth of their destitution must be great indeed when they can find nothing more sane and

sensible than the "Old Flag" argument. We call it argument through excess of courtesy. It is not argument, however, but a nauseous mixture of cant and impudence. And this is literally their one "issue," an issue upon which they expect to win a general election in a country which claims to possess a high degree of intelligence. Let us examine it a moment, since it is of so great importance in the campaign. What does the "Old Flag" mean? That not more than half the people of Canada are loyal, either to their own country or the British Crown. Where is the proof? Why, here—this two and a half million odd of our citizens favor reciprocal trade relations with the United States, and Reciprocity means Annexation. Yet, the London Times and every British statesman of any eminence, think Reciprocity would be an excellent thing for us to get if we can, and Sir Charles Tupper (who may be numbered in this category, perhaps, since he does most of his statesmaning in the Old Country) has only lately expressed himself publicly in the following words:—"Mr. Blaine may feel that a broad reciprocity measure between the United States and Canada would dispose of all difficulties. I think so myself. I would like to see the trade relations between Canada and the United States placed on the broadest and most friendly basis

possible, and I know that such a state of affairs would meet the approval of the home government." Words of similar import could be quoted from the lips of Sir John Macdonald and other Conservative leaders, who are now wildest in their swinging of the "Old Flag." It is all arrant cant. They know as well as anybody else that Reciprocity not only does not mean annexation, but that it is the only thing that can save us from ultimate political union with the States. But the impudence of the cry is even worse than its hypocrisy. Who are these people who dare to brand a clear half of their fellow citizens as traitors? Are they the purest, the wisest and the best men in our midst, or are they the authors and abettors of nearly all the scandals our public life has known within recent years? This cry, silly and brassy as it is, is calculated to serve a purpose, however. It is meant to get votes; and it is considered better for that purpose than the "great N.P." would be. It is worthy of remark just here that even the Manufacturers' Association is "roaring as gently as a sucking dove" about the N.P. this time. "Annexation" and "Direct Taxation" are the burden of all the campaign literature these worthy patriots have issued. And even the Empire has nothing to say about tall chimneys, home market and high wages. This stuff wouldn't go down as it used to. Schoolmaster Experience has been abroad since last general election, and he has taught the people some stubborn truths. So the "Old Flag" is all that is left, and when our farmers cry out in their dire straits, the banner or the Empire (British Empire, we mean; it is a mistake to suppose that the banner belongs to the Government organ) is stuffed into their mouths. They, with all the other members of the long-suffering consuming classes, are practically told that unless they will vote to have their pockets picked for another five years they will be disloyal knaves. Some of them will be fools enough to succumb to the threat, perhaps; but for the credit of our country we hope there will be enough left to resent the insult on the 5th of March with a force that will teach its authors better manners.

A BOGEY TO FRIGHTEN SIMPLETONS.—Lest the Old Flag should not do the business, the anti-reciprocity party try to frighten the people by predicting Direct Taxation as the inevitable result of Free Trade with the States. Mr. Laurier, Sir Richard Cartwright and other Grit leaders content themselves with the reply that any shrinkage of revenue can be made up by economy and retrenchment. They have not the boldness to face this pumpkin-headed bogey and tell the people plainly that Direct Taxation is not a bad thing, but a good thing. We presume they know this to be the case, and, if so, there is no excuse for their halting and irresolute attitude. By their timidity they strengthen a miserable superstition in the public mind. Perhaps they consider this good politics. We can tell them it is the sort of politics that has kept the Reform party in the cold shades of Opposition most of its life. The people don't care for coachmen who are afraid of their horses.



LOYALTY is the cry on which Sir John hopes to win. The nonsensical ravings of the Tory leaders and organs just now in denunciation of "traitors" and "treason" are calculated to make us rub our eyes and wonder whether we are really living near the close of the nineteenth century or in the Middle Ages. All that sort of melodramatic rant is out of date—as antiquated as the burning of witches or touching for the king's evil. No doubt there are plenty of people in Canada so peculiarly constituted that they sigh for a return of the "good old times" when a king was a king in earnest and could, on the whim of the moment, order traitors to be hanged, drawn and quartered by the dozen any morning before breakfast. It is unfortunate for Canada that we seem to have more than our share of these anachronisms in