

percentage of the members of anyone of these churches really belongs to that particular church for any better reason than that his parents were members of it, or that his environment shut him up to it, or that he was trained and indoctrinated in its creed and policy by those responsible for his early education? Can we suppose that one in ten, or one in fifty, of the Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Episcopalians, or Congregationalists, or Baptists, who constitute the membership of the bodies under consideration, ever at any period of his life sat down to a deliberate, unprejudiced, conscientious investigation of the questions at issue between these different bodies and reached his conclusions accordingly? The fact that in the majority of cases the "convictions" in question were gained in a very different and much less laborious way does not of course prove that the sectarian distinctions are worthless. We are quite willing to admit that correct views, in other words truth, may have an intrinsic value to the individual, apart altogether from the way in which he may have come by them. But none the less, even the truth that is held as the result of training or tradition, without impartial investigation, is held as a prejudice, and must be dealt with as such. And everyone knows how much harder it is to uproot or examine a prejudice, than an opinion formed by conscientious study. The point we wish to reach is this: assuming the facts with regard to the history of our individual creeds to be as we have suggested, it follows that the only possibility of reaching a genuine unity of belief and practice founded on the truth would depend upon two conditions. First, the finding of a sufficient number of competent representatives in each denomination, so loyal to truth that they could be trusted to free their minds from every preconception and sit down with their brethren to study the textbook at first hand with a view to find out simply what it teaches in regard to the points at issue. Second, the consent of the rank and file of the various bodies to abide by the result. As to the probabilities in favour of, or against, these representative men reaching an agreement, we leave our readers to judge from their own knowledge of human nature. To any objections which might be made to the reception by the many of the verdict of the few in such a matter and the changing of their convictions to suit, it could only be answered that the new convictions would have about the same intrinsic value as those at present held in the majority of cases, if the above view as to the manner in which they are ordinarily formed be correct. Failing this way of attaining the desired unity, would it not be better for the brethren of the various churches to join hands cordially to carry out their principles and do their Christian work, in so far as they are already at one—and everyone claims that the points of present agreement are far greater in number and importance than the points of difference—leaving to time and growth in knowledge and grace to bring the closer union? There is nothing like close contact and hand-in-hand struggle in a worthy cause to wear away the sharp corners of prejudice and fit mind and heart for closer approximations.

THE inevitable reaction against the unwisdom of protection as a commercial policy is operating just now in a somewhat roundabout fashion in both hemispheres. It is inconceivable that the intelligence of modern times can long suffer great nations to be guilty of the practical folly of flying in the face of nature and striving by artificial disabilities and prohibitions to countervail the beneficent ordinances by which she has decreed that the peoples dwelling in different regions and in various latitudes and longitudes shall freely exchange products for mutual advantage. Notwithstanding the prevalence for the time being of the strange economic heresy that A confers a special favour on B when he permits the latter to supply him with some commodity which he (B) has to spare and which A needs, even though he (B) is quite willing to take in return something which he himself needs and which A wishes to sell, the free-trader's confidence in the ultimate triumph of nature's beneficent purpose never wavers. It is incredible that the majorities in self-ruling communities can continue permanently to stand in their own light. We ventured to observe some time since that there were indications that the protectionist nations were beginning to find their way back to healthy commercial conditions by the indirect route of international treaties. Those who follow the news of the day will have perceived that considerable progress has already been made in this direction in both Europe and America. In the former the Dreibund Zollverein, which it is almost certain will soon be extended to include Belgium, Holland, Roumania, Servia,

and possibly Spain, spreads in effect the free-trade area over a large part of the European continent. Then, again, France, though she is fighting against serious disadvantages, in consequence of being too late in the field, as well as of other well-known causes, has made some progress in the same direction, especially in the cases of Greece and Denmark. It is unnecessary to recount what has recently been accomplished by the United States, along somewhat similar lines, though not to the same extent. The agreements just made with the British West Indies complete a circle of comparative freedom which will go far to counteract the injurious tendencies of the McKinley Bill. It is to some extent a redeeming feature of these treaty arrangements that however wrong in principle, they work so far as they go, right in practice. In giving the peoples concerned opportunities for testing the benefits of commercial freedom within certain limits they are almost inevitably paving the way for further experiments in the same direction, since no very profound reasoning can be required to convince the masses that if partial freedom cheapens production, quickens trade, and increases domestic comfort, complete freedom would be proportionately more beneficial. It is of course greatly to be deplored that these treaties are based to so great an extent on political rather than purely commercial grounds, especially since free commercial intercourse would prove one of the most potent of all influences in restoring good feeling between unfriendly peoples and in rendering future wars impossible. A Canadian journal supporting the present Government and its policy asks pertinently enough, why if it pays the United States to have a reciprocity treaty with the British West Indies it would not also pay it to have one with us? There is much force in the suggestion and, though there are many differences in circumstances and conditions which greatly increase the difficulties in the case of Canada, especially those growing out of the differences in latitude, these do not furnish a satisfactory answer to the question. It will remain for the Dominion Government to give the answer when the negotiations at that long delayed conference shall have failed, should they unfortunately fail, to bring about a better commercial understanding with our next door neighbours.

"PATRIOTISM becomes stagnant by too long epochs of peace." If General Porter, of the United States Navy, really delivered himself of the foregoing and other truculent sentiments, as reported by an interviewer at Washington, and if the words were spoken in seriousness, the fact affords a most suggestive argument for those who would have professional soldiering confined within the narrowest possible limits. The words speak volumes in regard to the relations between the maintenance of great standing armies and navies, and the finding of occasions for their use. Nor can it be denied that the sentiment is a very natural and reasonable one from the professional point of view. What more likely than that the soldier or naval officer should come to regard the virtues associated with the profession of arms as the chief of all manly and national virtues. To one who thinks it over calmly, having in full view all the horrible passions let loose in war and all the horrible results involved, there is indeed something monstrous in the idea of one nation going to war with another, on some pretext more or less plausible, but in reality in order to find scope and exercise for the development of what is called patriotism in its own subjects. One has only to imagine the powerful navy which the United States is now constructing complete and fully equipped, and manned with officers of kindred spirit with that of Admiral Porter, to be convinced that the finding of an enemy on whom to test the prowess of the war-ships would not require a great deal of time. On the same principle it is that the danger of war in Europe, however pacific the intentions of its rulers, can never be reduced to a minimum so long as immense bodies of warriors on sea and land are trained to look upon war as their legitimate business, and to regard their respective peoples as in serious danger of deterioration in all manly qualities if enervated by too long a period of peace. It is easy, for instance, to perceive what effect upon the issue of the present controversy with Chili, the presence at Washington of any considerable number of fire-eaters, of the Porter type, would have. We may hope that the day is far distant when such sentiments as those ascribed to him can find general favour on this continent.

WE are sorry to be compelled to infer from the tenor of discussions going on in the newspapers that the practice of dehorning cattle is spreading in Canada. It is

said by some that dehorning is now so common in the Western States that it is the exception to see cattle with horns. We sincerely hope that this taken, as it is evidently meant, to imply that the hornless cattle so universally seen were not polled or hornless by nature, but have been made so by the saw or other implement in human hands, is an exaggeration. But, if otherwise, it is still obvious that this fact is by no means decisive of the question of humanity or morality, since it will hardly be claimed that the average cow-boy or cattle-raiser of the Western plains is exactly the kind of man to whose judgment or humane instincts it would be safe to refer a question of this kind. To us it always seems that in all questions of cruelty to animals two distinct considerations should be taken into the account, though as a matter of fact stress is usually laid mainly or wholly upon the one, viz., the amount of pain inflicted upon the animals. This is, of course, a vitally important question in the present case, and, unfortunately for the easy decision of the matter, it is one in regard to which there is a very wide difference of opinion. We have, for instance, before us at this moment two letters which appeared in the *Globe* of Saturday last, both written by men claiming to know whereof they affirm. Speaking of the consequences of dehorning the one writer says: "These consequences to the unfortunate animals are intense agony during the operation, and great subsequent suffering, continuing more or less severely for considerable periods, frequently causing permanent injury, and occasionally resulting in death." The other writer, a practical farmer, asserts, on the contrary, that the charge of cruelty is foundationless. He says: "As to the operation itself, every precaution is taken to prevent injury, and only in rare instances does it exceed ten seconds in duration to each animal, and within fifteen minutes afterward they will be feeding without any appearance of suffering." Evidently the first thing to be decided, so far as decision in such a matter is possible, is this question of fact. As a trial is shortly to be had in London in which this will no doubt be the chief issue, those interested will do well to pay special attention to the evidence. Meanwhile it cannot be unfair, we think, to observe that pretty strong evidence will need to be brought forward to convince the disinterested listener of the opposite of what appears to be the testimony of experience and common sense. To conceive of the operation is enough to cause most sensitive persons to shudder; to conceive of it as almost painless is well nigh impossible.

BUT there is, it seems to us, a human as well as a humane element involved in all such questions. By this we mean that while the question of the suffering inflicted upon the poor brutes is a legitimate and important one, that of the reflex influence on those who perform such operations, those who witness them or their effects, and gradually on the whole community which tolerates such practices and perhaps profits by them, is, properly considered, of still greater moment. Of course the two things are pretty closely connected, yet it is not very difficult to distinguish clearly between them in thought. If the whole question were simply one of a few minutes or even a few hours of pretty acute pain inflicted upon an animal, to be forgotten as soon as past, it might not be so difficult for even the most sensitive humanitarian to become reconciled to it on the ground of the greater good to be gained, say, in the cheapening of animal food for the poor. But no thoughtful mind can fail to perceive that there has always been a close connection between the development of the more merciful and tender attributes of humanity and that of the finer and nobler and braver qualities. Hence it has come that we instinctively associate mercy with true refinement and manly courage, and cruelty with coarseness and cowardice. As we pointed out on a recent occasion, the modern and essentially Christian sentiment of pity which has covered every Christian country with hospitals and asylums for the halt, blind, deformed and helpless, of every class, means very much more in its effects upon civilization than the perpetuation of individuals whose continued existence really tends to lower the average of the national manhood, so far as mere physical and mental characteristics are concerned. The compensating advantages—and who will undertake to say that they are not ample?—are to be found in the development of those moral qualities which all are agreed constitute the highest attributes of our complex humanity. In this direction, it has always seemed to us, lies the strongest if not the absolutely impregnable fortress of the opponents of the vivisection practices which are so marked, and in the opinion of very many of the most estimable people