

exaggerated. This is inevitable, and much allowance must be made for it. But it must not be forgotten that the very existence of the tendency to exaggeration is to a certain extent an indication of the reality of the state of things which is the subject of the exaggeration. Men do not readily accept and pass on overdrawn pictures of a state of opinion or feeling which is in itself contrary to the observation and experience of their own daily lives. When we find considerable numbers of persons, usually regarded as reliable, ready to believe that such and such things are going on in the community, it may generally be considered certain that there is a substratum of truth underlying their impressions.

Next in importance to the fact of the existence of an abnormal degree of political unrest is the question as to its cause. On this point there can at the present time be no serious difference of opinion. The cause is almost purely commercial. The popular discontent, in whatever degree it exists, has its origin in unsatisfactory trade conditions and prospects. It is the outcome of business depression. In the towns and cities the complaint is of the scarcity of money and consequent dullness of trade. Among the farmers and tradesmen in the country, where the outcry is probably loudest, the low prices for products, resulting, as it seems to be generally believed, from the lack of an accessible market for many of the heavier and bulkier staples, form the burden of the lamentation. Everywhere, in town and country, the emphasis is laid upon the lack of employment and the consequent necessity which is taking the young people of all classes by scores and hundreds, to seek their fortunes "across the lines."

It might be amusing were the case less serious to listen to the varied tones of reproach, advice and consolation which are used by certain classes of philosophers. "Your habits of living are too luxurious," say some in effect. "You must put away your hand-some turn-outs, your fine furniture, your pianos, and be content to live as did your fathers before you. Return to the coarse homespun and the rough waggons which were good enough for them and your difficulties will begin to disappear." Others refuse to believe in the reality of the troubles. They lay the blame for whatever discontent they are forced to admit upon the "Grit" agitators and pessimists and croakers. Others again assure the sufferers that times of depression are unavoidable, and that people of the same classes and occupations elsewhere are in similar difficulties. Miserable comforters are they all, so long at least as they are unable to convince those whom they address that the present situation cannot be amended.

That brings us to the crucial point, the question of remedy. The impression is growing with astonishing rapidity that the most potent cause of difficulty is removable, and that the remedy is to be found in better trade relations with the great nation to the South—that we are suffering in consequence of the unnatural attempt which is being made to divorce us commercially from "the continent to which we belong." That stock phrase has been repeated till it seems almost like irony to quote it, and yet it is but the simplest expression of a great economic truth—a truth which is coming to be realized more clearly every day, especially by the farmers. Statements are made from time to time by those who are

supposed to be in the confidence of the Government, and even by some members of it, to the effect that their faith is not shaken in the efficacy of the "National Policy," and that they are more disposed to strengthen than to weaken it. We venture to predict that Sir John Thompson and some of his more far-seeing colleagues will embrace wiser counsels. They can hardly fail to perceive what is becoming obvious to many of their supporters, that the "National Policy" is rapidly falling into discredit, and that, unless very materially and promptly modified, its days are numbered. It has failed to procure the reciprocity which was alleged to be its first object. It has failed to supply the sufficient home market which was to make us independent of the foreign. It has failed to promote immigration, or to check the debilitating outflow of the country's best blood.

Every day's observation but convinces us the more firmly of the truth of what we have before said, that the new Premier has a great opportunity before him, if he has but the foresight and courage to grasp it. Freer trade with the continent is the first great need of the country. It will not bring the commercial millenium, but it will infuse new life into our most productive industries and new courage and hope into many of our despondent citizens. How shall it be obtained? Commercial union the people have declared pretty emphatically they will not have at the price proposed, and we have seen no indication of a change of feeling in this respect. Political union is abhorrent to a large and influential class of our population, unacceptable to the great majority, and desired or tolerated in thought by a growing minority only for the sake of the commercial advantages it would bring. But there is another and a more excellent way by which safe and salutary progress can be made in this direction, which is entirely within our power, and which involves no sacrifice of principle. Our Government and Parliament can begin by promptly lowering the tariff wall on our own side of the line. By so doing they would not only promote trade with the Mother Country, but relieve our own people of some of their oppressive burdens, even were there no hope of response from our neighbours. But more than all, there is every reason to hope that with the incoming President and Congress pledged to tariff reform in the United States, the example set by us would be speedily followed by them. The following from the New York World, an influential organ of the Democratic party, is commended to the serious consideration of all concerned. It is full of suggestiveness:—

The Montreal Gazette, the leading Conservative organ of the Dominion, is very strongly of the opinion that Mr. Cleveland's administration will increase the freedom of commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States, and will do it through the modification of tariff laws rather than by the jug-handled reciprocity policy which prevails in our relations with South American countries. The Gazette has a very creditable notion of Democratic policy. If it will convince the leaders of its own party that tariff rates should be lowered on its own side of the border, it will aid in bringing about the end.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

President Harrison's message to Congress is remarkable for its assumptions and for its assertions. As the assumptions have chiefly to

do with the tariff issue, an issue in regard to which the nation has just declared its loss of faith in the conclusions based upon them, the best answer will be afforded in the trial of the new system to which he appeals. Should the adoption of a revenue tariff, other conditions being equal, result in the diminution of wages, and the other many and serious national disasters which it is insinuated rather than predicted will follow, the American people will not be slow to perceive it and we Canadians may profit by the object lesson unless we decide in the meantime to try the same experiment for ourselves. All parties can, therefore, afford to let such implications as that the rate of wages in the United States, measured by their ability to procure for the labourer the necessaries and comforts of life, are very much higher than those of other countries, and that the protective tariff is the cause of this difference, stand until such time as facts may speak for themselves. From the economical point of view, the internal history of the United States during the period of Cleveland's presidency will be a most interesting study for the whole civilized world. Very important results, too, especially for Canada, will depend upon it. Should the experiment of tariff reduction, to which the incoming Administration stands pledged, be happily followed by a period of increasing prosperity, as there is good reason to expect if such reduction is judiciously made, it may safely be predicted that the growth of a popular sentiment which will ultimately demand, in terms not to be misunderstood or denied, absolute free trade with all the world, will not be long in being developed.

But by far the most remarkable paragraphs in the Message are those in which Canada is referred to by name. It would be difficult to find a parallel to the bitterness of tone of this considerable portion of the address, in the language held by the responsible rulers of any nation in modern times towards any neighbouring people, save in the case either of actual war or diplomatic relations verging on war. The President seems not only to have forgotten the requirements of international courtesy but to have allowed his voice to ascend from the tone of dignity befitting the representative head of a great nation almost to the high pitch of the angry scold. Democratic bluntness degenerates on his lips into petulant denunciation.

There certainly can be nothing in the relations of the two countries to justify such an attack. It lacks both the dignity and the magnanimity which should be characteristic of one of the mightiest nations in Christendom. We are glad to believe that the feeling it represents is not shared—we are quite certain that the language will not be approved—by many of Mr. Harrison's most influential supporters. None the less there is danger that such words falling from the lips of the Chief Magistrate may do much to intensify a feeling of unfriendliness which unhappily exists among certain classes on both sides of the international boundary. Such a result would be mischievous and deplorable. As we have often said, whatever destiny the fates may have in store for Canada, or for the United States, it is inevitable that the people of the two countries shall live side by side through all the future. Therefore the best interests of both, as well as the highest moral considerations, demand that they shall live on the most friendly and harmonious terms. Whatever