

there is no hope of maintaining for ever the wall of China, free trade with Canada would be likely to seem the least injurious as well as the most natural concession to growing opinion which they could make. A renewal of the old Reciprocity Treaty, or something as near to a renewal as circumstances will now permit, is no doubt the measure under discussion between the Governments and the limits of their present views. But why stop short of this? The fate of the old treaty, overturned in a moment with all the industries which had been built upon it, by a gust of international animosity, is enough to warn us of the precarious character of all such arrangements, even when the difficulties of negotiating these, and of satisfying all the interests on both sides, have been overcome. Nor do they rid us of that intolerable nuisance, the custom house, or of the evils of its inseparable companion, smuggling. Why not make the boon at once complete and lasting? Why not enter into commercial union, and bid the custom house disappear for ever from the fair face of this continent, so far as the intercourse between its own communities is concerned? There would be difficulties of detail, no doubt, in arranging the terms of Union, both with regard to the Tariff and with regard to the Excise, which would also require adjustment, though they are likely to be diminished by the progress of fiscal affairs in the United States; but to overcome difficulties for the attainment of vital objects is the province and the pride of statesmanship. The one great material benefit which it is possible for legislation to confer upon the people of Canada is free commercial intercourse with their own continent. All along the border, especially our people, look upon the barrier which daily meets their eyes with an earnest desire for its abolition. Any possible loss of revenue would be swallowed up in the magnitude of the commercial gain, and it might be compensated at once by a reduction in needless expenses of government. The politicians, whose interest is distinct from that of the people, will say, no doubt, that commercial union might be fatal to political separation. But if reciprocity, which the politicians themselves are trying to bring about, does not weaken political separation, why should commercial union be fatal to it? In the North-West the absence of commercial union bids fair to produce a revolt against the tariff, in which political separation will be swept away. Here is a policy, if any body is in quest of one, better than cringing to priests for the Irish Catholic vote.

THE North-West has to a lamentable extent been made an asylum for disreputable or discarded politicians. This was to be expected: party claims its prey. But there is no reason to doubt that in framing regulations for the new country the intentions of the Ottawa Government have been good, or that it has spared any pains in its endeavour to give them effect. Its misfortune is that, like the Government of George III. in former days, it is making ordinances for a community not under its eyes, and of the needs and grievances of which it receives information only at second hand. Hence the discontent which appears now to have spread from the farming to the mining population. From the region of Silver City comes the report that the miners there are beginning, like the farmers of Manitoba, to talk about secession, and that some of them are taking their departure for British Columbia, whose mining laws, founded on those of the States and Australia, are of the most liberal character. Extraordinary powers have been vested by the Ottawa Government in its local agent, not appointed at the date of this information, but sure, as the people of the district thought, to be some broken-down politician. This functionary not only is to have paternal authority over those in quest of locations, but is to be sole judge of all mining disputes, investing at times large sums of money, while the only appeal is to the Dominion Land Agent at Winnipeg. A ditch cannot be dug without the permission of the Minister of the Interior, and Ottawa reserves to itself auction rights over mining districts which are contrasted, by those concerned, with the liberal treatment of miners and their customs across the Line. The communities of the North-West at present are weak; when they become strong they will break the yoke of Ottawa and its politicians. The notion that this vast and distant territory can be permanently treated as an outlying property or tributary appendage of Old Canada will certainly evaporate before many years are past.

To call the principle which is now visibly gaining ground in the United States Free Trade is a misnomer, and one which has not a little prejudiced the discussion. Free Trade implies the total abolition of import duties, which nobody has proposed. The United States must, like other countries, have their tariff, and adjust it to their own commercial circumstances. England herself is not a Free Trade nation; she raises twenty millions sterling annually by customs, and her practice in this respect is deplored by the thorough-going advocates of Free Trade among her own people, who propose to do away altogether with customs, and supply their place by

direct taxation. But she levies her taxes not for the purpose of Protection but only for that of revenue, nor does her Government take more from her people than the necessary expenses of the State. By this policy her wealth has, within the last forty years, been enormously increased, though her actual resources, her land and coal, have remained the same. The Government of the United States is now taking from the people at least a hundred millions annually more than the necessary expenses of the State, and taking it for the purpose of Protection, that is to say, for the purpose of keeping up the profits of certain capitalists, and forcing into certain manufactures labour which would be more profitably employed elsewhere. It is impossible that so palpable an absurdity and so manifest a wrong should fail practically to impress the shrewd intelligence of the American people, though it has been closed against the theoretic demonstrations of the Free Trade essayists and envoys of the Cobden Club. In Massachusetts, the heart of Protectionism, a powerful Tariff Reform League has been formed. Its constitution declares "that the present enormous surplus in the national revenues above the public requirements is demoralizing and dangerous, and should be cut down by removing the burden of taxation from the necessaries of life, and not from whiskey and tobacco, and that the policy of taxing imports not for revenue but for the purpose of obstructing trade is unsound." This declaration is just as applicable to the policy of Canada, in its measure, as to that of the United States. With reference to both, it might be expressed in more downright language. Government is entrusted with the power of taxation solely for the purpose of defraying the national expenditure; if it takes more, it abuses its trust and robs the people. Amidst all the economical dissertations which have been written or uttered on the subject, far too little prominence has been given to this argument from plain justice.

"LISTENING to infidel Bob."—"A big and delighted assembly at the Academy of Music."—"Even the ticket speculators busy at the doors of the heathen church."—"The orator fires away with his accustomed vigour." Such are the Pentecostal phenomena that, according to a New York journal, attend the promulgation of the New Gospel by Col. Robert Ingersoll. They certainly differ considerably from those which attended the publication of the Old Gospel by Paul of Tarsus. Paul did not charge seventy-five cents for admission, nor did he deliver his message to a big and delighted assembly with the studied accents and histrionic tricks of the platform mountebank. It may be added that he bore himself, as Free-thinkers have admitted, "like a perfect gentleman," and neither traduced the paganism against which he preached, nor vilified its professors. "Founders of inquisitions, builders of dungeons, makers of chains, inventors of instruments of torture, tearers, and burners, and branders of human flesh, stealers of babes, and sellers of husbands, and wives, and children, and they who kept the horizon lurid with the faggot's flame for a thousand years are in heaven to-night. I wish heaven joy." Such is Col. Ingersoll's presentation of the faith which has made Christendom, with its morality, its charities and its missions. In one of his lectures he travestied the Day of Judgment, and represented a perfectly virtuous man as sent to hell for not believing in the literal truth of the book of Jonah, while an abandoned scoundrel who did believe in the literal truth of the Book of Jonah was at once admitted to heaven. It is thus that he, as a minister of new truth, depicts to an ignorant and excited audience the religion of Luther, Pascal, Chillingworth, Chalmers, Channing, Maurice, Frederick Robertson, and, it may be added, of Kepler, Locke, Sir Isaac Newton and Faraday. It is a matter of course that he should charge rational Christianity with a literal acceptance of the figurative language employed in the Old Testament to bring the idea of God and His doings home to primitive minds, and "delight" his "big audience" with the absurd deductions to which figurative language, taken literally, must always lead. This is his special game, and its success ought to be a warning to those who persist in using the Old Testament and reading it in churches as if it had been written for Christians. Christianity, Col. Ingersoll says, is kept alive only because so much money is invested in it. That, it seems, is the sole reason why so many able and learned laymen who have no inducement whatever to profess one belief more than another continue to be Christians. It seems from what the New York journal says about the ticket speculators that in the new religion of humanity, also, some money is invested. The other day the great prophet of the new dispensation was seen employing all the artifices of the most unscrupulous advocate to save from justice, with the help of a dishonest jury, the gang of scoundrels which had committed the Star Route frauds. Now he arraigns Providence for conniving at the existence of roguery and asks why, if there is a God, he does not overrule, in the interest of justice, the wrong decisions of human courts of law.