

The Week.

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THE Fishery Question is giving no trouble this year. Not a seizure has been made so far; which is accounted for by the Government organs on the theory of increasing watchfulness on the part of the cruisers, which effectually prevents all chance of poaching; and by the Opposition press, by alleging that the Americans are freely allowed to fish within the three mile limit, provided they keep up appearances by sheering off when a Government cruiser comes in sight. But the truth seems to be that there is a better spirit on both sides than last year; our Government is not so punctilious, and the Americans are not so aggressive. The custom-house regulations have been modified in an accommodating spirit on the Canadian side; while the American fishermen have generally received instructions not to enter the disputed waters, save for shelter or wood and water. There has been a reasonable degree of concession on each side; and so unseemly and mischievous quarrelling has been avoided.

To ask Canadians to consider the commercial aspect of Commercial Union by itself and not at present to take into account its political consequences is much like advising a mouse to walk into a trap and taste the cheese, and not concern itself about the consequences. Will Commercial Union lead to Annexation, is the very crux of the question to most people; and we are persuaded that if the farmers who are now holding up both hands for Commercial Union could be brought to see—what we have little doubt is the case—that its probable effect would be such a state of things in Canada that Annexation would flow as a consequence or be sought as a relief,—if this could be made clear, there would be a speedy end to the agitation. It is impossible indeed to consider the project of Commercial Union without taking account of its political aspect, unless we wilfully shut our senses; the political aspect of the question is forced on us the moment we look beyond the statements of its Canadian advocates to the opinion and comments of the Americans. Mr. Wiman, for instance, tells us that Commercial Union will prevent Annexation; that if affairs are permitted to drift as at present Annexation will be inevitable, whereas Commercial Union will confer upon the Dominion all the advantages of Annexation without any of the penalties. Well, we might, as advised, taking Mr. Wiman's dicta on trust, go on discussing Commercial Union, and so perhaps forwarding it, without reference to Annexation; but what says the *New York Tribune* by way of comment on Mr. Wiman's statement?—Americans, it says, "do not desire to drag any of the Canadian Provinces into the Union, nor to encourage premature agitation of the question. Nevertheless, they are convinced that the incorporation of those Provinces in the American Union is inevitable, and . . . while they are not anxious to anticipate the future with importunate solicitations and ill-timed agitation, they are reluctant to block the road to Annexation. When, therefore, Mr. Wiman tells the Canadians that Annexation must come speedily unless Commercial Union can be effected, they [the Americans] are disposed to let the frontier tariffs stand. It may be true, they will conclude, that with Commercial Union the Provinces will have all the advantages of the American state system without any of the responsibilities; but why should so one-sided a compact be made? Why should the British Colonies on this continent obtain all the commercial benefits of membership in the Union, while they remain outside, and are dependent upon the Crown?" So, if it be really true as claimed by the Canadian Unionists that Commercial Union will prevent Annexation, we shall have none of it. The Americans believe the absorption of Canada to be ultimately inevitable, and believing that, they will certainly not agree to Commercial Union, if that is to "block the road" to the absorption. But, "Let us make their tariff, and we'll soon make their politics," says the *Chicago Tribune*, the leading Republican paper of the West, and this is unquestionably the true state of the case. Commercial Union would not prevent Annexation, or block the way to it. If it did we should not get it—that is shown by the *N. Y. Tribune*; but, in fact, this argument of Mr. Wiman's was fabricated for Canadian consumption, and has no currency on the other side.

THE annual exhibit of the United States Treasury for the financial year just closed shows an excess of revenue over expenditure for the year

of near one hundred and three million dollars. The receipts from customs were the largest ever received from this source, except in the year 1882, when they amounted to two hundred and twenty million and a half, while last year they were only three million less. This enormous revenue from imports in face of a high tariff certainly goes to support the opinion that Commercial Union would not operate an exclusion of British trade. While indeed such an immense volume of food stuffs from this continent finds a market in Great Britain, a return trade must flow over the tariff barrier, however high that be raised. Meanwhile, the collection of customs duties to near double the amount required ought before long to force the subject of tariff revision on our neighbours. The most likely method of reducing the surplus would appear to be a proportionate reduction in customs and internal revenue taxes, which would take about a third off the amount of the present duties, a reduction that might bring Commercial Union measurably nearer.

OUR neighbours have set us a worthy example in throwing off party fetters to no inconsiderable extent of late years; and the tone of popular comment on the present hostile attitude of the Grand Army of the Republic to President Cleveland shows distinctly the temper of the people toward the party "machine"—at least the party machine in masquerade. The annual Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organisation which includes every male citizen who blew so much as a tin horn in the service of the Union, is an affair of national interest. This September it is to take place, with special significance, in the southern city of St. Louis, in token to the world that the issues of the rebellion are no more things of the past than its animosities. In February last the Grand Army sent a courteous invitation to the President to honour the Encampment by his presence, and receive such honour as the Chief Executive of the nation might at the hands of the men who had saved it. In the meantime, however, Mr. Cleveland did two things that excited the wrath of the Grand Army of the Republic. He vetoed the Pension Bill of the session, and he proposed the return of the Confederate flags, taken in the recent struggle between North and South. His straight veto was received with applause by everybody not immediately interested in it, for the National Treasury has been for years so systematically rifled upon one pretence or another to catch the "old soldier" vote that the word "veteran" is beginning to have a distinct suggestion of bombast and boodle about it. With regard to the flags, the President's motives cannot be impugned, although his common sense may. The South is too solidly Democratic as it is to require propitiation, and if the negro vote could be affected by any sentimental consideration, it would be of course, in the opposite direction. The flags, however, were fairly taken from the enemies of the Union by its defenders, and to return them is simply to stir up not unnatural feelings of protest in the breasts of those of whose victory they are the pledges, without making the fact that the men who carried them were beaten any more palatable. To send them back is, moreover, to recognise a bi-partite Union, otherwise there is "nothing and nobody" to return them to. "The South" is supposed to have only a geographical existence in the present state of peace and harmony that the citizens of the Republic fondly believe exists there. While the South contended with the North, it was the enemy of the United States. In ceasing to be the enemy of the United States, it ceased to be at all in any sense of separation from them.

BECAUSE of these two Presidential acts, especially, it is more than hinted, because of the first, the attitude of the Grand Army toward Mr. Cleveland has become decidedly hostile. Windy orators of the Tuttle and Fairchild type have indulged in the most offensive criticism of his conduct; whole detachments of "veterans" have signified their intention of staying at home if he is present at the Encampment, and he has been threatened with insult and violence should he attend. Thus far the Grand Army has not officially repudiated these manifestations, and as it has had plenty of time, the President and the nation are justified in accepting them as indicating the prevailing sentiment of that body. Acting upon this belief, Mr. Cleveland has sent a manly and dignified letter of refusal to the Mayor of St. Louis and the Grand Army of the Republic's representative. And now everybody except the rabid Republican element is in a ferment of indignant enquiry as to whether the dignity of the Chief Executive's office is to be wantonly degraded by an organisation, assuming to be national and representative, that is sore-headed because its extortionate claims are at last defied.

FULLER information about the recent bye-elections in England goes to show that the Unionist reverses were due mainly to want of organisation. That is, while the Gladstonite candidates represented a united party, their opponents represented two parties—the Conservatives and the Liberal.