

Mother Country of a tariff discriminating in favour of Canada is the chief, if not the only, inducement which could weigh greatly with the majority of Canadians in favour of a scheme which would certainly increase their taxes, responsibilities and dangers, while curtailing, to a greater or less extent, their autonomous powers and rights. The practical question then is: Can the Canadian federationists bring forward any tangible evidence to show that there is in the minds of the leaders of British political thought, the least inclination, we will not say, to propose and advocate such a change in the tariff, but even to regard it as a matter for discussion? We speak subject to correction, but our impression is that not even the warmest friends of the movement in Great Britain, with possibly a very few exceptions, have ever admitted the possibility of a federation on the basis of "such tariff changes as would give to each part of the Empire advantages in the markets of all." Until some such evidence is produced—so long, at least, as the evidence all points in the opposite direction—it seems to us that it would be a waste of time and energy for Canadians to agitate for the attainment of that which is almost certainly unattainable. Nor can it be forgotten that the scheme in question becomes the more improbable, we had almost said absurd, so far as Canada is concerned, by reason of the fact that we impose upon the products of the Mother Country heavy taxes, which it is not even proposed to remove. The idea that the people, the breadwinners, who are rapidly becoming the ruling power in England, would consent to have their food again taxed in order to favour a colony which is, nevertheless, to continue to put heavy and in some cases almost prohibitory taxes upon the products of their toil, is equalled in improbability only by the idea that the legislators and political economists of England will consent to jeopardize that trade with the nations of the world, which is the chief source of the national wealth, for the sake of the comparatively insignificant business they transact with the colonies. These, we are well aware, are no new arguments. The question is: Are they valid arguments? Have they ever been fairly and successfully met?

THE other question to which we have referred as suggested by the League circular is one which we do not remember to have seen discussed, but which must inevitably come up for serious consideration before the Federation movement can make any great headway. Is such a Federation desirable on the broadest grounds? Would it be in the interests of higher civilization, of permanent peace, of good-will among the nations? It is, be it observed, to be in the first place an offensive and defensive alliance. It is to be, in the second place, commercially, a close corporation, involving, so far as the Mother Country is concerned, a distinct retrogression from the large and liberal policy by which she has so long set an example worthy of all imitation. The nations have been, unhappily, slow to imitate it, but that fact only makes the nobility of her course more conspicuous, and its success the more remarkable. Two points of view present themselves in this connection. What would be the effect of Federation upon the European rivals of Great Britain? Would it not be regarded as, in some sense, a challenge, if not a menace, to which they would be likely to respond with increased armaments and counter alliances? Would it not, therefore, increase rather than diminish any danger with which the Empire may be now threatened, by reason of the jealousy or dislike of other nations? It can scarcely be doubted that the vulnerability of the federated Empire would be increased in greater ratio than its defensive strength. It will, we dare say, be replied that this could not be so, as all the colonies to be consolidated are already integral parts of the Empire, and must be defended in case of war. But the inducement to attack a distant country, as well as the moral effect of its capture, would be much greater when it was regarded as part and parcel of the federated Empire. The other point of view referred to is that which takes in the probable effect of the proposed change upon the relations of both England and Canada to the United States. An alliance of the English-speaking countries and peoples of the world would have in it an element of attractiveness and moral grandeur which is wanting in the proposed Federation. The latter could scarcely fail to intensify and perpetuate any difficulties at present existing between the two great English-speaking nations, and would thus tend to permanent estrangement, if not to bitterness or hostility. It may be said that the unfriendly commercial policy of the United States would amply justify Canada in turning her back upon her powerful

neighbour, and seeking to enter into closer political as well as commercial relations with Great Britain and her colonies. But Canada must, after all, remain forever side by side with the United States. The commercial interests of the two countries must always be more closely related than those of either can possibly be with those of any distant country. The two peoples are closely allied by ties of origin and race, by intermingling of populations, and hence by relationship and intermarriage. It is almost an exception to find a family in Canada which has not son or daughter, nephew or niece in the United States. Hence any policy which tends to erect new barriers to friendship and intercourse between the two countries, or to strengthen and perpetuate those already erected, stands, it seems to us, in need of much better justification than any which has yet been brought forward. If there were sufficient grounds for concluding that our neighbours would persist in their present purlind tariff policy, the force of these considerations would be, we admit, considerably weakened. But seeing that a strong party in the Union is already working energetically against the policy of exclusion, and that tariff reform is, in all probability, only a matter of time, it would surely be most unwise for Canada to strengthen the foes and irritate the friends of better trade relations by committing herself to a policy looking to permanent commercial isolation.

THE loss of life from accidents at level-crossings in Canada is deplorable. Such incidents as those quoted by our correspondent "X" in another column are unhappily but examples of those which our papers have to report week after week. In fact they are matters of such common occurrence that we are in danger of becoming, as our correspondent suggests, callous through use and wont to the impression they should make upon our minds and hearts. The level-crossing danger is one which can be obviated, and which, therefore, should be obviated. The people should arise in their indignation and declare that a remedy must be found and the slaughter stopped. But the question of the best remedy and the right way of applying it is a debatable one, and we shall be glad to have disinterested and competent observers give their opinions through our columns. Seeing that neither the highways nor the railways can be dispensed with and that the crossings are therefore unavoidable, the two practical points involved are, it seems to us, first whether the roads shall pass over the railways by bridges, or under them by excavations, or whether the railways shall cross the roads by one or other of these methods; and, second, which corporation shall in either case bear the expense, or whether it should be divided between the municipalities and the railway companies. "X" seems to be of opinion that the roads should be elevated at the crossings, and that, in consideration of the important benefits accruing to the district from the operations of the railway company, the responsibility and expense should be divided. To us, it seems that a strong argument could be constructed in favour of the view that the expense should be borne exclusively by the railways, and that, in the majority of cases, the bridges or tunnels should be made for the railway, and the public road left undisturbed and safe. We shall not attempt to draw out that argument, but may suggest a few considerations that would give it weight, such as that the roads are usually first in order of time and thus have the right of priority; that the railways, however beneficial, are usually the property of private corporations, whose object is simply to make money; that the railway coaches being propelled by steam can more easily overcome a slight elevation, while to the farmers' teams a railway bridge, unless built with long and expensive approaches, becomes a very serious obstacle, in a level country; that if the matter were thus understood the surveyors of new railways would so take it into account that the excavation or bridging could usually be provided for with slight inconvenience, etc. We have no desire, however, to prejudge the question, but shall be glad to give both sides a hearing. We may observe, by the way, that, pending further legislation, the decision soon to be given by the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, touching the crossings in Toronto and vicinity, will have an important bearing upon the question of the legal responsibility of the railways as the laws now stand.

CANADA is peculiarly unhappy just now in having been made the scene of a series of crimes of the most atrocious and revolting character. The facts almost give colour to the popular notion that the tendency to commit

such crimes is under the operation of some atmospheric influence or other natural law which causes them to be perpetrated in groups. The more rational theory that the sensational publicity given to the details of one diabolical deed causes those details to dwell and work in the imagination of some weak and wicked reader, until by a kind of unconscious imitation a similar tragedy is enacted, is negatived in the cases in question by the utter want of similarity in both the motives and the methods of the different criminals. Fail as we must to account for it, the appalling fact remains that our country has within the last few months gained a bad notoriety from the commission within its borders of several of the most cowardly and cruel murders of which it is possible to conceive. Taking three cases, in two of which a verdict of guilty has within a week or two been found and sentence of death pronounced, we are shocked to see how the villainy and moral degradation, which seemed to have reached almost the acme of human possibility in the first instance, have been intensified in each successive case. When a young man was convicted on irrefragable proof of having lured another young man from his comfortable home in England, and done him to death in the most treacherous and cowardly manner in a remote Canadian swamp, all, so far as appears, for the sake of a few hundred dollars, it seemed as if human depravity must have well nigh reached its lowest depth, and there could scarcely be a lower deep to which another could descend. And yet the man who could, deliberately and with coolly planned malice, entice the wife, whom he had solemnly vowed to love, honour and protect, to the edge of a Niagara precipice, treacherously and pitilessly push her over the brink and leave her there, for aught he could have known, to writhe in agony for hours or days, before death came to her relief, managed to outdo, it must be confessed, in horrible cruelty at least, the Eastwood murderer. And now both these bloody deeds may be said almost to pale beside that of the fiend in human shape who could relentlessly strangle, with his own brutal fingers, at the same moment, two innocent and unsuspecting girls on their way from school, bringing upon his soul this awful burden of guilt, not for filthy lucre, nor from fear of deserved punishment, but for the momentary gratification of a brutish passion. Surely we may now hope that the climax has been reached and that our fair land may again, for a time, enjoy the comparative freedom, which has been its wont, from such foul crimes as those which have just now, it is to be feared, done lasting injury to its reputation.

THE charge which Archdeacon Farrar is reported to have brought, or rather implied, against certain publishers who are said to have made large gains out of his brain-work, and given him a scanty share, raises once more the hard ethical question, which is ever and anon coming to the surface, and which will not down. That question is, broadly stated, the right of one man or class of men to grow rich by means of the labour of others, while those others remain comparatively poor. The case in question may serve well as an illustration, whether the facts are correctly given or not. Let us suppose that a certain publishing firm agreed to pay Archdeacon Farrar £500 for a certain book, that when the book proved successful beyond expectation, the firm voluntarily gave him £1,500 more, though under no obligation to do so; and that at the same time the firm had cleared £25,000 from the sale of the book. Legally the publishers have done much more than they agreed to do. They, no doubt, fancied that they were acting generously rather than justly in quadrupling the amount due the author according to contract. And yet, by hypothesis, they put more than twelve dollars of the profits from his book into their own pockets for every one they handed to him. Are they morally as well as legally justified in doing so? If not, would they have been justified had they given him one-third or one-half of the total proceeds? If the legal contract is not the measure of moral right, who shall determine, and how, what is the measure of the moral right of each? It may be urged that the publishers took all the risk, and that if the book had failed they would have been the chief losers. We are not sure that that is so. It might be plausibly argued that both the author's investment and his risk were greater than theirs, as his literary reputation was more valuable to him than the part of their capital they staked, to them. The question is simply a new version of the old dispute between capital and labour. The president of the Standard Oil Company gave, the other day, a million of dollars to a university which he is helping to found. That sum is said to represent his income for but a few weeks or months.