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EDITORIAL NOTES.

As a non-partisan journal, it is not our business to take sides in the present political contest; and in the utter absence of any question of principle on either side it is not our inclination to do so. The campaign is merely a rather unseemly struggle for the spoils of office, with scarcely any reference to what is best either for the present or the future of the country. The old tactics are being resorted to again, and each province is fighting for what, in a short-sighted way, is considered best for its own immediate interest, without any care whatever for the common good. Thus, both Grits and Conservatives are vying with each other to see who can offer the highest price for votes. In one district it is a tunnel, in another a railway, and in another such alteration of the tariff as is supposed to affect local exigencies. This, of course, is to be deplored. We do not expect, on the other hand, human nature to be other than it is. In a vast country like this, with little or no history; with provinces wide apart, and at best loosely connected with each other; with a mixed population, the predominating elements whereof are composed of two races of diverse religion and language, and in all other things as dissimilar as it is possible for them to be, there is much to be said in palliation of the want of unity and patriotism around us. At the same time, it is humiliating to have to admit that the election in which we are engaged is only a rough-and-tumble fight for the control of the national purse.

WHAT is Protection: is it right or wrong? This is a question much debated among us now, and one that cannot be answered off-hand. Unquestionably the free trade doctrine is right in theory, and would be so in practice if universally applied. But free trade, as it was proclaimed in England half a century back, and the lopsided practice of it at the present time, are two very different things. The one great argument of Peronnet Thompson, Richard Cobden and George Wilson—the fathers of the free trade movement—was that as soon as England inaugurated free trade its manifold advantages would be so apparent that it would be at once followed by all the nations of the world.

Now nearly half a century has passed away, and not only have the nations of the earth very decidedly declined to follow the example thus set them, but there is in England now a party numerically not contemptible, and possessing in its ranks some able men, who are demanding, not a return to the old system, but what they term Reciprocity. Whether Reciprocity is right or wrong is not the question here, but the existence of the demand is extremely significant, arising as it has in the country where the free trade idea was carried into effect, and where free trade principles were for a long time accepted as one of those self-evident truths that require no demonstration. In these circumstances Canadians may well be cautious in reversing their present fiscal policy. Maintaining our National Policy now does not mean maintaining it forever; but no change of importance can be made but by arrangement with the United States; and it is only too evident, in the present rather excited tone of our neighbours, that for anything like equitable reciprocity the time is not yet.

MR. GRANT ALLEN, who has long since made his way to the front rank on the periodical press of London, is a Canadian by birth and early training. By his numerous contributions to the various magazines he is doing a good deal of late to attract attention to his native land. ARCTURUS recently contained some account of his article on "Calabogie," in the January number of the *Cornhill*. *Longman's* has another article from his pen, in which he speaks out with the utmost plainness regarding the future of Canada. He refers to annexation as "the manifest destiny and only natural future of the Canadian Dominion." A writer in the *Montreal Gazette* waxed indignant at this deliverance, and only half in jest declares that were it not for personal friendship he would rush at Mr. Allen and stone him. The writer of this pugnacious rejoinder is understood to be Martin J. Griffin, formerly editor of the *Toronto Mail*, and now joint librarian of the Parliamentary Library at Ottawa. It is all very well for Mr. Griffin and other Government officials to try to stifle free discussion. All their interests lie in preserving the *status quo*. Doth Job serve God for naught? It may be that the annexation of Canada to the United States would be a very bad thing for the former. It may be that a movement in that direction would be unwise and unpopular. So far as we are aware, no such movement is afoot, or likely to be so in the near future. But the subject is at least a legitimate one for intelligent people to talk about, or even to write about if they please, and the holders of fat berths under the present regime must not suppose that they will be