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The Week,

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

SIR THOMAS FARRER, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Board of Trade, is an excellent example of the great public servants whom England possesses outside political party and who are the real pillars of her administration. A man of large private means and cultivated tastes, he retains a laborious office from public spirit and from love of the work of which he is perfectly master. In a treatise on the question between Free Trade and Fair Trade he incidentally reviews our Canadian Tariff. He is mistaken in thinking that the Tariff was originally Protectionist. It was originally a revenue tariff, rendered necessary by the deficit, and it answered the purpose for which it was intended by producing an increase of income. Retaliatory, as against the United States, it no doubt was from the beginning; and, for our part, not being purists of Free Trade, we see no objection to retaliation if it accomplishes the object of forcing open the closed gate. But the Protectionist character was assumed only when the principle was avowed by the Finance Minister, and it was proclaimed by him, that the taxes would be retained, whether they were needed by the revenue or not, for the purpose of protecting native goods. In the present aspect of the question, however, Sir Thomas's remarks are pertinent. He thinks that it is too soon yet to trace the effects of the Tariff. Canada shared the revival of American trade; she has increased her production of grain and, as she must take something in return for what she exports, her imports have likewise increased and with them her Customs revenue. But the increase, Sir Thomas thinks, is not so large as might have been expected. In 1880, after the new tariff, the amount received as Customs revenue had increased over that received in 1878, the year before the new tariff, by a little more than a million of dollars. The duties in 1880 amounted to about twenty per cent. in value of the whole imports of the country. In 1874 and 1875, before the new tariff, the duties constituted only from eleven to thirteen per cent. of the value of the imports, and in those years the Customs revenue was larger than it was in 1880. Comparing the trade of 1878, the year before the new tariff, with 1880 we find that the imports were ninety millions of dollars in the former year and eighty-six and a-half millions in the latter year; whilst the exports were seventy-nine millions in the former and eighty-eight millions in the latter. In 1873-74 the imports had been one hundred and twenty-eight millions, and the exports eighty-nine millions of dollars. In 1883 the imports had risen to one

hundred and thirty-two millions, the exports to ninety-eight millions only, little more than they had been ten years before. We would commend these points to the candid consideration of Sir Leonard Tilley. Considering the increase of our population, of our cultivated area, and of the European demand for grain, Sir Thomas Farrer thinks it surprising that the increase of our exports should have been so small as it has. He thinks, and with too much reason, that Canada has called into existence some weak manufacturing interests at the expense of her natural industries, while she has checked the inflow of capital of which she stands greatly in need. After all Sir Thomas perhaps overlooks, or fails to place in a clear light, the greatest absurdity of a system which endeavours to force manufactures into existence at the expense of the natural industries in a country which has no coal, laying an import duty on coal at the same time.

NOT an unimportant event in its quiet way is the institution in Toronto of Monday Popular Concerts, on the model of those which in England have been very successful in making Chamber Music of a high class better known to the people. Better service cannot be done than by awakening and extending musical tastes among our people. Ancient wisdom, whether embodied in fable or in philosophy, recognized the civilizing power of music. Luther, in whose character sweetness was wedded with strength, said that music was one of the most glorious of the gifts of God, to which Satan was a bitter enemy, since it took from the heart the weight of sorrow and the fascination of evil thoughts, and by its gentle discipline the passions were improved and refined. He said that its lovers were gentle and honest in temper, and that he would not himself give up for any price the little knowledge which he possessed of the art. There is no greater source of pure enjoyment, no more powerful counter-charm to joys which are impure. From the excessive strain of our commercial life music is the best relief; and perhaps if we had more of it one source of the increase of lunacy might be removed. We need it as an object for social gatherings, of which there are too few; for our people are seldom drawn together except for politics or religion. As the pleasure which softens but does not enervate, it is a most essential element in the formation of national character. Perhaps harmony, conveyed through the ear into the heart might even mitigate the rancour of politics, and thus be the gentle ministrant of wisdom as well as of happiness. A great English musician, when he was asked to sign a party manifesto, said he could not sign it, but he would set a tune to it. We speak, of course, of good music, that which makes a man better as well as happier; not of that which is the mere slave of sense and the minister of a voluptuous languor. Everything seems to promise success to this enterprise. Its directors will, no doubt, bear in mind that to be popular, or serve as an instrument of popular education—indeed, to be music at all—a piece must touch the heart and awaken emotion. There are very elaborate compositions which, as they awaken no emotions, are not music. There are also very eminent performers who are not musicians, having high mechanical skill but no music in their own souls. Overstraining the human voice may be the performance of a wonderful feat, but it is not music; neither is there in smashing a piano. We will venture to add that the directors would be teaching our public a good lesson of taste if they would have the courage once for all to put a stop to the idiotic practice of encores, to which Toronto audiences are beyond measure addicted, and which utterly destroy the æsthetic order and balance of the entertainment.

THE London *Spectator* is a Liberal journal, but it is moderate, sober and generally well-informed. It holds the result of the elections to be "already past discussion," and thinks that "the greatest difficulty Mr. Gladstone will find will be to drill a majority almost too numerous for discipline and to prevent its indulging in freaks in the very wantonness of strength." Expressions so confident, we own, surprise us. That the Liberals have in the old constituencies a large majority was proved at the last election; and Mr. Gladstone's manifesto having been accepted by all sections of the party, the balance thenceforth, as we said at the time, distinctly inclined against Lord Salisbury. On the other hand it seems impossible that Mr. Chamberlain's violence should have failed to produce a