

# THE WEEK.

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## The Week.

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

THE London *Free Press*, with a courage which does it honour, has expressed itself in favour of granting to American fishermen the privilege they so much desire of entering Canadian ports and shipping their cargoes in bond over Canadian railways to the United States. THE WEEK some months since pointed out that the question was one which should be now re-considered, with an honest desire to go as far as possible in the direction of neighbourly concession. The suggestion of the *Free Press*, which was at first naturally supposed to be inspired, has been repudiated on behalf of the Ministry by the Ottawa correspondent of the *Empire*, and was virtually frowned upon by Sir John A. Macdonald's speech at the recent banquet of the Hon. Mr. Chapleau. It may, therefore, be inferred that the Government have no present intention of yielding the point. The Ministerial programme, as represented by the Premier, presents to the United States the alternative of accepting the provisions of the rejected treaty, or having the full pound of flesh exacted in accordance with the bond executed in 1818. This course certainly saves the Government a good deal of chagrin and annoyance it would otherwise have to suffer in view of its past utterances and record. These would be quoted remorselessly against it, should it now consent to adopt a view of international obligation and courtesy which it has hitherto emphatically refused to admit. To declare themselves more anxious to be right than to be consistent, in the face of watchful political opponents, would require, we suppose, a higher pitch of moral heroism than is to be expected of modern party politicians.

SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT'S speech at Ingersoll the other day challenges attention by reason both of the undoubted ability of the speaker and of his representative position as the leader of the English speaking wing of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons. Unrestricted Reciprocity he still declares to be the leading article in the Liberal creed, and towards this as a centre all the thoughts and arguments of the address converged. With regard to the fundamental question, that of the desirability of Unrestricted Reciprocity considered in itself, or rather in its purely commercial

aspects, apart from any question either as to the possibility of obtaining it, or as to its bearing upon our political future, Sir Richard found little that was new to be said. He did, indeed, claim that great progress has been made in the few months during which the subject has been under discussion. He even ventured the assertion that it is now admitted by those who oppose the movement, that such reciprocity, if it were attainable, "would be, beyond all doubt, for the material advantage of a very large proportion indeed of the people of Canada." And yet Sir Richard must know, if he reads the Protectionist press, that this is one of the things which is emphatically not admitted by the opponents of Unrestricted Reciprocity. How he would justify his bold statement we are unable to conjecture. His arguments in support of the main position which he claims as thus generally conceded amount to little more than emphatic repetitions of the assertions, so often made, that free trade with the adjoining States would prove of very great benefit to each of the Provinces in order from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, and hence to the Dominion as a whole, assertions which, it is needless to add, are categorically denied by upholders of the National Policy.

THE next question in logical order is whether Unrestricted Reciprocity, assuming it to be proved desirable, is to be had, and, if so, under what conditions. On this point, too, Sir Richard leaves his hearers little wiser than he finds them. He reiterates the statement so often made and denied that Unrestricted Reciprocity was, in effect, offered on behalf of the United States at the time of the Washington Convention, that the Canadian Cabinet was divided on the question, and that the opportunity was, consequently, lost. But Sir Richard fails, so far as we can discover, to show any good reason for supposing, even granting that President Cleveland and his Cabinet were prepared to negotiate on that basis, that a treaty providing for the mutual abolition of Customs would have been any more acceptable to the Senate than the one which was so summarily rejected. But this is the crucial question, since, as he himself points out in another connection, the Constitution of the United States gives the Senate full power to decide on any treaties the Executive may make. With reference to present and future probabilities Sir Richard also fails to notice the hard fact that Senator Sherman, the most influential Republican Leader in the Senate, has distinctly pronounced against Unrestricted Reciprocity, at least in the form of Commercial Union, on the ground that it would tend to prevent the political union he desires. Sir Richard can hardly be sanguine enough to deny that the prospect of obtaining Unrestricted Reciprocity on any other basis than that of Commercial Union is exceedingly remote.

ON one other point of the gravest importance Sir Richard Cartwright spoke with a frankness which has scarcely before been used by any responsible Canadian statesman. It is, we suppose, very natural that ardent but irresponsible speakers and writers should sometimes discuss the delicate questions arising between Canada and the United States in a tone and manner which derive a touch of jingoism from the belief that Canada has at her back and beck the armaments of the mightiest empire in the world, ready to support her in any quarrel in which she may become involved. Those who have looked more closely into the conditions of the problem know that the time has gone by when England stood, sword in hand, ready to enter the lists with all comers on slight provocation. It is time that Canadians of all classes should fully understand that, while the mother country would undoubtedly interpose with all her wonted energy to defend her greatest colony against unprovoked foreign aggression, Canada must rely mainly on her own resources to settle her fisheries and other commercial disputes with her powerful neighbour. As a matter of right this fact should not affect in the slightest degree, our bearing in the matter, but a knowledge of the truth should certainly check such jingoistic outpourings as are occasionally indulged in. Canada should know but one law, and that the golden rule of right, in dealing with her neighbours, but it may help in the interpretation of that rule to remember that our national destiny is put into our own hands by forces too powerful for even the armies and navies of England to control, and that our position in relation to the great nation with whom we share the virtual empire of a continent, is, as Sir Richard Cartwright has reminded us, so unique that it would be idle to seek for precedents or analogies in old-world history.