

# Correspondence

IN the Great Exhibition of Hyde Park, 1857, promoted largely by Albert the Good, when the world was said to be at peace for a little while, until Russia spoiled it by the Crimean War, England showed her hand to the wily foreigner, feeling her great supremacy in manufactures and home and foreign industries, and she was soon copied, and her wares produced in many cases at almost 50 per cent. reduction. Dealers and distributors had a glorious chance for making large profits; the middlemen worked the two for their own advantage, often sending out patterns for reproduction abroad at greatly reduced prices. "Cheap! cheap!" was the universal cry. The game went with a swing. American goods flooded the markets with domestic and household goods, physic pills and novelties, new in design, simple in construction, and at popular prices. Splendid opportunities for making money. Alas! then cometh the change. British manufacturers realized that they were being played one against the other until their profits stood at zero. Combines, syndicates, and co-operative companies banded together to stay the destroying conditions. But the foreigners and colonials must now be checked from pouring their goods into our markets. How could it be done? Only by reversing our fiscal policy. The landed and agricultural interests had been sorely pressed under free trade. Birmingham, Manchester, Yorks, and other great commercial centres, saw in the near future that, like the rural districts by the depreciation of corn values, their game

was partially played out by competition. Machinery was pouring out volumes of merchandise, foreign markets competed more fiercely, and they were at their wits' end. "Down with the foreigner. Down with free trade. No dumping. No cheap wares for good old England. Let us hark back to the land. Supply home markets with home-made goods. We are not beaten, only hampered. Tax what comes into competition with us. Fair trade, not free trade. But food must be dealt with preferentially because it is a prime necessity. The people will not stand their daily bread being heavily taxed. Canada, being in somewhat similar commercial straits as we, from the pressure of the United States' competition, England must win and woo her, to assist in developing the new policy. So, hands across the sea under the British flag with reciprocal understanding, and Canada is to be the granary of Great Britain until the land can be brought into cultivation. Yes, and so it will be just so long as it answers the purpose of each to unite for common commercial interests. There is business in it, and on this basis it will work. The impulse on other foundations may look pleasant and pretty, but it would require some one other than a Birmingham seer to induce a nation of young aspirants to play into the Old Lady's pocket without it was manifestly to the new country's advantage. Let us then be willing to make the new game a fiscal mutual benefit concern on the give and take plan.

PLAYFAIR.

Isle of Thanet, Kent, England, May, 1904.

