

tion the giving of a larger representation to a smaller number of people. We are not aware that there is any similar proviso in the Canadian constitution, or in those of the respective Canadian Provinces, and we have no supreme court save the British Privy Council whose decision in such a case would be authoritative and final. But the Privy Council is not inaccessible, and its judgments are reliable as well as final. We do not know to what extent it would feel itself empowered to decide such a question on the broad basis of equity and manifest intention. We see no reason to suppose that the facts on which the decision of the Michigan Supreme Court is based are one whit more unfair and subversive of the rights of electors than similar facts which are to be found in each of the last two redistribution Acts of the Dominion Parliament. Can it be that no steps will be taken to test the validity of the constitutional objection which was raised last winter in regard to the method of making the decennial redistribution—an objection which was believed by some of the best lawyers in the House, on both sides of politics, to be well taken? Might it not be possible to get a consideration of the larger question of the constitutionality of the "gerrymander" included in the same reference?

#### SHORT STUDIES IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE—I.

IN 1809 was born one of the strangest figures of Russian literature in the person of Nikolai V. Gogol. The friend of Pushkin, the novelist, shared to some extent the feverish audacity of the poet: that audacity which seems peculiar to his race and which we shall afterwards see developed into stranger and more complex forms.

Gogol was to some extent primitive; it is his freshness, his freedom from conventionality which has given vitality to his works. The medium between lyric poetry and national novels, he is, according to Mme. Bazan, "the centre at which romanticism and realism join hands." Still Gogol is not only a realist but in himself the founder of Russian realism. This realist in the opinion of M. Guizot has written the only epic of the century. It is better that an epic should be, in a modified sense at any rate, realistic. Gogol's realism springs from his inmost being, from his love for the things of nature; his is the sentiment of one who has never reached the plane of the artificial rather than of him, who, himself an artificial product, exclaims "we will be natural, we will paint things without fetters." The former is an unconscious artist, the latter a diligent photographer. It is this unconsciousness so conspicuous in the *Iliad*, so studied in the *Æneid* and so completely forgotten in the *Henriade*, that gives to Gogol an indefinable charm. The author of "Dead Souls" is one who, to quote M. De Vogüé, "n'est pas de ceux qui veulent ou savent voir le paradis dans aucune des conditions humaines," but he had not quite forgotten romanticism and in "Taras Boulba" he gives us what might well be called a book of a Russian *Iliad*. It is the *Iliad* without the threshold of Olympus, without the presence of the immortal ones. Gogol can give us the phantoms of Achilles, of Hector, of Ajax and of Paris, but there is no smile from the lips of laughter-loving Aphrodite, no scornful gleam from the grey eyes of Athene. It is war and death with now and again a touch of almost womanly tenderness.

The story of Taras Boulba is briefly this: Ostap and Andréi return from college to their father's house. Taras, instead of embracing them, hammers them with his fists, and the next morning they start with him on an expedition against the Poles. The journey is not eventful, Gogol has adopted the *Iliad* rather than the *Odyssey*. His descriptions of the Steppe, however, are among the most beautiful passages of the book: "the whole surface of the earth presented itself as a green-gold ocean, upon which were sprinkled millions of different flowers." Ostap, Boulba's elder son, is the Hector of the book; magnificent in battle, at once wise and courageous, this Cossack of the Steppe is in spirit the horse-taming hero of Ilion. In Andréi there are more subtle touches. In his early student days he fell in love with a beautiful Pole, and in the thick of the contest against the "accursed Lyakhs" he never quite forgets their beautiful daughter. He is the Paris of this *Iliad* of the Steppe. In the dead of night while all the camp are sleeping a silent figure approaches Andréi. It is a woman and her story is brief in its simplicity; the Poles in the besieged city are dying of want, and amongst their number is her mistress, the girl he loves. Andréi follows the Tartar woman, brings food to his loved one and is enrolled amongst the Polish troops. This is the manner in which his father greets him upon the battlefield: "'Stand still, do not move! I gave you life, I will also kill you!'" said Taras, and retreating a step backwards he brought his gun up to his shoulder. Andréi was white as linen; his mouth moved gently, and he uttered a name; but it was not the name of his native land, or of his mother or of his brother! it was the name of the beautiful Pole. Taras fired," and so he dies. Not long afterwards Ostap is tortured to death by the Poles. In the epic death is the great lesson, fame and battle have their place but only as preparative to—death. Taras himself is burnt alive; he might have escaped but for a trifling incident, Homeric in its simplicity: "Halt! my pipe has dropped

with its tobacco! I won't let those malignant Lyakhs have my pipe." The book is fiercely national in its spirit, and Taras dies with a prophecy of Russia's greatness trembling upon his lips: "A Czar shall rise from Russian soil, and there shall not be a power in the world which shall not submit to him." And Taras dies, but the fame and the glory of the Cossacks spread and we feel that it is they and not Taras or Ostap or Andréi who are the subject of the epic.

There are, however, softer touches and the "ἐντροπαλιότης" itself is not more exquisite in its pathos than the lingering glance which the hopeless Cossack mother casts at her sons as she is being dragged away by her attendants. Gogol is a realist, and this mother is not the stately mother of Astyanax, but in her stunted life there is still room for love and these boys are all that are left to her; it is *la vie*. "J'ai poursuivi," says the author, "la vie dans sa réalité, non dans les rêves de l'imagination, et je suis arrivé ainsi à Celui qui est la source de la vie"; and even in this epic poem he is true to this principle of his art.

But after all it is not as an epic poet that Gogol has presented himself to the world, or rather to that infinitesimal world of letters which recognized in the young barbarian something between a satirist and a seer. Gogol was placed by Merimeé "entre les meilleures humeurs anglaises," but M. de Vogüé protests against this decision as unjust to Gogol. According to the great French critic, Gogol may claim comparison, in some respects at least, with no less a person than the author of "Don Quixote." The real value of Gogol, however, is not that he is an epic on the one hand or a humorist on the other; it is because he is, so to speak, the first link in the chain which connects Turgeniëff, Dostoevsky and Tolstói, three names which are often mentioned in connection with "Russian Realism" by people who ignore the fact that one Nikolai Gogol *quondam* teacher and actor, half poet and wholly barbarian, was in reality the founder of this school.

In "Taras Boulba" we catch glimpses of this realism at its best, that is to say—truth without grossness and without exaggeration. "Il avait," says M. de Vogüé apropos of this book "eu l'impression directe de ce qu'il chantait," and again "il avait vu mourir autour de lui ces débris attardés du moyen âge." It is this which makes "Taras Boulba" so fascinating; we feel the vibrations of the author's heart upon every page, and in every line of this spontaneous product there is something of the Cossack's soul. Surely this is a source at once more pure and as powerful as that which eventuated in "La Bête Humaine"; and though this stream of realism has wandered through scepticism and through pantheism, through pessimism and despair, it has never become murky and stagnant by reason of the films of modern materialism. For this, if for nothing else, let Gogol be remembered!

J. A. T. L.

#### THE FREE TRADE ISSUE.

THE newspaper reports of Senator Boulton's address at Cobourg on Free Trade are evidently condensed, but they indicate that he has gone deeply and thoroughly into the question as it affects Canadian conditions. One often hears the remark: "O yes, I believe that free trade is the right principle, but it won't suit Canada until the rest of the world adopts it." Senator Boulton has apparently come to the belief, with other free traders, that a wrong economic principle can only work economic injury, and that it is worth while to consider whether or not the principle that is theoretically right might be practically right when applied to the conditions that obtain in our own country. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that there is a very small proportion of the voters in the Dominion or in the United States who are either capable, or have the opportunity, of studying the principles of political economy in the abstract. Indeed, there are many free traders in "principle" but protectionists in practice, who have very hazy notions about their "principle." Quite often, in probing, I have found that their belief in the "principle" is not due to their own investigation and thought, but to the fact that "both parties in England" believe in it. It is a fine tribute to the practical wisdom of the Mother Country, but promises little for a careful study of our own economic conditions. I think free traders may look with more hope to the many sincere men, particularly in the agricultural ranks, who really looked for general benefit and prosperity to follow the adoption of the "National Policy," and who have been therein disappointed, than to those free traders in "principle" who are protectionists in practice until "the rest of the world" adopts the British system.

We have had high protection for thirteen years. Senator Boulton believes, with many others, that it has failed to furnish what its advocates promised; and also that it has worked actual injury to the chief industry of the country, namely agriculture, as well as to many of the smaller industries directly dependent upon the prosperity of the farmer. He, therefore, challenges the people of Canada to the discussion of a better system of political economy, and is prepared to maintain the advantages, not only on theoretical but on practical grounds, of that known as free trade.

Now, have we to stop on the threshold of discussion and fight over the question whether there has been general prosperity or not under the N.P.? I think not. There is one large sign, and always an unmistakable one, of the

absence of general prosperity, and that is general discontent. Grown people never, as a matter of fact, cry for the moon, but when the conditions of life become more and more difficult, instead of less and less difficult, they give voice to complaint. There is discontent in Canada to-day, evidenced undeniably by the census returns and other reliable testimony. Some of the best portions of the Dominion—nay, many of the best portions of the Dominion—are annually losing to the United States their sturdiest and most progressive human elements. These people, as a rule, do not think that the American system of government is preferable to the Canadian system. They do not imagine, as a rule, that they will find gold hanging from the trees in the country they are going to. They go simply because they are discontented with the long hard struggle without hope of advancement that general farming in Canada affords.

Now, there are two answers generally brought forward when this statement is made. The one is that the farmers could make their farms pay better if they studied more science. Granted! Although, by way of parenthesis, it can hardly be unfair to add that some of the strenuous advocates of a more extended study of the science of agriculture are far from being warm supporters of the science of political economy. But no one acquainted with the very admirable farming that obtains in some of those best portions of the Dominion which are losing population, can really believe that unscientific farming lies at the bottom of the agricultural depression which is causing so much discontent. Single instances should never be taken as satisfactory evidence upon a general statement, but I beg to cite here an instance which, if supplemented from the knowledge or experience of others, would have the weight of satisfactory evidence upon the point raised. I know a farmer—a gentleman of long practical experience, of large judgment, of scientific training, of business habits, of economical life—whose quiet deliberate judgment is (and he is a methodical bookkeeper) that the profits of farming have distinctly and positively declined since the National Policy came in force, and that that decline is due to the increased cost of production which naturally hampers any industry prevented from buying its raw materials in the cheapest market. And I know no man more free from party prejudice than my informant.

But the more frequent answer made to those who assert that the exodus to the United States is due to discontent with our fiscal conditions in this: "Why, then, do they go to a more highly protected country?" To the many who feel compelled to arrive at conclusions without resort to any process of reflection this appears as a "short cut" proof that protection is not the trouble with Canada. The reply to this argument involves the consideration of certain conditions in the United States which have rendered the policy of protection less injurious, or, properly speaking, more slowly injurious to that country than to Canada. There are still many inviting fields of activity in the United States. But a close study of the economic history of that country—of the decline of agriculture in the Eastern States and of the rise of agriculture in the Western States; of the development of certain manufacturing industries and the destruction of others—will generally reveal the fact that the general prosperity of the United States during the last twenty-five years has not been due to protection, but to the operation of causes which have modified the natural injurious effects of a protective policy upon any community as a whole. Among the principal of these causes may be mentioned the following:—

1. The geographical position of the United States, including, in a compact square with a double seaboard, nearly every valuable zone of natural production.
2. The abundance and variety of its mineral resources.
3. The superior advantage of internal free trade between largely populated states possessing a variety of productions.
4. The extension of the free trade area outside of the country due to the reciprocity clauses of the McKinley Act.

The last mentioned cause has only been in operation, of course, for a short time, but its effects seem distinctly recognizable. There is far from being any argument for the continuance of the protective policy by the United States in these statements. It is simply contended that certain conditions have rendered the protective policy more slowly injurious to the United States than to Canada. Is it the part of wisdom to ignore the fact that there is more attraction to the fields of activity in the United States than to those in Canada? Only upon the assumption of this ground can indifference to the economic conditions which modify the protective policy of our neighbours be justified.

What we have to consider, therefore, I hold, are the conditions obtaining in Canada that would affect the general action of any particular trade policy. The subject should certainly be approached in a fair and manly spirit. It is one of the questions that men have to deal with in which mutual misunderstandings often become accentuated into violent differences of opinion, and in which the slightest over-statement of the case on either side is usually a danger, even with thinking men.

What, then, are the conditions which have rendered protection more rapidly injurious to Canada than to the United States? The first one, I take it, is our geographical shape. Internal interchange of productions between a single string of provinces, roughly speaking for commercial