

## COMMERCIAL UNION.

More than a year ago, viz., in December, 1885, we had a short article upon the above subject, and our attention has been once more called to the matter by the notice in the Toronto "*Mail*," in its issue of February 15th, regarding a bill proposed in the United States Congress by Mr. Benjamin Butterworth of Ohio, to bring about entire reciprocity, or in other words free trade between the States and Canada. The bill is as follows:—

A bill to provide for reciprocity between the United States and the Dominion of Canada.

"Whereas, controversies have arisen and are now existing between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Dominion of Canada, growing out of the construction of treaties affecting the fishing interests; and whereas by reason of the contiguity of the two countries, and the similarity of the interests and the occupations of the people thereof, it is desired by the United States to remove all existing controversies and all cause of controversies in the future, and to promote and encourage business and commercial intercourse between the people of both countries, and to promote harmony between the two Governments, and to enable the citizens of each to trade with the citizens of the other without restriction and irrespective of boundaries, as fully and freely as if there was no boundary line between the two countries.

Now, therefore, be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:—

"Section 1. That, whenever and as soon as the Government of the said Dominion of Canada shall, by Act of her Parliament, permit all articles of trade and commerce of whatever name or nature, whether products of the soil or of the waters of the United States, or manufactured articles, live stock of all kinds and its products, or minerals and coal and products of the mines of the United States, to enter the ports of the said Dominion of Canada free of duty, then all articles manufactured in Canada, and all products of the soil and waters, and all minerals and coal products of the mines of said Dominion of Canada, and all other articles of every name and description produced in the said Dominion of Canada, shall be permitted to enter the ports of the United States free of duty; it being the intention of this Act to provide for absolute reciprocity of trade between the two countries as to all articles of whatsoever name or nature grown or produced in the said countries.

"Section 2. That when it shall be certified to the President of the United States by the proper officials of the Government of the said Dominion of Canada that the said last named Government by Act of Parliament has authorized the admission into the ports of said Government of all articles of trade and commerce produced in the United States free of duty, the President shall make proclamation thereof, and shall likewise proclaim that all articles produced in the said Dominion of Canada shall be admitted into all ports of the United States free of duty, and such articles shall be so admitted into the ports of the United States free of duty so long as the said Dominion of Canada shall admit the products of the United States, as herein provided for, into her ports free of duty.

"Section 3. The Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized with the approval of the President of the United States, in connection with the proper officials of the Government of said Dominion of Canada, to make rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act, and to protect the said respective Governments and the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States shall furnish to the customs officers of the United States such rules and regulations for the purpose of guiding them in the discharge of their duties in respect to the protection of each of said Governments against improper importations of foreign goods as herein contemplated."

If this is not free trade pure and simple and complete Commercial Union we do not know what those terms mean. In our former remarks we fully agreed with the Toronto "*Mail*" in the position it then took up, pointing out that Commercial Union between the United States and Canada could only result first in the independence of the Dominion, and secondly as a necessary consequence annexation of our country to the Union. To suppose that we can exact commercial treaties which will discriminate against the mother country and still remain a colony, we cannot believe Great Britain would ever consent to, and it would be unreasonable on our part to expect her to do so, for, surely in return for protection against foreign aggression and the liberty granted to frame our own tariffs, it is not too much for England to ask that in our trade intercourse we shall treat her as favor-

ably as any foreign nation. It is a mystery how any one can fail to understand that our making a tariff in favor of an outside nation and, therefore, hostile to Great Britain simply means a declaration of independence. Whether such independence is desirable or not is quite another question; but we do not believe, with our large tract of country and sparse population, we could long stand alone beside our powerful neighbor. The fishery dispute has given rise to Mr. Butterworth's bill, and also to a great deal of silly talk about twisting the lion's tail; but in the midst of what even the better class of Americans termed "buncombe" there was a feeling that the tail did belong to a lion, and we are inclined to fear that had it merely been a beaver's tail the beaver would have fared badly.

To return to the bill before us, we maintain that so far as commerce is concerned its effect would be to make Canada simply a State of the Union, and is the first step towards annexation, always supposing that Canada has ceased to be a colony, for otherwise she is quite incompetent to entertain the bill at all. There is no use fighting shy of the point at issue; Commercial Union such as there is between the different states of the Union (and such is what Mr. Butterworth's Bill proposes) means neither more nor less than annexation, and this is what many of us who have endeavored to build up Canada's individuality would hesitate before advocating. The Toronto "*Mail*," upon this as well as other subjects, has completely wheeled round from its standpoint of a year ago, and we now find it favoring Mr. Butterworth's Bill, having in a leader headed "Reciprocity" as follows:

Without doubt, reciprocal free trade with the United States would result in the weeding out of some of the industries, which the tariff of 1879 has called into existence; and men whose money is sunk in them might be expected to protest that the whole country was about to be ruined. But no one can seriously suppose that the general effect would be otherwise than most beneficial to the two peoples. If a few exotics perished in the bracing air, all those Canadian industries which deserved to survive would receive an impetus such as no tariff-juggling could ever give them. It is hardly necessary to add that our three principal pursuits—agriculture, lumbering and the fisheries—would be greatly benefited; and that the arrangement would lead to the thorough exploration and development of our mining resources, as yet leaving out those of Nova Scotia and British Columbia, almost a sealed book.

There is not much chance of Mr. BUTTERWORTH'S bill being passed this session, Congress adjourning on March 4; but that so distinguished a member of the Republican party should be found on the side of reciprocity is surely a very hopeful sign. The measure, moreover, is endorsed by Secretary BAYARD.

"Tempora Mutantur" indeed! But a twelvemonth since and no champion was equal to the "*Mail*" in defense of what it is now pleased to call a "few exotics" and unfair competition of the United States factories is now designated as "the bracing air." That one day Canada may demand independence is probable, perhaps even some may desire annexation to the States; but such demand must be the voice of her own people sent from Ottawa to the Imperial Parliament, not a cry from Washington, before England will listen or allow a colony to admit foreign products and manufactures free while it charges a protective tariff upon those from the mother country.

**Building operations in Montreal.**—The building inspector reports that the buildings erected in Montreal during 1886 were 699, costing \$2,131,834. The figures for 1885 were 429, costing \$1,728,945. There is no public money included in these figures. It must also be remembered that a large proportion of these buildings are "tenements," with accommodation for two separate families (and sometimes more), being in reality almost the same as two separate houses.