

THE 'COURRIER DES ETATS-UNIS.'

It is a very fortunate thing for Free-Traders that they are not responsible for all the nonsense and otherwise bad matter that is written about them and their prospects by would-be friends and interested opponents. Like every other class of public men, they have to complain of no little misrepresentation, and to run the risk of being often misinterpreted, from the want of an opportunity to disclaim the views attributed to them by others. This has been the case with ourselves as regards the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, a French newspaper published in New York, in which the affairs of Canada are at times referred to. In a recent number of that paper, the subject of Free Trade has come under the Editor's consideration, and furnished him with an opportunity of indulging in some reflections on the present prospects of Canada and her connexion with the mother country—reflections which, we regret to say, are totally unsupported by facts, and which cannot be too strongly repudiated.

Our readers are aware that it has been one of the great objects of the writers in the *Economist* from the first number of their journal, to endeavour to show that there is nothing in the principle of Free Trade inconsistent with the relations existing between the colony and the parent state, and that the full application of this principle to Canada is not only desirable, but absolutely called for under the new system of commercial policy adopted by Great Britain. We hold that, as a bare act of justice, the mother country having withdrawn the protection we have hitherto enjoyed, is bound to remove from us the restrictions which resulted from that state of protection. In this claim we can see nothing at all at variance with the language which has been used, both officially in despatches, and by the ablest statesmen in England, when this subject was under discussion in Parliament. Not so, however, the Editor of the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*. Taking the tone from some of the Protectionist journals of this city, he is thoroughly convinced that Canada is ruined both in her commerce and her loyalty, and that she is only waiting for the hour when, as he expresses it, Liberty will break her chain,—in other words, when she will join the United States.

The general argument by which this view of the question is supported, is that "in every country—in England, and France, and the United States—revolutions have been precipitated towards their denouement by bad financiers, rather than by bad politicians; because material interests are more tangible and more exasperating than moral interests to poor human nature." In Canada, this revolution, we are told, is to be brought about by the demands which the colonists will find themselves compelled to make, and which the mother country will refuse—refuse, because those concessions amount virtually to independence.

These demands are (borrowing from the *Montreal Herald*) stated to be four:—

"First, to remit to Canada the interest of her debt,—that is to say, pay it for her.

Second, to permit her to buy and sell where she can do so to the best advantage.

Third, to take off all the duties upon articles coming from Canada.

Fourth, to open her rivers to all nations."

In regard to the first of these assumed demands, we have already expressed our opinion upon it. Except in the way of a boon, we can neither require nor expect it of the mother country, nor are there twenty men to be found in the province who would be bold enough to stand forward and say that that could legitimately be made a cause of quarrel with Great Britain. That the mother country may come to our assistance and assume the debt, is not altogether improbable; but if she does, it will be in the performance of one of those acts of kindness which she has so frequently exhibited towards the colony, and the recollection of which is a far surer guarantee for the continuance of the connection than is to be found in any system of protection that was ever devised.

As regards the three other demands, they are substantially those which have been advocated by the writers in this journal, and to the accomplishment of which we look forward with all reasonable hope. The writer in the *Courrier des Etats-Unis* knows very little of the spirit of modern English legislation, if he really believes that Great Britain will deny those advantages to the colony which she claims for herself, and invites all the world to partake besides. Had he watched the progress of the Free-Trade principle, he would have seen that it is perfectly inconsistent with the maintenance of any commercial restriction whatsoever, and that it would be as grossly violated in keeping up a protection on British goods in this market as in maintaining a protection on Canadian products in the English market. Both results spring naturally from the same law. Free Trade at home must mean Free Trade in the colonies, and this is a point on which the most intelligent statesmen at home have long since made up their minds. But, then, says the writer in the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, this will be virtually independence: England

will no longer have any interest in keeping up a connexion by which she gets nothing, and Canada, harrassed and disgusted, will fly off to the United States. Now here we have the whole question decided in a very few words, but decided in a very different way from what, we feel thoroughly convinced, will turn out to be the case. The writer in the *Courrier des Etats-Unis* knows evidently very little of the true feeling which binds Canada to Great Britain. All his ideas are borrowed from an obsolete school, and refer to a period when the avowed use of a colony was to make as much as possible of it, without any reference, or very little reference indeed, to the interests of the people who lived in the country. Judged by these notions, we are quite ready to confess that the introduction of Free Trade would be equivalent to throwing off the colony; but in our case, fortunately for both parties, such notions no longer exist. England has shown that she has no desire to hamper in any way the natural interests of this country, and has expressed a wish that our commerce should be rendered as free as the altered state of circumstances should necessarily render it. In all that pertains, therefore, to the development of our own resources, and to the working out of our own prosperity as a great and rising country, Canada must for the future be independent to a great extent of the mother country, and that not by her own seeking, but by the decree of the parent state. And what does such a state of independence imply? The seeking of a fresh political alliance—a total breaking off and separation from the mother country? We should be sorry to think so. We should be sorry to think that the natural consequence of commercial freedom was to lead us to seek after a merely visionary political freedom, and to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. We hold, on the contrary, that Canada will have a greater interest than ever in clinging to her alliance with Great Britain, when she enjoys in every other respect all the advantages she could enjoy under any system of political government. Nor do we at all believe that intimate commercial connexion with other countries will disturb the ideas that now prevail towards Great Britain, and bring about a desire for change. We never yet heard that trading with Dutchmen made Dutchmen, or that the natural consequence of commercial interchange was to produce political revolutions. If it were so, the Emperor of Russia would hardly, we suspect, have reduced his tariff, nor would other despotic Governments show the disposition they are now exhibiting to extend their relations with more advanced and more democratic countries. In short, we regard commercial connections and political connexions as two very different things; and whilst we believe that it would be to the interest of this country to extend her relations in the one respect with the United States, we should have the most decided objection, the most unequivocal aversion, to form any closer political relations with that country.

Nor are we at all singular in this view of the question. A similar opinion has been pronounced by a clever countryman of the Editor of the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*, who has watched with the utmost interest the progress of the new commercial spirit, and has recorded his feelings in a very clever work entitled "Cobden et la Ligue." From that work we take the following extract, which we recommend to the notice of the New-York writer as well worthy his perusal:—

Extract from "Cobden et La Ligue," par M. Bastiat, Membre du Conseil-General des Landes.

When the United States declared their Independence, the prejudices in favour of colonies existed in all their strength; and all the world knows that England believed that her commerce was ruined. So fully did she believe this, that she ruined herself beforehand in warlike expenses, with a view to retain this vast continent under her dominion. But what really happened? In 1776, at the commencement of the war of Independence, the English exports to North America were £1,300,000; but in 1784, after the Independence was acknowledged, they rose to £3,600,000, and within the last few years have reached as much as £12,400,000, a sum which almost equals that of all the exports of England to her forty-five colonies, for these in 1842 did not exceed £13,000,000. And really one cannot see why the interchange of hardwares for cottons, or of stuffs for provisions, should not be carried to a yet greater extent between the two people. Is it because the citizens of the United States are governed by a President of their own election in place of submitting to the rule of a Lord-Lieutenant paid from the coffers of the Exchequer? What relation can there be between such a circumstance and commerce? Should we ever nominate our Mayors and our Prefects, would that hinder the wines of Bordeaux from going to Eboëuf, or the cloths of Eboëuf from coming to Bordeaux? It will perhaps be said that since the act of Independence, England and the United States mutually repel each others productions, and that this would not have happened if the colonial tie had not been snapped. But those who urge this objection surely intend to present an argument in favour of my proposition; they mean to insinuate that the two countries would have profited by a free mutual exchange of the produce of their respective soils and industry. I ask how a barter of grain for iron, or tobacco for calicoes, can be hurtful, just because the two nations which effect the exchange are or are not politically independent of each other? If the two great Anglo-Saxon families act wisely in regard to their true interests in restraining their mutual exchanges, doubtless it is because those exchanges in themselves are prejudicial, and in that case it would have been equally wise to have restrained these exchanges, though an English Governor should have continued to reside in America. If, on the other hand, they have done wrong, it is because they have been mistaken; they have not understood their true interests; and it is not easy to pre-