

by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and especially his fondness for quoting Shakspeare. The Prime Minister himself is a student of Shakspeare; and he is probably a student of Dante also. Anybody who reads Richard III. will see that the great man who wrote that play must have been a student of the King of Italian song, because the dream of Clarence is palpably an inspiration from the Inferno. It will be remembered that Clarence dreams that he is gone beyond this life, that he has passed the melancholy flood, and the first person that salutes him is the renowned Warwick, who asks:

What scourge for perjury  
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?

And so he vanishes. And then there comes the victim of Clarence's great crime, who appears to him and cries out:

Clarence is come.—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence.

Sir, if there be a Hades where the kings of free trade are, as a great poet and prophet once fancied, and the time comes—which heaven forbend should be near—when the hon. gentleman should go there, why Bright and Cobden will rise up and say:

What scourge for perjury  
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?

Free trade itself will appear and cry out, pointing to his betrayer:

Clarence is come,—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence.

I say this with great regret, because it is a pity from every point of view, but above all, a pity from the point of view of the good of the country. With respect to the constitutional question that is involved in this matter. We had a speech yesterday from the Minister of Trade and Commerce in which he talked constitutional law or international law, and I saw that one of the newspapers to-day said he evinced his usual precision of language. I am a great admirer of the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), but really I do not think precision of language is his great gift—I think recklessness of language is his gift. He said that this was a mixed question of law and fact. There could not be a more fallacious description. It is at the present moment purely a question of law. There is no question of fact; nor has England ever acknowledged the American view on this subject; nor does the case cited by the Minister furnish an analogy.

I say here that although the Prime Minister said it was not intended that the present tariff should apply either to Germany or Belgium, the Minister of Trade and Commerce as good as admitted that the contention made on this side of the House is correct, namely, that if this

preferential column is to apply to England, it will have to apply as well to those countries that have the most-favoured-nation clause. I do not think it is necessary, after the speech delivered by the leader of the Opposition, that I should quote the clause of the treaty with Belgium or the treaty with the German Zollverein. It is enough to say here that as a man who has given some attention to the subject, I have no hesitation in saying that the preferential column must apply to some twenty-two other countries besides England. I say moreover, that England's name is not mentioned there, and that the pretense put forward that there is a clause preferential to England, is erroneously described as picturesque; it would be more correct to describe it as fraudulent; there is no foundation for it, it is essentially deceptive. Let me point out to the House that if these resolutions pass, the Controller of Customs by and by may give whatever advantages he desires to the United States without receiving any authority from this House or Parliament having had anything to say in respect to the matter. If hon. gentlemen will look at the resolution they will see that it gives extraordinary power to the Controller of Customs, and the result would be that the Government would have it in its power to make any arrangement it pleased with the United States. What did the Minister of Trade and Commerce say? That perhaps this was the best way to get reciprocity, and there was running through the speeches of other hon. members something of the same sentiment. Sir, the striking change that has taken place in the sentiments of hon. gentlemen opposite is suspicious. I hold in my hand a report of the speech that has often been referred to, an authoritative speech delivered only six years ago, and I may add that it is a very admirable and able speech. It was delivered in 1891 by the present Prime Minister. As we are pointing out the beautiful consistency of hon. gentlemen opposite we may as well make the case complete. In that speech at Boston the hon. gentleman said:

Our object is, when there is a Liberal Administration at Ottawa, to offer to the United States the free entrance of our territory to all American products, whether natural or manufactured, provided the United States extend the same privilege to the products of Canada.

This involves that we would offer to the American nation advantages denied to the rest of the world. So it does, and it is a cause of bitter reproach against us by the Conservative party, who charge us with disloyalty to England. This is not the place to discuss the grounds of difference that separate us from our opponents. This much only will I say: In the very nature of things, from the sole fact that Canada is growing, developing and progressing, the interest of Canada and the interest of England are on the other side; the only consideration for me is, what is best for Canada, leaving to the people of England to consider, and do what is best for England. This is not