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**TORONTO.****The Journal of Commerce****FINANCE AND INSURANCE REVIEW.****MONTREAL, MARCH 4, 1880.****COMMERCIAL UNION.**

During an excursion trip made to Montreal a few days ago by some Boston gentlemen of high standing, they had an opportunity, when paying a visit to the Corn Exchange, of expressing themselves as favorable to a renewal of the reciprocity treaty. We own that we attach very little importance to such expressions either from individuals or from members of the National Board of Trade. It is beyond doubt that there are many citizens of the United States, chiefly those engaged in commerce, who would be very desirous of aiding in the passage of any practicable measure for extending our commercial intercourse. There are others again, who seek to bring about the separation of Canada from Great Britain, under the plausible guise of a commercial union, and there is too much reason to fear that there are abettors of such a scheme among ourselves. We have been led to notice this subject, owing to the circulation of a letter on the subject of a Commercial Union between the United States and Canada, signed "Wharton Barker," who addresses George Brown, Esq., as "dear sir" though we presume, from the fact that he seems to be unaware that Mr. Brown is a Sena-

tor of the Dominion, that his knowledge of Canada must be very limited. Mr. Barker's letter is dated Philadelphia, 23rd February, but there is no imprint on it, nor is there anything to show that it was printed in Philadelphia. The sentiments are very similar to those that have been rather industriously promulgated by our annexationists, who maintain that the United States are quite ready for "Commercial Union," but will never consent to reciprocity on any other terms. Such declarations having been made in advance by Canadians, it is not a little suspicious that they should be disseminated in the form of a letter to a prominent Canadian politician, who was accredited to the United States Government a few years ago to endeavor to procure its assent to a commercial treaty. Philadelphia is not a place that has ever had much commercial intercourse with Canada, and we should have been much surprised at one of its citizens taking the trouble to write, print and distribute a letter on such a subject had it not occurred to us that the Centennial Exhibition was held at Philadelphia, and that rather a lengthened visit was paid to that city by the Canadian arch-agitator for separation from Great Britain. The letter to which reference has been made has been given increased circulation in rather an extraordinary manner. A morning contemporary publishes a letter, *without a signature*, introducing Mr. Wharton Barker to the Canadian public as a member of the International League and a banker in Philadelphia.

Mr. Wharton Barker assures his friend "George Brown, Esq.," that there is much ill-feeling in the United States, owing to the tariff of 1879 and the fisheries settlement. The tariff "had an evident purpose to force a modification of our own commercial policy in the adoption of a second reciprocity treaty, but the only result has been to evoke a threat of retaliation for the discriminating duties you have imposed upon our exports." We must confess that we were at first inclined to treat this Mr. Wharton Barker with some severity, but, on further consideration, we could not but entertain some pity for the unfortunate man when we considered that he had been made a mere cat's paw by some designing members of our own community. We venture to affirm that Mr. Wharton Barker has never seen the Canadian tariff of 1879, but it was really unfair to perpetrate such a hoax on the unfortunate man as to cause him to affirm that it imposes discriminating duties against the United States. Can it be possible that Mr. Wharton Barker's correspondents in Canada are ignorant of

the expression "discriminating duties?" As to the fishery dispute, as Mr. Barker terms it, there ought to be no ill-feeling about it. Canada does not now desire nor has it ever desired to sell its fishery privileges either for a money or any other consideration. We recommend the people who entertain ill-feeling on the subject to let our fisheries alone. We don't ask free admission for our fish into the United States, but we do claim that the United States fishermen will cease to molest us in the enjoyment of our own property. Let us just imagine for a moment that the Americans had valuable fishing grounds in some of their own bays, and then ask them to say candidly whether they would suffer Canadian fishermen to trespass on them. The fact is that the Americans know perfectly well the value of our fisheries, and were, in 1854, quite ready to consider them a full equivalent for any benefits that we derived from reciprocal free trade, although, in point of fact, all those benefits accrued equally to their own people. Having had the enjoyment of them for upwards of ten years under the treaty, no sooner was it abrogated by themselves, than they commenced to trespass systematically on the Canadian fisheries, and now evince ill-feeling because they have been made to pay a very inadequate remuneration for privileges which they would be most reluctant to abandon.

Mr. Wharton Barker informs Mr. Brown that the opposition to a new reciprocity treaty "is much more general than its friends in Canada are inclined to suppose." Mr. Barker may be in possession of such information as to enable him to speak authoritatively on such a subject, but we would require some better evidence than we find in his letter to induce us to think so. What we object to in all the schemes that are suggested for a Commercial Union, and Mr. Barker's is no exception, is that there is no attempt to formulate a plan for carrying the principle of a Commercial Union into practical effect. All the difficulties are to be found in the details, and these are not given. We know that there is to be a common tariff, and Mr. Barker most philosophically suggests that the best way is "to leave all lesser questions to settle themselves." He does not explain or suggest how "the common tariff" is to be established. One thing is tolerably clear, viz., that we are to throw our fisheries into the bargain, bad as the bargain is likely to be. We venture to make a suggestion to Mr. Wharton Barker, but, as we have no hope that anything that we write will come under the consideration of that distinguished indi-