

laissez faire' policy it will be, I feel sure from want of thought. No Canadian who gives this subject any attention, can fail to see that our grotesque and humiliating relationship to England is a standing menace to the good will at present existing between us. Whilst Canada acknowledges that she is dependent upon British strength. British Statesmen know full well that there is the greatest danger of any proposal coming from them being treated by Canadians as a covert threat, more especially in the face of the fact that we have since 1878 adopted a protective policy which was and is nothing more nor less than a direct blow at British Commerce.

Now when we turn our attention to Imperial Federation in the colonies we find that they are "at sixes and sevens" upon the subject and the chances of their deciding either for or against are very meagre and of deciding unanimously none.

In Canada we cannot find one of its advocates proposing a practical scheme without a condition being contained in it very similar to if not the same as this; "That England in return for free trade with her colonies shall adopt a preferential tariff in favour of her colonies." Indeed some of our statesmen advised them to take this course. Truly the dogged patience of the English is most marvellous! to be solemnly advised by one-fifth of her traders, as it were, to place a wet blanket upon the energies of the remaining four-fifths.

After showing in a manner which cannot be misinterpreted, their willingness to stand by us in any time of trouble, Englishmen must surely have felt, to use a mild term, disappointment, when told that they must pay for the privilege of doing business with us.

Anyone looking up the commercial relationship between Canada and England can see for himself that this country has had favoured treaties with England, not only since we commenced our career as a nation, but as a colony.

Of all this we showed our appreciation by adopting our National Policy, which we now use as a weapon with which to bring pressure upon Englishmen to cause them to depart from a commercial policy, which, whatever diverse opinions there may be concerning its present practice, has brought them prosperity and is one which is almost universally acknowledged to be the only sound one in principle.

I will give a few statistics for the consideration of those Imperial Federationists, who still cling to the hope that England, in view of her present agriculture depression, will depart from her policy of free trade.

It must be remembered that the present commercial policy was carried into every department of British Commerce before the year 1850. In that year the average weekly wage paid to agricultural labourers in the county of Cheshire was about \$2.30. In 1870 it was about \$3.60. In 1880 about \$4.16. This shows an increase for 1880 over 1850 of 66 per cent.

That followers of agriculture still suffer from the effects of the Federal system can be seen from the fact that the total annual rental of lands in the United Kingdom in the state of Massachusetts the average weekly wage paid to agricultural labourers in 1850 was about \$3.80. In 1880 it was about \$6.00, showing an increase for 1880 over 1850 of only 55½ per cent.

When it is remembered that the purchasing power of money is much greater in

England than in the United States, living is 40 per cent. cheaper in England, and that the United States farmer does not labour under the same adverse conditions as does his English brother, there is nothing in the above facts to encourage Englishmen to adopt protection whether it be in the shape of preferential tariffs or otherwise.

Protection in England, as in every other country, would directly increase the profits of invested and inherited interests the amount of the increase which the worker (i. e. the people) would obtain altogether depends on the amount of "kicking" he could do and "starving out" he could endure.

The ultimate result would be that, by increasing the cost of production, English manufactures would be unable to compete successfully in their present markets. Imperial Federationists say that, before that time arrives they will have built up a trade with the colonies which would more than compensate them for losses in other quarters. Can this be guaranteed to Englishmen? If not the argument ought in fairness to be withdrawn.

Even the most astute student of commercial laws would hesitate before predicting the results of any trade policy, for, just as the success of free trade astonished Englishmen, the failure of prohibited trade, the McKinley tariff, astonished Americans.

McKinleyites thought, it would appear with reason, that by placing very high duties upon manufactured articles, not only would they force on the development of their home manufactures, but that Europe would be compelled to pay in gold for what farm produce, &c. they bought from the United States. We find, however, that they were not paid in gold and that, for the last three months in 1892 there was \$30,000,000 worth of European manufactured articles imported in the United States over and above the amount imported during the same period, the preceding year, in spite of the enormous duties levied.

The capitalist reaped profit doubtless, but the Homestead workmen do not seem to have done so, indeed, we hear that they are starving as a result of their endeavour to obtain their share of the general inflation. The Homestead workers were well organized. If they did not obtain their share the question then becomes: did unorganized or inefficiently organised labour obtain it? It must be remembered that about half of labour is inefficiently organised and that, as a rule with very few exceptions the workers' wages are governed by the efficiency of their organisation. Did the farmers, the mainstay of any country, whose prices were governed to a very great extent by foreign demand? It must be likewise remembered that their chief buyer, England, is a country of "cheap prices."

McKinleyism is the thick end of a very finely pointed wedge, Protection, and Canadians would do well to study the National Policy a little more thoroughly, and to ask themselves the question: Where is it going to leave us?

I have made these few comments and quoted these few facts to show that in view of the present insane and almost universal policy of restricting and distorting natural trade, any scheme which is brought before Canadians for discussion with a view to our federating or allying ourselves with England or any other nation should be based upon the principle of "free exchange." It should give us the power we do not at present possess, to deal directly with nations with

whom we wish to negotiate commercial treaties, and, above all, it should be a scheme which will have the chance of being viewed with favour by the majority of Canadians so that it can become an accomplished fact within a reasonable time.

Continental Union, however desirable from certain points of view, will not fill the above conditions. It would be attended by evils which it would be folly to ignore. If we are desirous of becoming first of all a healthy, vigorous, agricultural country, why should we annex ourselves, irrevocably to a country whose agricultural condition is as bad, if not worse than our own? I say irrevocably for it must not be forgotten that the constitution of the United States differs in this respect, as in some others, from that of the British Empire.

Do those Continental Unionists who are farmers know that the five richest States of the Union—Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska, have a mortgage indebtedness of over \$1,100,000,000?

These figures can be read by anyone who takes the trouble, in a paper written in the "Arena," by Mr. Flower, an American citizen, to American citizens. When they have read his figures and compared them to similar figures concerning England—a country with a population of about 387 to the square mile, against about 17 to the square mile in the States, and a country within a few miles of a continent groaning under excessive military taxation—they will find that the respective conditions of the two people, in proportion to their chances of living, will not bear comparison.

Why, again I ask, should we throw in our lot with a people who have so governed themselves? Rather should we retain the power to benefit from the lessons they have taught us, and govern ourselves so that we shall avoid the same errors, at the same time seeking our mutual benefit by endeavoring to obtain as great a freedom of trade with them as possible.

Continental Union might benefit a few Southern Ontario farmers, but would not make any appreciable difference to Canadian farmers throughout the Dominion. Why should it? The United States export more farm produce than we do, and that is a proof, that as a nation, they do not require to buy from any other nation.

Do Continental Unionists imagine that Canadians would submit to the humiliation of being compelled not only to countenance, but to participate in a foreign policy, consisting chiefly in senseless and undignified attempts to embarrass Great Britain, a nation that has always shown herself to be the friend of Canada? No, surely not?

Were an election to be run on Continental Union, the writer firmly believes that it would be negated by the vast majority of Canadians.

Let it be clearly understood that I am far from being a hater of the United States, many of their institutions have been imitated by other nations with great success, but whether they have in a commercial sense, "boomed" themselves and are going to suffer a sickening reaction is another matter. It would be well for those blind unreasoning worshippers of the United States to bear in mind this fact,—“All is not gold that glitters.” They will see what I mean by reading Mr. Flower's article in the "Arena," entitled, "Are we a prosperous people?" The writer, although a well-informed and patriotic American citizen, answers "No," and with sorrow, shews that he looks to