

virtual prohibition of the purchase of cheap Russian grain to supply the deficiency. The people must be short-sighted indeed if they fail to draw some useful inferences. At the base of the whole difficulty in Europe as in America is the strange thing that the buyer confers a favour upon the seller, and that it is less to a man's advantage to purchase what he needs than to sell what he does not need, on advantageous terms.

Those who think that Canadian Independence is a more desirable goal to be set before the minds of young Canadians than permanent colonialism, which is about all that could really be attained under any possible scheme of Imperial Federation, or political union with the United States, have much cause just now, to exclaim, "Save us from our friends!" Anything more unfortunate for them, or better adapted to bring their views into discredit, than the advocacy of Mr. Honore Mercier, it would not be easy to imagine. If anything could add to the misfortune of having an ex-Premier with so unsavory a record constitute himself champion of the movement, it would be the selection of the United States as the place in which to push the propaganda. By far the most effective argument that has been used against independence as an ultimate aim for Canadian patriotism and statesmanship, is the belief entertained by so many persons that independence must of necessity end in annexation. For our own part, we are much more inclined to regard independence, as a present aspiration and an ultimate aim, as the most effective safeguard against any incipient tendency towards political union with the neighbouring Republic. To have a movement in the direction of independence started, or attempted, by one whose past history as the Premier of a Canadian Province has, to say the least, failed to place his integrity and sincerity above suspicion, is bad enough. To have such a leader, self appointed, commence his campaign to the south of the international boundary, makes it about the most effective means which could have been devised to bring it into disrepute at the outset. If Mr. Mercier chooses to pose as the champion of Canadian Independence, no one has power or right to hinder him from doing as he will. But those who intelligently desire to see the change effected in honour and good will, at the proper moment, will unite in crying out, "Not with such champions." When the change comes, it must take place with the full consent and hearty sympathy of the Mother Country. The friendship of the United States will always be desirable, but to invoke foreign sympathy, as if for the oppressed escaping from a house of bondage, is to put all friends of independence in a false position which they will refuse to occupy.

Among the many changed and changing conditions which add to the intricacies of present day social and industrial problems, the increase of competition consequent upon the increase of population is not always sufficiently taken into the account. We sometimes read dissertations in which the results of a certain economic system are compared with those of that which it may have superseded, no account being made of the fact that there are now half-a-dozen competitors for the given employment when there used to be but two or three. Without attempting any general discussion of the way in which the great economic questions of the day are complicated by the ever-increasing numbers of those who are struggling for the means of subsistence, a discussion for which our space is wholly inadequate, we may mention a single case by way of illustrating how the fact referred to adds to the perplexities of the student of sociological problems. We hear many warm denunciations of the "sweating" processes, which are the means by which the marvellously cheap clothing and other articles in common use are produced. In so far as this "sweating" is the outcome of the heartlessness and greed of the middleman who coins money out of the necessities of the poor, by compelling them to work at starvation wages for his enrichment, no terms of condemnation can be too strong. The man, be he middleman or millionaire, who grinds the faces of the poor by appropriating more than his rightful share of the products of their toil is a robber and a murderer. If any legitimate pressure can be brought to bear to compel him to disgorge his unjust gains, or to pay labour its rightful due, every good man and woman should aid in applying such pressure, at whatever cost, whether of higher goods or of personal inconvenience.

But when we are taught to regard the goods manufactured by cheap labour, as accursed, and to refuse to purchase them, or to patronize the mammoth shops which are supposed to deal in them, we are constrained to stop and ask questions. Dreadful as it is for the poor needlewoman in the east end of London to be forced to work like a slave for three half pence an hour, it would be still more terrible for her to be deprived of an opportunity to work at all. Most of us would prefer, for reasons which we need not stop to analyze, life sustained on the plainest food and under the hardest conditions to absolute starvation. There is something very pitiful and tragic in the looking out a miserable subsistence often regard the well-meant efforts of philanthropists to punish their employers. It is, from their point of view, a doubtful charity to cut off their poor means of livelihood, if an absolute lack of employment is to take its place. It is but the operation of the simplest economic law which brings it about that

every reduction in the cost of an article of comfort or luxury increases the demand for that article by bringing it within the reach of a larger number of consumers, and thereby creates more employment for the makers of it. Every one of us, except perhaps the few whose wealth is superabundant, purchases many an article because of its cheapness, which he would not have purchased had the price been fifty or a hundred per cent. higher. He feels that if the one case he can afford it; in the other he could not have done so. The sum is this: Whatever cheapens production increases sales, and to increase sales is to increase employment. Hence if I refuse to purchase a cheap article because I suspect it to be a product of "sweating," unless I at the same time purchase a dearer article of the same kind, I simply reduce the sum total of employment and make the condition of those who work for starvation wages worse instead of better. We are not apologizing for the "sweater," or defending the cheap counter. We are merely airing a moral perplexity and pointing out that the condition of those who toil at starvation wages is not improved by our virtuous resolve not to buy their cheap products if our feeble philanthropy exhausts itself with that resolve.

The leading place in the Canadian Magazine for August is given to a short article in which, with some ability, though with somewhat faulty rhetoric, Mr. J. P. O'Hanly, C.E., defends Sir John Thompson from his critics. It is fair to suppose that Mr. O'Hanly knows whereof he writes, else we should have been disposed to regard his article as a tilt against a windmill. It is certainly no compliment to Canadian politics to essay a formal defence of a public man against such charges as having embraced Roman Catholicism as a means of political preferment, or having become the tool of Jesuitism, the nominee of the Roman Catholics, and their ally in a deep laid plot to hand over this country to the Pope, etc. Any stick is good enough to beat a political opponent with, and it is quite likely that all these arguments, or substitutes for arguments, may have been used on occasion by members of the Opposition. But Mr. O'Hanly's paper is, we judge from internal evidence, intended mainly for recalcitrant adherents of the party of which Sir John is the head, and hence takes on a more serious aspect. Time was, we suppose, when even in Canada the Roman Catholic vote was cast as pretty nearly a solid unit, at the bidding of the clergy. In that case it would generally turn the scale, and so become a thing of value for which a very unscrupulous politician might barter even a counterfeit faith. But that day has gone by, forever, let us hope, in Canada. The politician who should now turn Catholic or Jesuit in the hope of furthering his political ambitions would