

—Talk of an Imperial Zollverein seems on the increase. The idea pleases English manufacturers galled by the American tariff. It is, at all events, more feasible than that of Imperial Federation, and aims at a more substantial object. There is no insurmountable obstacle in the way of an arrangement, by which England should bind herself to discriminate in favour of Colonial wheat and cattle, while the Colonies would bind themselves to admit English manufactures free, and exclude those of other countries. Yet we should be surprised to see a step practically taken in this direction, either on the part of the Colonies collectively, or by any considerable section of the Imperial Parliament. The Colonies would have to surrender the commercial autonomy which Australia and Canada have just asserted; while the English masses would fear and, for a time at least, would actually experience, a rise in the price of food, for abundance of which they care much more than for political relations with countries which they could not point out on the map. To the Protectionists in the Colonies, the free admission of English goods would of course be, commercially speaking, ruin, and desperate resistance might be looked for from that quarter. In the case of Australia, there would be no difficulty, other than that arising from adverse opinion, in the fulfilment of the compact; but, in the case of Canada, there would be the difficulty of guarding a long open frontier against American smuggling, of which there is, probably, not a little under the present tariff, though it is always left out of the account in stating the relative importation of English and American goods. It is a weak point in the position of ardent Imperialists that, whatever may be the feeling of the politicians, our people have no antipathy to the United States, or to anything good that comes from them. In the North-West especially, where the population will be mixed, and a large element of it will be American, commercial considerations may be expected to prevail; and as there is absolutely no natural boundary, the difficulty of maintaining the Chinese wall in that quarter would be very great. The wrath of our neigh-