

Any reference to the Board of Trade speeches would be incomplete if it failed to take note of the brief addresses of the Minister of Finance and of the gentleman who preceded him at one remove, whose remarks struck the note to which Mr. Foster's speech responded. The liberal and friendly sentiments to which the Hon. George Raines, of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, gave happy utterance, well deserved the warm tribute of approval with which they were greeted. His picture of the future commercial relations between the two peoples sets before us an ideal which, while worthy of their common antecedents, need not be deemed too lofty to be practicable. Why should the two peoples, cognate in origin, cherishing free institutions, having a common language and literature, be separated in the future by artificial trade barriers, or be mutually burdened with the support of armaments which could be required only for protection against or hostility to each other? It is true that the United States set the example of hostile tariffs, which Canada was all too ready to imitate. It is also true that that nation is now taking the lead in reducing them to a more friendly level, and there is good reason to hope that having once entered upon the path of reform, though the struggle against the opposition of selfish interests and wrong theories may be hard and protracted, there will be no cessation until a sound foundation has been reached, either in a tariff for revenue only, the avowed goal of the party now in power, or in absolute free trade. Nor have we any fear that Canada will not promptly follow the lead. Her own self-interest, on which Mr. Foster, it seems to us, laid almost unnecessary stress, if no more generous motive, will constrain her. As to the other point, of what greater folly can we conceive than that two such peoples, under conditions so unique and so favorable to mutual friendship, should maintain great standing armies against each other? Mr. Foster may be right in saying that history teaches that commercial intercourse alone is not an absolute guarantee against war between nations. But in this case we have not the commercial intercourse alone, but common interests and sympathies arising from such and so many sources as to render the relations of the two peoples to each other such as have never before existed in history. The conditions being unique, why should not the relations and the future history be unique likewise.

A correspondent, writing over a familiar *nom de plume*, takes us somewhat seriously to task for our journalistic sins and shortcomings, as particularly manifested in certain comments made a few weeks since in these columns upon burning questions of British politics. Any lack of the judicial faculty, so necessary in those who "write from the editorial standpoint," which may

show itself in these humble comments, is our misfortune, for which we may claim the indulgence of our readers. Possibly we need not despair of making some improvement in this respect by careful study of good models. But any failure to read on both sides of the questions discussed is a journalistic crime, and as such should be punished by the judges, our intelligent readers. It may be that our critic suggests such failure as a palliation of our error in not thinking precisely as he does upon all the matters referred to, but we cannot shield ourselves from his censure behind that rampart, seeing that, as a matter of fact, it happens that we are far more familiar with the *Spectator*—which our correspondent will hardly accuse of being on "the one side" on which he supposes us to read, than with any other British political paper; possibly almost as familiar with it as is our correspondent with the *Speaker* or the *Westminster Gazette*.

Much of our correspondent's letter, it will be seen, is made up of strong statements in regard to what are largely matters of opinion. To these we need not specially refer. Our readers will be glad to know the conclusions to which a writer so well-known as "Fairplay Radical" has come with regard to the important matters dealt with. They will also claim leave to form their own opinions on those questions. On one or two specific points we may offer a word of comment. Our critic takes exception to our remarks in regard to the action of the House of Lords in amending the "Employers' Liability Bill" by adding a clause permitting employees, under certain conditions, to contract themselves out of its provisions. Our comment, so far as we can remember, for we have not the files at hand as we write, was to the effect that this amendment rendered the Bill comparatively worthless for the protection of the workingmen, in the direction intended. That this is so, must, we think, be obvious on the slightest reflection. No great prescience is needed to foresee that the employers whose dangerous business or parsimonious methods make it specially desirable that their workmen should have the protection provided in the Bill, are the very ones who will be most ready, as a rule, to bring pressure to bear to secure exemption from its provisions under the "contracting out" clause; while, by parity of reasoning, the workingmen who most need the protection afforded by the Bill will often be the very ones upon whom pressure can most effectively be brought in order to enable such employers to take advantage of that clause.

"Fairplay Radical" complains that "the writer of 'Current Topics' puts it as if the peers in adding the 'contracting out' clause to the Bill, had acted in opposition to the

workingmen; and not, as the fact really was, at their request and on their behalf." Is this quite ingenuous? Can "Fairplay Radical" doubt that the amendment passed by the Lords was in opposition to the wishes of the great majority of the workingmen of Great Britain, albeit it was at the request of two hundred thousand or so of those who thought that under their peculiar circumstances they would be better off as they were; or who, under the influences which some classes of employers know so well how to bring to bear, were induced to join in the petition to which he refers. As to the feelings and wishes of the mass of British workingmen in regard to the matter, we need only refer to the fact that the intensest enthusiasm for the Liberal candidate during the late contest at Accrington was evoked by the Commons' rejection of the Lords' amendment in question, and to the admission implied by the *Spectator* when it blames the defeated candidate for having "wobbled" on this question. Why should he have "wobbled" if the workingmen were in favor of the Lords' amendment? and, when speaking of deputations, why did our critic not mention those very influential ones representing the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, both of which waited on Lord Salisbury and assured him in the strongest terms that workingmen would not accept the contracting-out clauses? It was, as is so often unhappily the case, the self-interest, not to say selfishness of the few against the larger and more vital interests of the many. Of course, even the two hundred thousand could have had no inducement to petition Lord Salisbury in favor of the "contracting out" clause, had they not been led to fear that if such a clause were not inserted, they would be deprived of the advantages of the subscriptions made by employers to their insurance societies. Indeed, Lord Dudley did not hesitate to declare in the House of Lords that he would withdraw his contribution to the insurance fund on his colliery if the Bill were passed without the "contracting out" clauses. But, to his honor be it said, the Marquis of Londonderry, who is probably a larger colliery owner than Lord Dudley, affirmed *per contra* that in whatever shape the Bill passed, unless something altogether unforeseen occurred, he should in no way alter his practice in this regard. Lord Dudley's declaration is very suggestive in regard to the influences under which the petitions in question were signed. But "Fairplay Radical" comes perilously near reducing to the absurd his own contention that the peers represented the workingmen, as a class, when he is obliged to support it with the assumption, for his argument surely amounts to that, that the representatives of labor in the Commons, with a single exception, do not represent the mass of British workingmen.