

and the origin of which must be looked for in the mistaken notion entertained by the statesmen of the day, that Colonies were only useful as markets for British manufactures, and which would have denied them the right of making even a horse shoe for themselves.

On the other hand, by allowing the Colony to consult its own commercial interests in all possible cases, the mother country may secure for herself all the advantages she can reasonably expect, and not the least of which is the political strength a well-knit alliance of this kind—based on feelings of mutual respect and affection—is sure to bring. To govern a Colony, indeed, the great aim should be to govern so that the state of dependence may not be felt, and this can never be the case whilst the commercial relations of the two are dependent on an artificial system of protection, requiring constant adjustment, and leaving both parties room to complain that their interests are not sufficiently consulted. But let the connexion look for its maintenance to the conviction that whilst their commercial interests are not interfered with, their political importance is immensely increased, and what shall disturb it? Tariffs may be changed and trade seek other channels, but so long as the right of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest is conceded to the Colonist, we need fear little for British connexion. It will remain linked with our interest as well as our pride, and be the means of encouraging our strength as it has hitherto supported our weakness.

THE TWO INTERESTS.

The importance of Agriculture as the handmaid of Commerce was never seen more clearly than at the present moment, when the various nations of the civilized world are investigating the laws of trade, with a sincere desire to learn the truth. The fact that commerce merely consists in exchanging those articles which we produce easiest and at least cost for those which we require furnished cheapest by another, has led to the desire to know what we really can produce, and also whether we can furnish some cheaper or better than we now do. Agriculture alone can supply us with the articles of exchange, and to the advancement of agriculture we look for an increase of trade.

But how can agriculture be improved? Not, certainly, by protective enactments, which are only useful to encourage indolence, but by carrying out the principles that have done so much good to commerce,—fair and open competition with those better acquainted with the matter than ourselves, and thus being compelled to follow their example.

Discussion has also done wonders: it will hereafter do more. The collision of intellect and the agitation antecedent to the alteration in the British Corn Laws, have advanced the commerce of Britain by a quarter of a century. Let the same agitation be communicated to farming affairs, and they will advance too. Interested as every merchant or manufacturer is in the increase of the products of the soil, let each one do his utmost to point out what articles are most desirable to be cultivated, and to push forward such manufactures as may lead to new articles for cultivation, so as to encourage and work together with those with whom the mercantile body must stand or fall.

We are partly led to make these remarks by the frequent use of the words "Commercial Interest," "Agricultural Interest," "Manufacturing Interest,"—as if all our interests were not alike, and indissolubly so.

The fact is, they act and re-act together. The farmer raises more than he requires for mere sustenance, in order to exchange his supplies with the merchant, who has imported the luxuries of life with the view of making the exchange. Were there no merchant to tempt him, the farmer would have raised only enough for his own use;—were there no farmer, the merchant would have nothing to receive in exchange for his imports. In fact, the farmer without the merchant would be but a remove from the aborigines of the country—the merchant without the farmer could not exist at all.

And still we hear of agricultural protection—protection against what? Against themselves. In Canada, where the farmers are the proprietors of the soil, it would not be difficult to show that, beyond a moderate profit, the gain is all their own. Are the harvests good—they have the benefit. The merchant gets merely a commission the more. They have the wealth of the country, as they have no landlords to receive a rent. On the other hand, the merchant must live:—If he pays less for his provisions, he works the cheaper; if more, he adds the extra cost to his profit:—If he pay duties on the necessaries of life, he adds the amount to the cost of the goods he sells; and as the farmer, in a country where the agriculturists are all proprietors, gets all the profits, so, on the other hand, he has to bear the losses—he may try to shift them off, but, eventually, on him they must fall.

Can anything then prove more clearly the absurdity of nine-tenths of the community taxing one-tenth for their protection—the nine-tenths being the owners of the soil, the one-tenth what, properly speaking, we may call their agents? No; let the farmers improve their farms—let them increase their fertility—let them labor and strive to keep up to the improvements of the age, and of other countries—let them rely on themselves, not growing

this to-day and that to-morrow, according to the fluctuation of this or that market, but pursuing a steady quiet course, raising those articles their land is most suited to, in good times and in bad—persevering and working—above all, let them produce abundance of the necessaries of life, and they will always find a market that will protect their interests far better than all the legislative enactments made for their advantage from the days of the first William.

FREE TRADE IN LONDON TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

We think we cannot do better at the present time than reprint the Petition presented by the merchants of London to the House of Commons on the 8th of May, 1820, in which the principles of commercial freedom, and the injurious influence of restrictive regulations, are set forth with a clearness and ability which have never been surpassed. This petition was subscribed by all the principal merchants of the metropolis, and has been introduced by Mr. McCulloch into his Commercial Dictionary, as containing the "true doctrines" upon this subject. Twenty-six years have now passed since it was written, and this period of time has only served to confirm the views which it sets forth. Thus slowly and laboriously, but surely, does truth ever make its way. The doctrines which the merchants of London adopted a quarter of a century ago, and which Adam Smith had promulgated a quarter of a century before, are only just producing their fruits in the country which is entitled to the praise of first having propounded them, and are still rejected and disowned by many persons even in that country and its dependencies. And yet no one attempts to deny the truth of these doctrines, or to assert that the view the petition takes of the true interests of nations in conducting their commercial affairs, is not a correct view. The principles have never been attacked. No man in his senses ventures to say that the maxim of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest is not the true one, because every one feels that that is the rule on which he himself would act if he could. It is the magnitude of the question, as it is proposed to carry it out, which confuses the mind and confounds the common sense of many. Reduce the matter to the simple transactions of individuals, and the most bigotted yield assent. Tell a person that he must not buy his bread at the cheapest shop in the town where he lives, because it is made of foreign flour, and he exclaims with indignation against so absurd a regulation: and yet only introduce a few custom-house officers, and the mystery of protective laws, and the names of foreign nations, and the same individual will probably insist that it is to his interest to consume the dearer flour, and that he is perfectly content to do so. It is true that very few such persons are to be found, but still examples of inconsistency of this sort may be adduced.

We would wish this Petition to be well studied in Canada, because it is, in our opinion, the best reply that can be given to those who charge against the founders of the Free-Trade Association of Montreal, that they are propounding doctrines which, if not entirely new, are untried, and therefore dangerous. Now we do not think that a better answer can be furnished to this than the Petition of the London merchants. If in 1820 the most influential and intelligent commercial body in the world, after mature deliberation, did not hesitate to propound those doctrines, and have up to the present time consistently supported them—if such, we say, has been the case, we think the Free-Trade Association of Montreal may well be acquitted of presumption and rashness in their humble but earnest imitation. Nor can it be objected that the cases are not parallel. The principles propounded in the Petition of 1820, if applicable to one country, are applicable to all. They presume no particular class or condition of society, but are based on the natural wants, the natural feelings, the natural interests of mankind, and are therefore applicable to every community. To be plentifully fed, to be warmly clothed, to be comfortably housed, are natural wants of man, and any law which intervenes to prevent this—which diminishes his food and clothing by increasing their cost, or in any other way abridges his domestic comforts, must be bad, and must have an injurious effect upon commerce, and, through commerce, upon society at large: so said the merchants of London in 1820, and so say the members of the Montreal Free-Trade Association in 1846.

With these remarks, we give the Petition itself:

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS, &c., THE PETITION OF THE MERCHANTS OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

Sheweth,

That foreign commerce is eminently conducive to the wealth and prosperity of a country, by enabling it to import the commodities for the production of which the soil, climate, capital, and industry of other countries are best calculated, and to export, in payment, those articles for which its own situation is better adapted.

That freedom from restraint is calculated to give the utmost extension to foreign trade, and the best direction to the capital and industry of the country.

That the maxim of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest, which regulates every merchant in his individual dealings, is strictly applicable, as the best rule for the trade of the whole nation.

That a policy founded on these principles would render the commerce of the world an interchange of mutual advantages, and diffuse an increase of wealth and enjoyments among the inhabitants of each state.

That, unfortunately, a policy the very reverse of this has been and is more or less adopted and acted upon by the Government of this and every other country; each trying to exclude the productions of other countries, with the specious and well-meant design of encouraging its own productions: thus inflicting on the bulk of its subjects, who are