

COMMERCIAL UNION WITH CANADA.

TWO LETTERS FROM EDWARD ATKINSON, OF BOSTON.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 10, 1887.

I have received your letter of Nov. 7, asking an expression of my views upon the expediency of a Commercial Union between the United States and Canada.

It might suffice in answer to put the question in another form:—*What possible objection can there be to a commercial union between the United States and Canada?* Is not one country the complement of the other? Does not Canada produce many articles which would be exchanged in very large quantities for other articles produced in the United States, if there were no artificial obstructions to the traffic? Would not this exchange profit the people of both countries? Is any commerce permanent, unless both parties gain by the exchange of product for product.

Or, the question might be put in this way:—Let it be assumed that in the treaty of peace, after the Revolution, the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island, had been ceded to or taken by the United States as a part of their territory. Subsequently, when the confederation of the United States failed because of the obstructions to commerce among the Confederate States, and when the present Constitution was adopted, would there have been any reason to maintain these obstructions between the Provinces named and the rest of the States, which would not have applied to the other sectional divisions? Has not the prosperity of the United States been greatly promoted by the provision of the Constitution that the Commercial Union of the United States should be absolutely free from obstruction?

We can readily imagine what would have been the conditions of the territory which now constitutes the United States had the Hudson River been the border line between one nationality and another; had the Potomac separated the Middle States from the Southern Atlantic States; had Florida remained a Spanish colony; had not the Louisiana purchase been completed, and had the vast territory beyond the Mississippi remained under the dominion of another power. Should we not have been cursed with obstructions to the mutual service or commercial union of these sections each to the other? Might we not have been divided up as Germany was formerly, into little petty kingdoms each armed against the other, until by way of the Zollverein treaty of commercial union the way was made clear for consolidation, as the German Empire has been consolidated? Might we not have been subject to the curse of standing armies like those which now eat out the very heart of the Continent of Europe? Might we not have