

Free-trade seems to have fallen upon evil times—for not only here in Canada, but in England the whole question is being brought forward for further discussion. The best evidence of that is to be found in the fact that Professor Fawcett has thought it necessary to address some lectures on *Free-trade and Protection* to the general public. They are admirable as lectures, of course—and of course are quite conclusive, as Free-trade arguments always may be, just because the theory is right—but none the less are the English people in a state of doubt as to whether a change will not have to be made. It is quite easy to prove by all the laws of economic science that Free-trade is not only right in the abstract, but good for any people—still, there is the fact that Germany and the United States and France are doing well on Protection—and the English are a practical people.

But a still greater disquiet prevails in the English world of politics. Even the Jingo's are beginning to be doubtful of the present situation. They are haunted by the spectre of an Empire falling beneath the greatness of its own responsibility—while the financial burden is increasing in a most alarming manner. In spite of all the Ministerial promises and protests as to peace, an idea is afloat that the real state is one of preparation for inevitable war. The Russian movements in Afghanistan are creating suspicion, and many are beginning to think they can see, notwithstanding Lord Beaconsfield's emphatic protests, that Asia is not large enough for England and Russia—that the chances of a collision between those two nations are greatly increased by the English assumption of the protectorate of Asia Minor. There is much that is strange in the state of things. The Earl talked of "peace with honour"; Colonel Stanley has apologised for introducing such a word as "war into his speech in these most peaceful times"; Lord Sandon speaks of a "durable peace"; and Mr. Cross has declared that all the anxiety felt during the last eighteen months was nothing but a "night-mare" which has passed. And yet, the British fleet has not been ordered home. As regards arms and ammunition, there are no signs of a return to the normal peace establishment, for all the great military factories are busy as ever. Can it be that the Prime Minister and the other members of the Cabinet see the storm gathering and are making stern and prompt preparation for a deadly duel with Russia, but keep their fears from the public? That is the only solution I can find.

I am sorry to see from the papers that gambling is reviving in England—for it is one of the very worst pests that can afflict society. The sound sober sense of the English public is against it, and the machinery of the law will be put into operation against it promptly—but it would be as well to make enquiry as to the use many of the London proprietary clubs are put to. It is quite right to put down "hells"—but there are other places called by names less ugly, which as many young men can testify, are not at all like heavens.

EDITOR.

THE ETHICS OF A NATIONAL POLICY.

It is seldom that the problems of actual political life are discussed in an ethical, but only in an economical or prudential, aspect; and it is to be feared that, in the political squabbles of Canada, even the considerations of national economy or prudence are, in most minds, overborne by the questions of success or failure to a party. It may be worth while, however, even though the task may seem somewhat hopeless at present, to try and raise the minds of electors above the meaningless contentions of rival parties, above even the narrow considerations of mere economy, into the purer region of thought in which the judgment is determined by ideas of right and wrong. There is a measure, advocated by the Opposition at the present time, which arrogates to itself the title of a National Policy. In two previous articles I have already discussed the claim of this policy to the title which it has usurped; in the present article I propose to examine the policy in its ethical aspect. This aspect may be considered from two points of view,—in relation to foreign countries, as well as in relation to the different members of the same nation.

In discussing the moral relations of one country to another, the vast problem of international obligations—of international jurisprudence—seems to be opened up. But to avoid all unnecessary digression into such a limitless field, let it be observed that the very nature of our moral convictions implies a progress towards the recognition of obligations to mankind at large apart from all distinctions of nationality. This universality in the reference of our moral judgments forms the very essence of Christian ethics; and every hindrance to the attainment of this moral standard is essentially anti-Christian—is, in fact, one of those barriers to human progress which must be carried away by the rising and widening influence of the Christian spirit. It is obvious, therefore, that our political measures should be estimated, not by the considerations of a narrow nationalism alone, but by the effect which they are likely to exert upon other nationalities. Patriotism is not absolutely a virtue; it is restricted by wider obligations: it holds among communities only the place which is accorded to self-respect among individuals; and it is no more right to justify and encourage my country, than it is to justify or encourage myself, in doing what is wrong to others. I know it is often said in reply to these considerations, that a nation must look after its own interests, that its very existence may depend on its welfare. There is a sentiment which I regret to find expressed by the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR in a recent issue. It is there acknowledged

(No. 34, p. 269,) that "Free Trade is sublime as an ideal; when the millennium comes, it will come along with it, doubtless. I like to think of four millions fighting for a great principle as against forty millions; but when I am one of the small militant party, the thing gets to be hard." It will be a long time before the millennium comes if we wait till then before we begin to strive after the ideals of humanity; but, indeed, these objections to such a struggle are precisely those which we may hear urged every day by men of obscure moral perceptions and of feeble moral efforts against the demands of the private virtues. "Honesty," it is said, "and generosity and all that sort of thing are beautiful as ideals; when the millennium comes, we shall all be adorned with these virtues. It's fine to think of a few men fighting for virtuous principles among millions of unscrupulous and ungenerous beings; but it is hard to sacrifice one's self for such an ungrateful set, and—in short I was not born to be a martyr, and a man must just do as others do." Is it necessary to urge that this style of reasoning would undermine the foundations of all morality, public and private alike? If Free Trade is a splendid ideal of international communion which must be realised in the perfected development of the human race, then at the peril of our souls let us work for it, at the peril of our national honour let us strive to make it the policy of our country.

But, it is argued, we may not be able to preserve our national independence, unless we first of all try to build up our national wealth independently of other countries. This, however, is not the question. It is not an immutable law of morality, that a separate nationality shall be built up on the American continent to the north of the forty-fifth parallel of latitude; but it is an immutable law of morality, that any nationality, which does exist there at any time, shall fulfil its obligations to the universe. Even, therefore, if we had already attained the unity of a national existence, and even if that unity of existence could be destroyed by allowing the productions of all countries to pour in upon us in return for our own, what right have we to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world, if such isolation is prejudicial to other nations, and beneficial only to ourselves? Is it not better to lose our separate existence in teaching a great lesson to the world, than to live in ignoble luxuries obtained by shirking the national obligations imposed upon us by Providence? Who would not gladly choose for his country a mission like that of Greece or Palestine,—a mission among the great teachers of the human race,—even though that mission could be fulfilled only by the sacrifice of our national independence? China has succeeded in preserving her national identity for some thousands of years, it is said: is that a National Policy which aspires after a similar ideal for Canada?

In all this argument, I have admitted, for the occasion, the principle of the Protectionists, that the exclusion of the wealth of other countries is the best way of building up our own; but the argument becomes immeasurably more forcible when it is taken in conjunction with the fact, that the policy of refusing to take the cheap productions of foreign countries, in order that we may manufacture similar productions ourselves at greater cost, is one upon which no sane man would act who was anxious to make a fortune,—is one which would be equally discarded by any commercial company, by any body of men associated for the purpose of increasing their wealth.

I proceed now to consider the moral aspects of Protection in its bearing upon the relation in which different citizens of the same country stand to each other. In this point of view the policy of Protection suggests several ethical considerations, which can be but briefly indicated here.

1. Protection is a policy which goes right in the face of the fundamental principle of fairness in taxation. To be fair, taxation ought to fall with equal burden upon all classes of the community. Now, the policy of barring our ports against the cheap productions of foreign countries in order to build up manufactures at home is one which necessarily taxes all who are not engaged in manufactures for the purpose of enabling the manufacturers to make fortunes more easily. For it is evidently impossible to protect all the industries of a country; it is impossible to compensate the non-manufacturing classes for the taxes they pay to the manufacturer, without thereby neutralising all the advantage which the protective policy intends to confer. If, for example, the manufacturer is enabled to add twenty-five per cent. to the price of the articles which he sells to the farmer, this advantage would be reduced to zero if the protective tariff enabled the farmer to add twenty-five per cent. to the price of the articles which he sells to the manufacturer. The only tariff, in fact, under which the system of Protection could confer a benefit on any, would be that under which the unfairness of the system would outrage the moral sense of the community by protecting very few manufactures alone. There is no doubt that the persons engaged in these manufactures would fatten like vigorous parasites on all the other branches of industry; but it is equally indubitable that these industries would be drained in proportion to the vigour enjoyed by those that were protected. If the protective system were extended so as to include a larger number of manufactures, its advantages would become less and less certain in proportion to its extent, for workmen would require higher wages to obtain the protected necessities and comforts of life, while the requisite materials and tools and machinery would be likewise increased in price. If all manufactures were brought into the hot-house of Protection, even though every other industry of the country were left out in the cold, they would almost certainly destroy each other. Those, which use little but raw material and survive, though they would be seriously weakened by the increased cost of labour; but most of the manufactures would be suffocated by the very process by which they had been forced. It may be added that, while a distinction is commonly drawn between manufactures and other industries, it is impossible to carry out the distinction, except on a capricious principle; and therefore the collateral distinction between raw material and manufactured product becomes, in nearly every case, illusory when any attempt is made to draw it exactly.

2. Another principle of fairness in the relation of common citizenship is violated by the policy of protecting manufactures. Every citizen should, as far as the laws are concerned, have equal facilities for making a living, equal facilities even for accumulating wealth. No artificial advantages should be conferred by legislation upon one class of the community over another. Now, the fact is that many manufactures would flourish naturally among us, if the