

the communities which are under the British flag, and all the subjects of Her Majesty throughout the world."

What did the Colonial Secretary and the Premier of Victoria mean by a "huckstering spirit?" No doubt the spirit of the peddler, of the petty bargainer, who belabours with a multitude of words the defects of his wares, just as the diplomatist is said to use language to conceal his thoughts. We have as little fear as the authorities above mentioned, that the methods of the retail dealer will cause any difficulty in such commercial negotiations as may become possible between the Mother Country and her colonies. There is, however, a spirit much more to be dreaded in such matters than that of the huckster. We refer to the spirit of the monopolist, of the large capitalist, who believes that he has the upper hand, and who thinks that all he has to do is to wait stolidly and callously until other less fortunate people come to his terms. It is he who most frequently uses the words "make me an offer," rejects it readily when made, and does not trouble himself about making any counter proposition. He is content to let the negotiations drag, until the necessities of the borrower or the seller compel them to make such a sacrifice as to render the bargain an undoubtedly profitable one to the man of money.

The policy of England towards her colonies in commercial matters (but in those alone) has been leavened not a little by this spirit of the self-sufficient capitalist during the last 50 years. Owing to the dominance of the free trading or rather free importing party, the feeling of relationship in race and interest with the colonial Empire was suppressed. The canny Scot used to say, "It's not lost what a frien' gets," but, under the influence of free tradeism, Scot, Sonthron and Celt became as cold as codfish to their colonial brethren. It is to be hoped that the time is rapidly approaching when the Imperial Government will abandon not only the spirit of the huckster, but that of the usurer as well, and make an offer in generous and confiding terms, with all the details filled up, to all the British colonies, which will tend to consolidate the Empire both as regards commerce and defence.

It has already been attempted in this essay to give reasons why the Imperial Government should take the initiative in this matter, and what their proposal should be has also been foreshadowed. In what

manner it should be made does not admit of much doubt. At the recent Premiers' Conference the following resolution was unanimously adopted, which establishes an institution for receiving and discussing such proposals: "Meanwhile, the Premiers are of opinion that it would be desirable to hold periodical conferences of representatives of the colonies and Great Britain for the discussion of matters of common interest." A communication from the Home Government to the authorities, stating their plan, and calling another Colonial Conference to discuss it, might readily lead to the desired result of simultaneously establishing British commercial union and providing a revenue for Imperial purposes. A definite proposition, embracing a scheme, such as described in this essay, might be laid before such a conference by the Home Government. No doubt such proposals could at once be laid before parliament, but it would be wiser to have them discussed previously at a conference of colonial representatives. As in former instances, the latter would be unable to bind their respective governments, but they could say what would likely be acceptable in the colonies.

The Imperial Government would then be ready for legislation in parliament, and could pass their measure, which would, of course, provide that it should not apply to the outer Empire until after acceptance by the various authorities and parliaments existing there.

Such a measure would levy an Imperial duty of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ad valorem on all goods arriving in any and every British port, over and above the different local tariffs there in force. It would provide that the proceeds of this particular duty collected in England should be kept separate from her other revenues, and applied only for naval defence. It would enact that the same proceeds in British possessions beyond the sea should be remitted to the Home Government, and devoted to the same purpose. It would also be understood that any part of the Empire declining to agree to this arrangement would have its products treated like those from foreign countries and subjected to the payment of the Imperial duty. There cannot be any doubt as to the manner in which such enactments would be received by the well disposed colonies and Crown dependencies. They would only be too willing to contribute in this way to Imperial defence and obtain at this price a preference in the markets of Great Britain.