

generation lies, by which the evils which it has engendered may be eradicated before the superstructure, raised on so treacherous a foundation, may topple over, bringing chaos in its train.

If protection in Canada should be followed by similar results as in Britain, Canadians may well pray;—"From protection, Lord, deliver us."

The worst effects of a protective policy is its tendency to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Unequal distribution of wealth is the great danger which threatens social institutions. It is the burning question of the age. It is on the solution of this great economic problem depends the success or failure of the existing social fabric. It is the duty of true Conservatism, if it cannot remove, to temper the great inequalities between the extremes of society, to soften those startling contrasts between excessive luxury and squalid misery, which form so painful a feature of modern civilization. If legislators are unable to grapple with this task, to find a remedy for this great social scandal, then the system itself is judged, and stands condemned as a nuisance.

#### "THE SLAUGHTER MARKET."

A word on the "slaughter market" grievance. The interest of the consumer is the public interest. The interest of the seller is always antagonistic to that of the purchaser. The seller is invariably the producer or distributor; the purchaser is ultimately the consumer. When a producer or dealer has a warehouse full of goods unsold, he is always grumbling about hard times and the scarcity of money. But the secret burden of his refrain is disappointment at the diminution of his profits. If a foreign competitor is underselling him, he cries ruin, but what really occurs is that his profits are reduced, while his grief is cause of rejoicing to the community collectively. For what does this terrible *under-selling* process mean? It means, when all is told, that a poor man can buy his necessities cheaper than the wealthy capitalists would wish he could get them for. Suppose that the Americans, during the slaughter excitement, sent over their goods here and distributed them gratuitously amongst the people, would anyone call that an evil? Would it not be the most munificent generosity? Well, suppose that instead of giving them for nothing, that they gave them for one-half what similar commodities could be obtained from the home dealers, is that an evil to be deplored? Is it not, on the contrary, a great blessing, differing only in degree from the first supposition; and if there is one time more than another when this is a blessing to the poorer classes it is in times of depression. Suppose, coming on winter, that I want an overcoat, and that owing to commercial difficulties my means of purchasing it has been considerably reduced, so that if I am compelled to buy it from the home dealers I may go without or have to take a very inferior article. Will any one pretend to say that it would not be a great boon to me to get a coat of good quality of foreign manufacture for the same or less price than an inferior one of home growth would cost me? I take it to have been in some respects a most fortunate thing for this country, in its last commercial crisis, that accidentally a similar