

practice of erecting artificial barriers to prevent the citizens of the sister colonies from interchanging freely the products of their industries with one another.

As to the projected cable, there seems to be every reason for hoping that the Conference will give such impetus to the enterprise as will send it swiftly forward along the lines of achievement. The Mother Land's sympathy and substantial aid will scarcely be withheld under an administration led by Lord Rosebery, especially if the colonies are found to be heartily agreed, and each ready to do its best to promote the scheme.

Though the fast Atlantic service may not seem to concern so directly the people of Australia and the Cape, the success of the Conference could hardly fail to give a powerful impulse to this project, too, as one having a close bearing upon the successful working of the others.

Information recently received by the Board of Trade of this city from a correspondent in New South Wales is published, to the effect that the merchants of that Province are forwarding to the Board samples of wools, butter, honey, tallow, canned meats, wines, hardwoods for use in veneering and furniture-making, and hardwood blocks for use on railroads. If this is the answer to the ready question of the sceptics, as to the class of commodities which can be profitably interchanged between ourselves and our cousins at the Antipodes, it must be confessed that it does not appear at first thought so satisfactory as could be wished, seeing that almost every one of the articles named, except perhaps the first, belongs to the class of which there is, or ought to be, a surplus of Canadian production. It would be a somewhat remarkable phenomenon should it be found profitable to interchange such commodities as these around half the circumference of the globe. Yet we are by no means prepared to say that such a thing is not possible, assuming all artificial barriers to be removed. Should the thing be proved feasible, the fact would furnish an effective reply to those among ourselves who depreciate the value of freer trade relations with our next-door neighbours, on the ground of the similarity in the productions of the two countries. The correspondent in question states, it is said, as a fact, that the experiment is about to be tried in butter by an Ontario merchant, who has ordered several thousand pounds of the Australian article for distribution in this Province. Should it prove of superior quality to the average of home manufacture—a contingency which, we are sorry to say, does not seem impossible—our butter producers may have to look not only to their laurels but to their interests in the near future.

It is encouraging to learn, as we do from the Board of Trade's correspondent, that the earnest hopes and desires of Austral-

ians are centred in the Conference, and that all Australians will eagerly watch its proceedings, looking upon it "as one of the greatest and most important conferences in the history of the present generation." As the day approaches we shall, it may be hoped, see evidences of a similarly keen interest in Canada, to a greater extent, at least, than has yet been apparent.

### HORSE-RACING.

It has been said of Yorkshire, that in that county, probably horse-racing dated from the time when there were two men and two horses. It is very likely true; but it is just as likely to be true of a continent as of a county. In fact, the boldest antiquarian would shrink from fixing a date for the origin of this pastime. The domestication of the horse is (in the usual formula) shrouded in the mists of antiquity: Egyptian monuments, Greek marbles, Roman columns, all depict the horse in harness; and no doubt wherever there were horses harnessed, there horses were pitted in the arena or on the plain. Thessaly, we know, prided herself on her horses; and the Arab has been for centuries the theme of poets—though at present the Arab has fallen on evil days, on evil days and evil tongues.

Horse-racing in England, however, perhaps all do not know, dates, as a regular and systematic sport, only from the times of the Stuarts. It was Charles II. who first made Newmarket famous, and, as befitted the "sport of kings," he himself not seldom there rode his own horses; and from his day down to our own it seems that royalty has—sometimes more, sometimes less—patronized this favourite pursuit. William of Orange is known to have staked two thousand guineas on a race. Anne entered horse after horse, both at Newmarket and Ascot. Though the three Georges did not much personally for the breeding or racing of horses, yet in their reigns these two important factors in English life received great impetus from causes not easy to trace. It was in the second George's reign that the Jockey Club was founded. In his reign too the Arab was in high estimation; and—not least curious or significant fact—many were the ladies who entered horses in their own names for races. In the third George's reign were established those five great races, the Derby, the Oaks, the St. Leger, the Two Thousand and the One Thousand Guineas. In his reign also, it was, it must in justice be added, that that curious appanage to horse-racing—perhaps as unavoidable as undesirable—most easily summed up in the words "the talent," became first prominent. The fourth George was an enthusiastic turfite from his youth upwards. His brother William continued the royal patronage, but was not at heart as 'horsey' as his predecessor.

But it was left—in the words of Mr. Robert Black in his recent book on "Horse Racing in England"—for "the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria" to see "the most wonderful increase in the number, if not the excellence, of the race-horses bred, and in the quantity, if not the quality, of the horse-racing itself—a pitch of development in comparison with which that of George III.'s time, wonderful as it was, sinks, unless perhaps as regards the style of horses bred, the 'form' exhibited, and the sort of races run, into absolute insignificance." These be strong words, but they be well within the truth.

It would be interesting to seek for the more important sources of this wonderful development. Mr. Black incidentally mentions the facility of attending races afforded by the railways as one of them. Perhaps an equally important factor is the two-fold one of the spread of a certain sort of education by which millions now read where hundreds read before, linked with the spread of the habit of reading newspapers. The amazing increase of "sporting" papers within the last two decades seems to corroborate this. The next best thing to seeing a race-horse (and then—to some—betting upon him) is the reading about him (and then—to some—betting upon him); and this anyone can now do for a penny or a cent a day. Undoubtedly, the search for pleasure too is on the increase; and if one is not a "sport" oneself, apparently one delights in witnessing or hearing of the achievements of those who are—as the truly terrifying numbers of professionals in all lines of sport prove.

About horse-racing unfortunately in the eyes of some there hangs a cloud. To attempt to trace the source whence this metaphorical miasm is exhaled would be as futile as a similar attempt in the case of its atmospherical analogue. But surely it is not necessary always to view the subject of horse-racing through this cloud. Granted there are touts, and black legs, and for the matter of that, bookies, is that any possible reason for avoiding the race-course? Is the theatre to be abjured because the "go ds" cheer a vulgar scene or some actors' or actresses' characters are not above reproach? Are cards to be untouched and whist eschewed because some lose heavily at poker? It is surely the old question of use and abuse. Why should the users suffer because of abuses? To argue otherwise would be to argue that honour and rectitude were absent from the Jockey Club—a serious argument in view of its hundred and forty years of existence.

In Toronto racing has of late years wonderfully improved. The very appearance of the Woodbine at present on the first or third day of the May meeting as compared with its appearance on such occasions ten years ago is evidence of this. The arrangements are in excellent hands, as the names of the active members of the Ontario Jockey Club abundantly testify.