

of the most hopeful features of the movement among our neighbours that the reform is being promoted solely with an enlightened view to their own interests. The short-sighted notion that international trade, in order to benefit one of the parties, must be injurious to the other, is, let us hope, being rapidly outgrown. The people are coming to see that the very fact that the trade they are interested in promoting is beneficial to a neighbor, is one of the best guarantees of its expansion and permanence. So one will continue a traffic which is not profitable to himself. The truism is as applicable to one party as to the other. When the trade is profitable to us, and we wish to continue and enlarge it, the more profitable it is to our customer and the more prosperous it makes him, the better for us. The only reliable basis for true progress in the direction of free trade is the conviction that to lower or abolish the tariff will be a good thing for the people who do it, whether the Americans reciprocate or not. So long as the Americans fail to see that their own interests are promoted by buying their raw materials and their necessities of every kind in the cheapest market, any reform of their tariff which they may make will be humiliating and paltry. If and when they are fully determined to pull down the barriers for the benefit of themselves, without regard to the policy of others, they will have laid out on the right road. Nor need they have the slightest fear that their northern neighbors will be slow to reciprocate.

Mr. Gladstone's address to the Midlothian Committee at Edinburgh, on the 27th inst., may be said to have bristled with points, but of these there are two which stand out so prominently that they cannot fail to challenge the attention of all thoughtful men. The first is the statement of the obvious truth that the present Parliamentary institutions of Great Britain are too weak for their purpose. For generation after generation the just demands of the nation for legislation have been postponed, all attempts to meet them being frustrated by the ever-present and ever-persistent Irish question. It was not putting it too strongly to say that the situation thus created is intolerable. The minority who opposed so strenuously the Home Rule Bill which has yet been proposed for the removal of the obstruction which has so long effectually blocked the wheels of legislation. In so doing they are surely bound in logic and consistency to propose an alternative measure for effecting the same object. This measure, which has hitherto failed to do. Lord Salisbury's "twenty years of resolute government" cannot be accepted as such an alternative, for it is no new method, but simply the refurbishing of an old weapon which has again and again been tried, with the effect of simply aggravating the difficulty and expending still more deeply the malcontents.

Mr. Gladstone's measure has at least this one merit, that it aims at a complete and permanent removal of the cause of obstruction. Unless the Tory and Unionist leaders can bring forward some other less objectionable scheme which shall promise a like effective cure, it is pretty certain that the people, in sheer desperation if for no other reason, will try the Radical prescription. We do not suppose that Mr. Gladstone meant to imply that the settlement of the Irish question would wholly remove the defects of the present Parliamentary system. It has long been evident to onlookers that the Imperial Parliament attempts, and under existing conditions is obliged to attempt, much more than it can possibly perform, and much that no central legislature of a great nation should be expected to perform. Extensive and far-reaching changes in the direction of decentralization will be the order of the day as soon as the Home Rule crisis is over.

Mr. Gladstone's other main point—touching the House of Lords—raises some fundamental questions. There is unanswerable force in the dictum that the rejection in so summary a manner, or in any manner, by a body of legislators the majority of whom derive their power by hereditary descent and who are responsible to no one but themselves, of a measure passed by the Representative Chamber, by no matter how slender a majority, is incompatible with responsible institutions. The ration which consents to such a procedure is not a self-governing nation. But, on the other hand, so long as the House of Lords is recognized as one of the estates of the realm, so long as it is admitted to be constitutionally one of the Chambers of Parliament, there is a manifest inconsistency in denying its rights to legislate according to the views of the majority of its members. The right to approve implies the right to reject, so far at least that the concession of the one without the other would reduce the Upper House to a position of impotence that would be both humiliating and ridiculous. Either the two Houses must have co-ordinate powers with reference to the matters that come before them, or the position of that one which has not such powers becomes anomalous and absurd. Mr. Gladstone's argument leads directly to one of two alternatives. In the current phrase, it means nothing less than that the House of Lords must be either ended or amended. To amend it so as to make it really and directly responsible to the people would be to take away that hereditary membership which is now its most marked feature. Its special function, if it now has one, is to safeguard the interests of the class from which its members are taken. Take away that function, make it representative of the people, and it becomes but an unnecessary duplicate of the Representative Chamber. If some of these arguments would bear hardly upon our own Canadian Senate

that cannot be helped. Mr. Gladstone virtually asks the question, never before asked by a British Premier or the leader of a great party in England, "Does the British nation wish to perpetuate class legislation and legislators?"

The Manitoba agent of the Massey-Harris Company has published a lengthy letter in reply to the memorial which appeared some weeks since from a Committee appointed by the farmers of the Brandon district, setting forth the burdens borne by the farmers of Manitoba in consequence of the protective tariff on agricultural implements. One would suppose that a representative committee of the kind indicated would be careful in a document intended, as the one in question no doubt was, for general circulation as well as for the eyes of the Minister of Finance to whom it was addressed, to put their names to those statements only which they had carefully verified. When the issue is between such a committee and the agent of an interested firm, the reader may be pardoned if he naturally inclines to accept the authority of the former, especially on all points which are matters of opinion and experience rather than statements of bare facts and figures. But when the question is one of the prices of certain articles of merchandize dealt in by the latter, and when his figures, vouched for by price lists of his own and other firms and other documentary evidence, contradict the statements of the Committee the agent must certainly know what he is talking about, and it is but fair to suppose that the authors of the memorial must have been in some way misinformed. Under the circumstances the public can only hold its judgment as to the actual figures in suspense, awaiting a rejoinder by the Committee, in case they should see fit to make one. Suffice it for our purpose to say, without entering into details, that whereas according to the farmers' memorial the farmers of Manitoba are compelled to pay for their reapers and mowers considerably more than Ontario prices with the freight added, and considerably more than the prices at which they could be purchased and brought from the United States but for the duty, according to the reply put forth on behalf of the firm, both these statements are incorrect and the agricultural implements made by this firm are sold to Manitoba farmers at lower rates than those of American manufacture.

Now herein is a marvellous thing! Accepting the figures and statements of Mr. McBride, it appears that many of the intelligent farmers of Manitoba are actually so perverse that they will deliberately purchase an inferior American machine at a higher price and on less advantageous terms of payment, in preference to a superior Ontario machine at a lower price and on more advantageous terms. Mr. McBride