

conjecture what might have happened, had Sir John's life been spared for another five years ; but no one will deny that, the more firmly Protection became intrenched, the more active and determined became the efforts of its opponents. It is invariably the case in every great movement. A cause is either worth fighting for with all the vigor and zeal and devotion of which men are capable or else it arouses no enthusiasm, and at once ceases to be a question of the first magnitude.

The stronger the tendrils of Protection grew, the more necessary its opponents felt it to destroy the tree, root and branch. Protection, from the standpoint of Liberalism, was the handmaid of corruption, both in private and official affairs. It debauched the manufacturers by giving them a bonus which came out of the pockets of the people : it vitiated the public service by inviting extravagance and providing the means for scandalous jobs. From time to time the tariff was tinkered with,—even a rabid Protectionist may sometimes cater to public sentiment and profess to “lighten the burdens of the people,”—and Reciprocity was played with. At heart, however, Sir John was neither Free-Trader nor Reciprocist : in fact, as he declared in an interview about four years before his death, he was an Imperial Federationist, a firm adherent of “Greater Britainism.” He looked forward to the day when, “With England as a central Power, with Australia and South Africa as auxiliaries, we (the Confederated British Empire) will control the seas ; and the control of the seas means the control of the world.” I have been told, and I can well believe it, that Sir John Macdonald looked far enough into the future to see the time when the United States would be the great commercial competitor of England. Surely, Sir John Macdonald, with his sturdy Imperialism and his devotion to the interests of Greater Britain, was not the man to help his great rival in the race for commercial supremacy. His entire policy was perforce anti-American, because, from his view-point, the interests of his country were antagonistic to those of his southern neighbor.

Up to the time of Sir John Macdonald's death, the Liberals talked Reciprocity : with his demise, they went a step further and advocated “commercial union,” which soon became translated into annexation to the United States. A recent English writer has truly said that the Conservative party, after the death of its great Premier, collapsed because of a series of incompetent leaders and their blunders. But, while the Conservatives were dancing over a mine, there was no man