

terers tell them are now rising more despairingly than ever from all classes in the Old World. They are not likely to tire soon of such stimulants. When anything goes wrong, their cry will certainly be, "More brandy."

While this is the case as regards Europe, as regards Canada they have an additional reason for maintaining their national policy. We are on the same continent with them, but we are British. Once they were sure that our destiny was "to drop like a ripe plum" into their mouths,—a nice fate, by the way, for the plum; but now they see that we are making a nation. Mr. Blaine expressed the general view when he declared openly that this was wholly incompatible with our having free trade with them. As he puts it, we cannot be Canadians and Americans at the same time. Well, we mean to be Canadians any way.

That is the present position in the United States. It is folly for us to shut our eyes to the facts. It is worse than folly to content ourselves with speculating on the possible results of the November elections, or for private persons to go to Washington and pass themselves off there as the authorized representatives of Canada. Let us always welcome the fullest freedom of speech, but conduct of that kind comes so near to being treason to the country that I do not see how the charge can be escaped except on the plea of aberration. In stating the case I have no intention of finding fault with the United States.

Our own attitude proves that if we had been in their circumstances we would have acted in precisely the same way. We, too, are afraid of competing with what our neighbors call "pauper labor," or even of competing with what one of our newspapers call "the pauper hens of Holland, Germany, and France."

While our neighbors were preparing their unfriendly bill we gave them all the excuse that could have been desired by placing new taxes on their corn and pork; and at the very moment when we are more dependent than ever on the open markets of Britain some of us propose to shut our doors against her as the price of conciliating those who announce that we cannot be Canadians and Americans at the same time. The United States may be selfish in politics, but they have never proposed anything quite so selfish as that.

I have indicated the United States' position. The policy of Britain we all know. We are between the two. What course shall we take? If we imitate the United States we shall proceed to double our duties on almost everything that we tax now. Every sane man will admit that we cannot afford that. We simply cannot afford to make living in Canada dearer. If we imitate Great Britain we shall at once reverse all our previous policy. Almost everyone will admit that we cannot afford so violent a disturbance as that. Is there any middle course?

For answer I shall indicate three points that I have thought out, though there is barely time now to do more than state them.

First, that to fill the gap made by the McKinley Bill in our volume of trade we must look chiefly to an increased trade with Britain. In one way the country that lies alongside of us for three or four thousand miles is certainly our natural market, and I have no wish to argue with the people on either side of the line who refuse to admit that free trade with neighbors is a good thing. But it is just as certain that Great Britain is also our natural market. She is ready to take almost everything we produce, and distance by water is of far less consequence than distance by land. It is clear, too,



that we must buy more from her as well as sell more to her if we are largely to increase our dealings.

Secondly, if we are to have commercial union with only one country it would be more natural to form such a union with Great Britain than with the United States. There would, in that case, be less disturbance even of our manufacturing interests; for the differences between Canada and Britain have led here to lines of manufactures in which, under any arrangement with her, we could easily hold our own or even preserve an unchallenged supremacy. These lines of manufacture would be at once multiplied and strengthened by the introduction of the one article of free iron from Great Britain.

On the other hand there is not a single line of manufactures in which the United States are not our keen competitors. With regard, again, to the manufactures in which Britain excels us, not only would consumers, in the event of free trade, get the benefit of cheap goods, but the merchants, especially along the borders, would find their business increasing by leaps and bounds. Besides, in any such union with Britain we could depend upon her stable trade policy and her friendliness, both matters of importance, as the history of our relations with the United States for half a century abundantly shows.

Thirdly, retaliation by us would be ridiculous. I do not say that retaliation is out of the question in every case. Sometimes it is the best way of bringing others to a reasonable frame of mind. Cobden could never have made his celebrated convention with France if Britain had been previously admitting all French products free. He had something to offer that it was worth France's while to accept. In the same way Canada and Britain will not get any reasonable

measure of free trade with the United States till unitedly they can offer something which in the opinion of Congress is as good as that which we want from them.

If, then, Canada would agree to abolish its duties on British products and manufactures, or even keep on them a small revenue tariff for a short time, and if Britain would agree to discriminate against countries refusing any reasonable reciprocity with her and us, that would give us the weapon we need. That course would have other advantages. In my opinion it would be the best course, not only for Canada but for Britain. Neither of our great parties will take it for obvious reasons, but these parties are certain to break up before long; and if I were a young man going into political life I would nail my colors to it, simply because it is right in itself and most certain to lead to the best results. It would certainly teach the primer of free trade to the farmers of the United States. They are now in the fog and will remain in it for an indefinite time until the lesson is taught them in this way. They could not complain, for even a little imitation is a sincere form of flattery. Besides, they have already done their worst. If you agree with me on these points, it follows that we should approach the British government with a reasonable offer and find out whether any, and if so what, arrangement, can be made. We have approached Washington time and again. Ought we not to try London now? We are dogmatically told that Britain will never discriminate. It will be time enough for us to believe that when we are willing to share in the sacrifice that any change requires, or when she herself says so. At any rate, that which is worth getting is worth asking.

It is clear to me that our policy should follow henceforth the British rather than the United States system. It is clear



that if we are to throw in our lot fiscally with any other nation we should do so with the mother country. It is clear that we can approach her without loss of dignity, and I believe, too, that if we are prepared to pay the fair price we would get all the advantages from her that existing treaties permit.

The people of Britain are free traders by conviction, but they believe that there is something more important than a rigid adherence to the good rule of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. It is also clear to me that the trade theory of Britain is right, though it does not follow that no exceptions can ever be allowed, or that there are not relative degrees of rightness. It is wrong in principle to limit trade to an island or a continent. At any rate, as far as we make changes let us head in the direction of what is right, and not of what is wrong—not only with regard to the lines on which changes should be made in our tariff, but in other respects also.

Our policy must be decided. Since our neighbors will not trade with us we must do everything in reason to open more widely the avenues of trade, not only with Britain, but with related countries. Commercial treaties with the West Indies on one side and Australia on the other, a fast steamship service across the Atlantic, the deepening of the St. Lawrence canals, a cable and a line of steamships to Australia and New Zealand, a railway to Hudson Bay, are all moves in the right direction.

But, while we may not agree on details, let us be at one on fundamental principles. There are matters of unspeakably greater importance to a people than the volume of its imports and exports, or anything that can be tabulated in the most roseate-colored and most carefully prepared statistics,

Not by these things does a country live. A country lives and lives in history by what its people are. Very little thought did the men who made Canada give to tariff questions. They were men who lived simple lives and whose hearts of oak no privations shook. Everything we have we owe to them, and the more firmly we stand on their foundations and get back to their simple manners, robust faith, and sincere patriotism, the better for us. We are living in a critical period. We need strong and true men. These will be given us if we are worthy of them. Let us take our stand on what is right without any fear of consequences. All sorts of bogeys will be used to frighten us, all sorts of temptations to allure us from the path of honor. Against all these stand fast. Remember how the spirit of our fathers shone out again and again like a pillar of fire when the night was darkest. Oh, yes, we come of good stock. Men emigrated to this New World who knew how to endure. They hoped to found in the forests of the West a state in which there would be justice for all, free scope for all, fair reward for labor, a new home for freedom, freedom from grinding poverty, freedom from the galling chain of ancient feuds, mutual confidence and righteousness between man and man, flowing from trust in God. They knew that there was no other sure foundation, no other permanent cohesion for the social fabric. These men yearned and prayed for the country. They were poor, yet they made rich all who came in contact with them. Some of them are still with us in the flesh, for Canada is only in its infancy. Let the knowledge that such men laid our foundations hallow our aims and give us faith in the country's future. I never despair.



