

Colonies than from a Customs Union. It is clear that the proposition is not a novel one; and it can only be considered as prejudicial to the interests of the Empire, by the light of the altered policy of the Imperial country towards the Colonies. Of late years, the disintegration of the Empire has been officially treated as a possible contingency. While such a contingency is admitted, all questions between the Colonies and the Imperial country are liable to be discussed under embarrassing conditions; but if, as was the case a few years ago, no possibility of the kind was contemplated, it could not now be urged that the consideration of the best means calculated to promote the trade of the Colonies had a greater significance, or one more hostile to the Empire, than the same policy had at a period when it was warmly espoused by the Imperial Government. The change, in short, is not with the Colonies, but with those who imperially govern them.

In reply to the suggestion that reciprocal arrangements would partake more of the nature of protection than would a Customs Union, the Colonial Treasurer has already pointed out, that the absence of the power to make such arrangements has led to the adoption in the Colonies of Tariffs which are not only protective but retaliatory. As pointed out by Mr. Du Cane, in his Despatch of the 29th September, 1871, the choice lies "between a system of protection pure and simple, maintained by each Colony against its neighbours, and a system of protection modified by Reciprocity Convention," and which might ultimately result in "the establishment of a commercial union of the Australias and New Zealand on the basis of a common tariff."

Lord Kimberley's principal objection, apparently, to giving power to the Colonies to make reciprocal arrangements is, that it might be used for protective purposes; and it is not clear that he does not consider that it is in the very nature of such arrangements that they should be antagonistic to the principles of free trade. It is right, therefore, that the Colonial Treasurer should state that his former Memorandum was adopted by the then Government of New Zealand, most of the members of which were opponents of the doctrines of protection. If it really be that the disinclination to grant to the Colonies the power of making reciprocal arrangements arises out of a desire to indoctrinate the Colonies with the free-trade ideas of Great Britain, too much stress cannot be laid upon the observation of the Chief Secretary of Victoria, in his Memorandum of October 7th, 1871, that "No attempt can be more hopeless than to induce free self-governed States to adopt exactly the same opinions on such questions as free-trade and protection which the people of England happen to entertain at that precise moment." Great Britain has, at various times, adopted different fiscal policies, in accordance with what seemed to her Rulers suitable to the circumstances of the country; and there are not wanting persons who fail to see that there is any greater guarantee against modifications of the present free-trade policy, than there was against the reversal of the policy of protection which at one time had an equal hold upon the minds of the people of the United Kingdom. When it is asserted, on behalf of Great Britain, that free trade is the only wise policy, it can hardly fail to be remembered that free-trade doctrines have made very little progress in other countries. And when Lord Kimberley urges as an argument against granting to the Colonies the powers they require, that a suspicion that they mean to resort, under those powers, to a protective policy, is likely to foster an unfriendly feeling between them and Great Britain, the thought naturally suggests itself, that if agreement with Great Britain's fiscal policy is necessary to the maintenance of friendly relations with her, there is scarcely a colony or country in the world with which she can be said to be on friendly terms.

The Colonial Treasurer shares with Lord Kimberley the desire that the Colonies should avoid doing anything calculated to alienate from them the cordial feelings of friendship entertained by the people of the United Kingdom; but he cannot understand how any such result is likely to follow from reciprocal arrangements between the Colonies. Possibly, a few persons interested in manufactures might feel aggrieved by one or two items of the Tariffs which would result from such arrangements; but the great bulk of the people of the United Kingdom would surely not judge the Colonists by any such standard. It is within the knowledge of the great mass of the people of the United Kingdom, that it is the desire of the Colonial Governments to promote the prosperity of the Colonists; and that they are anxious to secure as Colonists an unlimited number of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. Whatever direction the legislation of the Colonies may take, that legislation is not intended more for the benefit of the present Colonists than for the benefit of those who may come to the Colony from the United Kingdom, and who, as Colonists, would be eagerly welcomed. It would be an injustice to the good feeling of the great mass of the people of the United Kingdom, to suppose that they would resent as unfriendly the honest desire of the Colonists to guide their legislation in the direction which they believe best calculated to promote the welfare of the Colonies, and—through the interests which the Imperial country has in the Colonies—the welfare of the Empire. It is, indeed, difficult to realize why the people of the United Kingdom should be alienated by the Australasian Colonies asking for only that which the British American Provinces already possess; or because of the Australasian Colonists holding opinions which are held by those of British North America, and which have been held by the people of the United Kingdom. The question really seems to narrow itself to this—Should the theories of a comparatively modern School of Economy outweigh the teachings of actual experience in the Colonies, backed by the recommendations of able practical men, including amongst their number Officers in the Imperial Service?

A brief *résumé* of the case, so far as it relates to New Zealand and the Australian Colonies, will, the Colonial Treasurer believes, convince the Secretary of State that whilst the Colonies have been patient and respectful in their demands, they are not likely to recall them. It is some years since it was first felt by the Colonies that it was desirable there should be an interchange of Colonial productions. That feeling did not arise in connection with any commodity which Great Britain could, or can, supply. It arose principally in respect to the excellent wines which Australia produces; and as to which the people of New Zealand and Tasmania felt it a great hardship that a supply should be denied them, except upon payment of the same rate of import duty as was demanded upon wines the produce of far-distant and foreign countries. When the question was looked into, it was found that the Constitution Acts of the several Australian Colonies expressly prohibited the imposition of differential duties, whilst the Constitution Act of New Zealand merely prohibited the imposition of any duties inconsistent with Her Majesty's Treaty obligations. It seems probable that the different scope of the enactments in