

ing the whole. It is true that of Brazil we purchase about one half of the exports; but of the imports we furnish only a small percentage. Our relations with Mexico are, of course, somewhat closer, since at most only a single stream separates us from that republic, and railroads bind us together; yet they are not what they should be. We are a maritime nation, geographically well known to these countries, but our flag is seldom seen in any of their ports, in some never. We can use their products; indeed must have many of them. We are the leading manufacturers of the world and can supply their wants in this direction, yet we are now neglecting to improve our opportunities for trade with them.

Might not these people then in years past reasonably have concluded that we desired nothing of them? Is it strange that they trend toward England, Germany, and France? That we have been drifting farther apart? Was it not time that these neighbors should meet and confer? It is to be hoped that the present state of alienation between the American republics will not be prolonged. That there should be some sort of union between the people of the three Americas has for many years been before the people of this country. It was merely a suggestion until in Mr. Garfield's short but promising administration it reached the stage of actual invitation to the governments of South and Central America to meet and confer with us upon subjects of mutual interest. At length, after a delay of seven years, we behold, the congress of the three Americas assembled at Washington. These delegates, with ours included, represent a territory three times that of all Europe, and occupied by one hundred and twenty millions of people. They represent more. They represent peace, trade, business, enterprise and the rights of the common people. They represent further the new idea of conference before war, of arbitration instead of war. It is true these delegates cannot ratify into binding treaties the results of their conference. Their assemblage is merely for

the purpose of discussing affairs of mutual interest, of dispelling misunderstandings, and of clearing the road to closer and better relations between all the American nations. The subject of establishing regular and frequent communication between the ports of the several states deserves and receives their consideration. The great loss to trade with South and Central America is in the want of steamship lines. It was time that the Pan American Congress had met, that by mutual advice and consent, we may unite to establish such lines and also to help in the building of a railroad through Central America and down the Isthmus to connect the two parts of the continent. For this purpose nature seems to have especially designed that neck of land.

The lack of communication routes is not however the only difficulty which our commerce here meets. Our neighboring republics depend largely upon duties on imports for revenue. Some of them indeed rely entirely upon this means. In such, our system of taxing lands and other property is practically unknown. The duties generally exceed the value of the goods themselves, and the fines imposed by custom house officers for the most trivial errors on the part of importers are sufficient to change many transactions from profitable to losing ones. Again, trade is immensely compressed by want of a common standard value of coin, and by the need of banking facilities in these countries. We further have most urgent need for laws to protect our patent rights, copy rights, and trade marks, from the pirates of the world, to whose mercy they have long been exposed. And if we wish for better political relations, a code of international law and methods of judicial procedure are among our wants.

We must notice that the recent movement in Brazil and the endeavor to establish a government more strictly by the people, although that government is yet too young to assure its entire stability, is an evidence that those people wish for free institutions, and appreciate the example first set to the American nations by our own re-