

A WORKING MAN'S NOTIONS
ABOUT
RECIPROCITY
AND
"FAIR TRADE."

A PRIZE ESSAY

IN A COMPETITION INVITED BY
THE PROPRIETORS OF THE
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DEDICATED

BY PERMISSION TO

GEO. TATHAM, ESQ., J.P.,

MAYOR OF LEEDS,

AS A SMALL MARK OF THE WRITER'S

MOST RESPECTFUL ESTEEM

AND

GRATITUDE.

THE FALLACIES OF RECIPROCITY.

"THE dead salute you!" I am tempted to exclaim at the sight of your kind offer to evoke some essays on the fallacies of Reciprocity. "The political dead salute you!" is my exclamation on reading your appeal, as it is well known to you that we, the provincial workers of this district, are still unrepresented in our Imperial Parliament.

These are indeed signs of the times when the opinion of the workers of this country begin to be quoted and weighed over; when "the great unwashed," as we have been called, begin to form opinions of their own; when they are within measurable distance of the extension of the franchise—I wish I could say manhood suffrage—and when they are invited to give their opinion on a question of such importance as the one which our Conservative friends have been pleased lately to bring forward as one of the planks of the platform on which they probably mean to hazard the next general election.

Generally speaking, we may frankly say that the whole Conservative Party is more or less committed in favour of Reciprocity. That they have given expression to this opinion, or creed, is manifest by their having made the Marquis of Salisbury, their present leader, the mouthpiece and godfather of a petition, coming from our West Indian colonies, clamouring for protection for one of their staple industries, the sugar trade.

The noble Marquis did not seem to be desirous of forsaking the Free Trade policy, but he is dangerously near doing so; and there is no doubt that he would, for the sake of a passing popularity, try to put a more plausible face on the protectionist movement, and make our West Indian sugar planters the pretext for the thin end of the wedge with which he would break the phalanx of the Free Trade policy of this country.

The Tory Party have thought fit to again indulge in a sort of pugnacious enterprise, of which I admit they are masters; but, seeing the signal failure which attended their spirited foreign policy at the

last general election, they have this time adopted a different, but equally dangerous course, *i.e.*, to introduce pugilism into our commercial relations with other nations; or, in other words, they are clamouring for the doctrine of "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," "blow for blow," as applied to commerce. In short, they desire Reciprocity.

Reciprocity is a momentous word to utter—of sinister meaning to the social, political and commercial freedom of this country. Its adherents, with varying skill and eloquence, claim it to be a complete antidote for the commercial depression which has made itself so keenly felt in this and other countries; a depression which was perhaps more keenly felt on account of it having followed years of unwholesome, feverish activity in all industries. I allude to the years 1871-72-73-74.

Reciprocity has, say its advocates, become necessary because of the hostile foreign tariffs, and in their opinion, Reciprocity will be the open *sesame* to the floodgates of prosperity and plenty both for employers and employed.

Let us for a moment examine this Trojan horse, called Reciprocity, ere we venture to trust the present and future welfare of the industries and workers of this country on its treacherous back.

Reciprocity, or Protection, means a series of protective duties passed by the law-making assemblies of these realms calculated to impede, to a certain degree, the efficiency of labour, and while restricting a free interchange of commodities with other countries, will impose on the people unnecessary indirect taxation. It is meant to act as an artificial stimulant for certain industries, which are held up to our compassion, with the assurance that after they have been protected for a number of years, they will have recovered lost ground, and be able once more to assume the lead.

Fond delusion! Vain hope! Protection knows no stand-still—no rest. Like the Scylla and Charybdis of old, there is no escape out of its pitfalls. The adoption of Reciprocity would be the first downward step in the commercial supremacy of this country, and would end in ruin, famine and

desolation. Already the sugar industries are making a powerful bid for protection, no doubt shortly to be followed by the silk industries, the worsted manufactures, the hop growers, and last, but not least, the landed property owners.

The supporters of Protection argue that the apostles of Free Trade predicted that other nations would follow the lead which England had taken in her Free Trade policy ; that this prediction has not come to pass ; that we are practically isolated ; that Free Trade is very good in theory, but when not adopted by a majority of nations it is disastrous in practice ; and that therefore our present commercial depression is due to our Free Trade proclivities, which favour the protected competitors of this country in our own markets.

In reply, I would ask those friends of the good old times, when Protection was rampant in this country, when we had virtually a prohibitory tariff on all classes of goods, was not the condition of the workpeople deplorable ? Were they not subject to great fluctuations in work and wages, and frequently reduced to starvation, especially during the times when a selfish legislature of landowners had been patriotic (?) enough to tax the million for the benefit of the few, those few being themselves ? Was not the abolition of the Corn Laws (due to the heroic efforts and fervent eloquence of Mr. Cobden and his fellow-workers) the fall of the outworks of the girdle of Protection, which had so long been fondly supposed to be necessary to this nation's welfare ? Did not that gallant little band convert a powerful Conservative Ministry, backed by a great majority in both houses, into ardent Free Traders ? Has not our country become the real "workshop of the world" since the adoption and introduction of Free Trade into practical politics ? Has not depression in trade been universal as far as civilised nations are concerned ? Were not the highly protected countries more affected by this depression than ourselves ? Are we going to aggravate foreign nations (already sensitive enough as to our commercial supremacy) into virtually prohibitory tariffs, by reintroducing Protection or Reciprocity ;

Does anybody with a spark of reason in their brains think for a moment that political disturbances have not helped to retard the Free Trade movement on the Continent and elsewhere? Are we to blame if we want to buy our necessities in the cheapest market, and sell our surplus productions in the highest? Can we artificially mutilate our imports without giving at the same time a serious blow to our exports? Is not the amount of capital at this moment waiting for investment unprecedented? And last, but not least, Is not our system of division of labour superior to that of all protected nations, and why is it so?

I will at once proceed to answer my self-put queries. As to the first question, everybody who has read history knows how and when the Corn Laws (one of the bulwarks of landlordism) were enacted, and how long, by this infamous piece of legislation, the workers of this country were often on the verge of famine; how, by these iniquitous Acts, cheap corn was kept out of the country; and how, finally, in 1846, the Acts were repealed, and a general lowering and abolishing of nearly all protective duties followed.

We know that the Government of that day resisted and outvoted Mr. Cobden, Mr. Villiers, Mr. Bright, and their supporters time after time; but the Government was ultimately compelled to give way, to the chagrin of the great bulk of the Conservative party, who had opposed the measure tooth and nail.

As to my second query, nobody doubts England's powerful and improved capacity and facilities of production since the adoption of a freer commercial policy, and I shall hereafter, without being over tedious, support this statement by quoting the requisite figures from the Board of Trade returns, dealing with the imports and exports under the two systems.

I come to the third question, Has not depression in trade been universal, and what shall we gain by reintroducing retaliation? On this point the most varied and conflicting statements are often uttered—all untenable and utterly fallacious. The greatest

admirer of Protection must admit that other protected countries have had their full share of dull trade. Take France, for instance. Trade there has not yet revived so much as it has in this country. True, they have been specially favoured in their silk industries by a change of fashion, but that is in part attributable to the climate. However, owing to a Government in which the people had confidence, and which promised them some security from ruinous foreign enterprises and adventures, the French are, with their wonted elasticity, recovering lost ground.

France and the United States are undoubtedly the two countries in which the battle of Free Trade *versus* Protection will next be contested, and, let us hope, won. As to retaliation, what shall we retaliate upon, and how will it benefit the working classes? The friends of retaliation are on this point by no means unanimous. While the rabid Tory would put a duty on everything, including corn, there are others who would only tax one particular sort of goods, vainly hoping that this piece of Machiavellian legislation would keep our money at home, and provide work for the masses. But I would ask, what becomes of our competition against our foreign rivals, if we are to have the price of commodities and food risen? Wages must, as a consequence, rise also; therefore, the worker will not be benefitted, but more heavily weighted. As to partial protection, I reply that a tax on certain goods, which are at present imported into this country, would very probably only enhance their value, and make them more sought for; and, on the other hand, compel the foreign producer to run us a closer race in the neutral markets.

As to the question concerning political disturbances retarding or delaying the progress of nations, and their adoption of improved modes relating to the interchange of commodities, every right-thinking man knows, or at least ought to know, that the state of affairs at present existing in Europe is exceedingly unhealthy. The continent of Europe bristles with bayonets; all the continental powers are jealously on the alert lest their

neighbour should have a more efficient and numerous army than themselves. As a consequence, young men in the prime of life are drafted into this so-called service of the country, whereas their skill, energy and intelligence ought to be put to a better purpose. Large standing armies don't mean lowering of tariffs; but taxation, direct and indirect, as well as Protection, are brought into use to squeeze the yearly expenditure out of the deluded nations, with the wonderful result that the yearly budgets, or balance, shows a chronic incline of a long number of figures on the wrong side of the ledger.

As to my next question, I say the popular idea that a nation should derive a benefit by trying to curtail her imports, and to increase her exports, is utterly devoid of reason. The imports and exports of a country are like the Siamese twins—if you artificially hamper the imports, you naturally enough curtail the exports in the same degree. Or, to put it in a simple way, we are compelled to import so as to enable us to export. But Protectionists say that it is a sure sign of the decline of a country when her imports exceed her exports. The opinion of all political economists contradicts that assertion altogether, for they maintain, and prove with figures which are incontestable, that it is the surest sign of a nation's prosperity when her imports exceed her exports.

Protectionists are very fond of quoting the United States of America as an example of a protected and prosperous country. They naturally enough say: "I am going to convince this Free Trader that he maintains an untruth." They ask: "Do not the United States export more than they import? If so, according to your theory that should be a declining nation, whereas the opposite is well known." In reply to that argument, I admit that undoubtedly the Board of Trade returns of the United States show a preponderance of exports over imports, but this is mainly attributable to their being compelled to pay the interest, or a great portion of it, of their national debt in this manner with commodities, for it is well known that English money is largely invested in American bonds. To

take another item ; if we take into consideration the amount of human skill and muscle at so much per head, which the States are importing with their goods from all over the world (and that labour represents capital nobody will for a moment dispute), the sum of the imports of America will be found not to differ far in amount from the sum of her exports ; and as they go on paying off their debt, they will no doubt see their way to an amelioration, or relaxation, of their heavy, and in some instances prohibitive, duties.

Besides, the United States will, for a long time to come, be able to supply the Old World with abundance of corn and other food, owing to the rich tracts of virgin soil which the industrious settlers of all nations are so successfully bringing into cultivation. But it is quite a different thing to argue that America will continue to uphold her protectionist policy for a great length of time. One fact, the direct outcome of her narrow commercial policy, is that the mercantile navy of America, which before the protectionist era was enabled to compete successfully with our own, has, since the introduction of a heavy tariff on commodities of all descriptions, lost ground and ceased to compete with our own in the carrying trade of the world. In other words, the Americans cannot build, equip and man vessels so cheaply, and consequently cannot carry so cheap, as the vessels of this country.

Does the friendly reader suppose that, to a nation so eminently enterprising and intelligent as the Americans, this fact will not very soon become painfully apparent, and that they will not try to remedy it by lowering their heavy duties. That, in my opinion, is only a matter of time, which we should assuredly retard and postpone if we entered into a retaliatory policy.

France, another favourite country of the Reciprocitarian, is rapidly assuming the same position which we occupy relating to imports and exports ; and to this fact ignorant people naturally point with alarm, maintaining very plausibly that such a sign is the beginning of a nation's decline. But, in reality, France does not owe one particle of her

wealth to Protection. Protection, I assert again, has had no beneficial effect neither for that nor any other country. If the people have been successful and thrifty in France under Protection, I maintain that they would have been still more so with Free Trade and an open market. Nobody can be ignorant of the military, political, and social disasters which that unfortunate country has recently experienced. A whole world's sympathy was too little to express what the French nation then suffered. Trodden down, and encircled with a ring of foreign bayonets, everybody thought that the race of France was run, and that her star was in the decline ; but, like a phoenix out of ashes and ruins, she rose again step by step, paying an enormous war indemnity. Aided by good harvests, the whole nation with one great admirable effort put their shoulder to the wheel, and being no doubt helped by an economic and popular Government, France has succeeded in restoring the European equilibrium and has resumed her place amongst the nations.

Is this owing to Protection, I ask ? I challenge anybody to prove it. The French war indemnity is another delusion, which people are very fond of flourishing in our faces. It is a well-known fact that of that enormous sum only a comparatively small part was paid in ready cash, and the remaining instalments were paid with bills, which were, so to say, issued and drawn upon the national credit, a financial undertaking which was crowned with success. It is also well-known that the amount of specie at that time lying in the vaults of the Bank of France was not diminished to any great extent, but was kept at the ordinary standard amount.

I come to the next question, the answer to which, curiously enough, confirms the Free Trade argument. At no time has there been such an accumulation of capital in this country as at present. It is computed to amount to something like £600,000,000 sterling, and accordingly shows that our surplus imports are not paid for with hard cash, but are representing to a great extent interest on English

capital which is invested abroad. At the same time, I freely acknowledge that owing to bad harvests and the unnatural laws with which agriculture is encumbered, we have been compelled more and more to rely on foreign food, which might be grown at home if favoured with a more genial climate and a comprehensive land bill, which latter desideratum would abolish the last feudal vestige and give our tenant farmers a fair field for their enterprise.

I now take the last of my queries, which alludes to the superior division of labour as one of the results of the Free Trade movement in this country. As a rule, Englishmen are rather inclined to boast on this particular point, and it is therefore worth examining how far they are justified in so doing. We have often heard it said that one Englishman can do as much work as four or five foreigners, and a great many people naturally enough take this saying for granted because of its flattering meaning to themselves. Here, again, I differ from the popular version, and reply : If there is some truth in the statement, it is not owing to the worker individually, but (1) owing to a superior and longer system of apprenticeship, and (2) owing to commercial freedom and the patent laws on the other hand, which laws keep a certain class of work in the same districts and workshops, and gives the employers the advantage of having whole families of workers employed their lifetime in one service. This cannot but foster superior skill amongst the artisans themselves.

For instance, the head of a family has had all his life steady employment at a certain firm, and he will naturally enough try to get his son into the same place. Not only that, but as a steady, well-meaning father should do, the parent will try to impart to his son the skill and knowledge of a lifetime which he himself possesses. Such things do not occur so often in protected countries. As I have said before, fluctuations in trade and work are very much greater there than here. Since the opening of the markets, workmen are there compelled to shift about more ; the apprenticeship

system is worse, and of shorter duration. Instead of making an apprentice a good branch worker, their system is to teach too much to a young man in a little time. The results are self-apparent, and I maintain that as a rule the English workman is inclined to take far too much credit to himself. In all justice and fairness he should ascribe things to their real causes, viz., the mineral wealth of his native land, the genius of England's great inventors, and the far-sightedness of her statesmen of the Free Trade school.

But after conceding all these points, a well-meaning protectionist will say: "How is it, if Free Trade brings such great advantages, that no other civilized nation has, as yet, followed in our wake, and adopted this system, instead of leaving us practically isolated?" The answer is not far to seek. The highly-protected countries are either ruled autocratically, or are governed by Parliaments consisting of a majority of manufacturers, whose desire it is to keep foreign competition out of their own country, and in doing this they are successfully supported by their constituencies, on the fallacious grounds, as I have shewn, not to let their money go to the foreigner. Or, to take another view, there is a ponderous national debt to provide for, towards which the nation already contributes a large share in direct taxation; but indirect taxation must be resorted to, to make up the balance. Thus the nation has to submit to another turn of the screw, and has to pay an increased price for imported commodities, out of which a goodly share goes towards satisfying that voracious animal called "National Debt."

We have not far to go to find a similar expedient. Though practically free traders, we still pay duty on foreign wines, spirits, tobaccos, and last, but not least, tea; and we also compel the Chinese—because might is right, I suppose—to buy of us the "health destroying opium," as the Marquis of Hartington not long ago blandly declared it in the House of Commons; and this because he could not think of an expedient to reimburse the loss to the Indian Treasury which the stoppage of the opium-traffic would cause to the revenue.

Foreign Statesmen have, up to the present time, excluded Free Trade from their programme, because the pressure from outside has not been strong enough to compel them to include it. Public opinion is, in most countries, lamentably behind-hand on this great question, and most likely some statesmen are afraid to offend the powerful, privileged few, who derive a benefit from Protection, at the expense of the bulk of the nation.

I propose now to give a few figures in support of my argument, figures which are mainly intended to arrest the attention of those who have a natural aversion to book-reading, but who may perhaps see this, if my effort is considered good enough to appear in print. It is remarkable that, since 1841, pauperism in this country has decreased upwards of 25 per cent.

Since the repeal of the Navigation Laws (protective laws), the total tonnage of British shipping has increased by 164 per cent., while our population has increased by $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Since the repeal of the Corn Laws our Imports of Breadstuffs has increased from 3,000,000 of quarters per annum to 10 to 16 millions of quarters per annum, or more than 300 per cent. The importation of foreign cattle, only as yet in its infancy, has reached 200,000 head, 1,300 tons of beef, 800,000 sheep and lambs, and 140 tons of pork. It is remarkable that such a great importation of food has not ruined our stock farmer, but on the contrary, an advance of 50 per cent. on butchers' meat has been obtained.

The total value of our Imports in 1850 was	..	£62,004,000
The average value of our Imports in 1872-3-4 was	..	£365,354,565
or an increase of 489 per cent.		
The total value of Exports in 1840 was	£51,308,740
The average exports for 1872-3-4 was	£250,325,690
or an increase of 289 per cent.		

On an average every family in the country is indebted to the foreigners for $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of breadstuffs per day, 4-5ths lb. of bacon, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of butter, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of cheese, 1 lb. of rice, $\frac{1}{3}$ lb. of tea per week.

Notwithstanding the protectionist argument, I find, for instance, that this country in the years 1876-7-8, years of great commercial depression, imported in Gold and Silver :—

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS IN GOLD.

	£
Imports ..	59,000,000
Exports ..	51,500,000

Consequently £7,500,000 excess of Imports.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS IN SILVER.

	£
Imports ..	46,800,000
Exports ..	44,100,000

Consequently £2,700,000 excess of Imports.

In the same three years, the excess of our Imports over our Exports in goods amounted to upwards of £200,000,000, and that instead of sending our specie abroad to pay for this excess of imports over exports, we actually received from foreign countries, as shewn above, £10,000,000 in specie. When we come to consider the enormous amount of human food and raw material for manufacturers thus brought to our markets for consumption, we may reasonably conclude that our former starvation was the result of Protection, and that commercial freedom has happily brought abundance of food and employment to our people.

Our exports, notwithstanding the commercial depression and hostile tariffs, have increased in quantity, and we have maintained a steady trade, at less prices it is true, with the neutral markets, having only lost ground where the duties are almost prohibitory. These facts I think are a complete contradiction to the oft-repeated cry that we are losing our trade.

But it will be remarked by protectionists of all shades that I have perhaps expounded some of the Free Trade principles, and shirked the real grievance, viz., the pending commercial treaty with France, and their intention to change the duties from *ad valorem* into specific duties, meaning really a threatened increase on British manufactured goods, and a consequent falling off of our trade with that country. To help book-shy readers into getting a glimpse of the real grievance, I quote the sum total of our exports to, and our imports from, France in 1879, as given by the Board of Trade : Total exports to France, £4,975,083 ; total imports from France, £13,448,154. In 1860 we imported

French goods to the amount of £3,732,959, and in 1879 we find the marked increase as given above of £13,448,154, or a difference of £9,715,198 in nineteen years in favour of our French competitors. This marked increase in our imports of French manufactured goods consists mainly in silk stuffs and ribbons and cotton tissues. Protectionists naturally enough say : "Here is a palpable miscarriage of our boasted Free Trade policy. These foreign articles of luxury should be taxed, as the climatical advantages are on the French side, while we are burdened with a heavy taxation and increased carriage fees for the raw material." My answer is, that I doubt if even a heavy duty on these goods would keep them out of the English markets, as a duty thereon would simply be an advertisement for them ; or, in other words, the classes now wearing these favoured goods would cheerfully pay an increased price, and follow the caprices of Dame Fashion as before. Fashion has never been patriotic enough to patronise home-made goods, even if they were as good or better than foreign goods in the market. I would only recall to the reader's mind that it is the wealth possessors, and not the wealth producers, of this country who are mainly the buyers of the French luxury goods above-mentioned, and that an increase in the price of these articles would by no means mean a check to their import from France, but simply an increased expenditure on the buyers' part on purpose to obtain them, and an aggravation and retrograde movement of this country in our Free Trade policy.

But others go farther, and advocate total prohibition of these goods. To such I say : "Beware of the serpent under your feet ; beware of the long pent-up power which you have enlisted in your cause. Do you for a moment think that the parties who are supporting you so devotedly in this outcry for partial Protection have not a selfish motive of their own ? Do you think that Protection would stop there after putting a duty on French silk stuffs ?"

Credulous indeed must be the man who thinks so : he is to be compared with the somnambulist, who walks unflinching near a tremendous preci-

pice. The party now clamouring for this first instalment of Protection in favour of the languishing silk industries of this country, would only consider that concession as part of a future demand. We have heard of sugar ; we are hearing of hops ; we are, rightly or wrongly, hearing of agricultural distress ; we should have to be prepared to hear about worsted next, and so on, would the voracious appetite of the Protectionists lead us back to the good old times (?) when we had an all-round protection, and starvation and pauperism in abundance. It is impossible not to see the cloven hoof of the landed property owners in all this agitation. They are mainly swelling the ranks of the Reciprocity Party, because sympathy is sweet, and mutual help sweeter ; because they see, looming in the distance, a legislative amelioration of the law in reference to the cultivation of the land in England, as foreshadowed in the Irish Land Bill at present before the public, a measure of justice long due to the patient English farmer, a measure of dread and despair to themselves—another assault on the feudal privileges which have been so tenaciously kept up in this country, a death blow to the *dolce far niente* of present large and small property owners, which is sure to succeed if supported by the enfranchised county voters, with the inscription on their flag : “Property entails duties, as well as privileges. Once more for ‘Peace, retrenchment, and reform.’” Then we shall hear it echoed from the other side, lost in darkness, interestedness and despair : “For Church and Constitution, spirited foreign policy and Protection.” On these grounds will be fought the next general election, and I hope the country will give as unanimous an answer as when Mr. Gladstone unfurled the glorious banner of Reform.

I have now endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to picture the fallacies of Reciprocity without touching on foreign nations, and now comes the question. How are we to meet their hostile tariffs ? It is assuredly not by retaliation. Their growing inability to compete against us, even under the cover of heavy tariffs, is the best sign of the fallacy

of their system. I could cite many instances where bounty fed industries are complaining, and are asking for still more protection against our own; and when in the end their cry for help has been responded to, they find to their astonishment that they have gained nothing. For instance, look at the shipbuilding trades of France, Germany, and America, and also the sugar industries of the first named country. With protection granted, and supposing for an instant it is prohibitory enough to keep foreign goods out of the home market, will it encourage the protected manufacturer's enterprise to keep his standpoint in the market of the world? I say not. It would encourage somnolence, and tender a patent to incapacity. Paradoxical as it may appear, bounties are the surest forerunners of a better state of things, because a nation will not go on supporting for ever an industry which keeps making urgent drafts on the national purse without showing increased efficiency.

I say, have we not powerful and wealthy societies of both employers and men, have we not statesmen whose voices are listened to with reverence all over the world, and will not the coming discussion in our legislative assemblies be watched and read with keen interest all over the universe? It is sure to leave some impression abroad as to the Protectionist fallacies. Have we not writers and lecturers who go abroad, and who might undertake the campaign of Free Trade, peace and goodwill amongst the nations, and by that means slowly and surely pave the way to bring the principles and humanising creed of Richard Cobden to be a great and universally recognised reality? I am not a dreamer, and I do not believe in a millennium, but I do believe in a universal national progress, a gradual falling of national barriers and prejudices; and that such a progress can only be brought about by a free and unfettered intercourse and interchange of commodities between nations.

Pessimists point to the bristling array of bayonets, to the millions of armed men, to heavy protective tariffs, to all the formidable array with which

foreign rulers have succeeded in enslaving their nations' prosperity and welfare. I say that those unnatural institutions are destined to fall—that there is, after all, a silver lining to the cloud. There are some people who prophecy a great European conflagration, but I certainly think that we are on the threshold of a better and happier state of things, and I say that the sooner the Continental unnatural tension and militaryism comes to a termination the better will it be for us all. There is hope that such an end will be achieved without bloodshed—that the monster of national jealousy and prejudice will be conquered by means of the increased educational facilities, by means of the utterances of Cobden and Bright, John Stuart Mill, and others being translated into all languages, and preached by disciples as zealous, as eloquent, and as eager as were those great men themselves to make their voice heard amidst the clamour for blood and glory, and thus leave their names as landmarks and monuments for a whole nation's, —aye, a world's,—gratitude.

Opponents, and even pretended friends, may sneer at this my poor effort; they may point to my foreign birth in order to discredit it; they may say, "What right has he to mix himself up with our politics?" But my answer is simple enough. I have not associated myself with a great nation for nearly a decade without, to some extent, learning to think as you think, and to sympathise with your national undertakings. I find there is still some work to participate in, that there are still some prejudices to conquer, some labour of love to do for the millions of busy workers who have been misrepresented and misled by so-called friends of both shades of politics. When, at the last general election, the earnest appeal from Midlothian echoed from end to end of this sea-girt isle, I was content to join the ranks of the Liberal party, because they are the sworn enemies of intolerance, class legislation, and feudal privileges, and I contend that it is the bounden duty of every citizen, wishing for the progress and welfare of his country, which provides him with food and work, and whose

laws protect him, to put his services, be they ever so small, at the service of the great party which is at present leading the affairs of the British nation.

It is impossible for me to conclude this essay without here expressing (as well as my insufficient knowledge of the English language will allow me), my gratitude to those friends of all classes and shades of politics, who have ever been ready to make me forget that I was staying amongst strangers, and who have made me feel that a life-long gratitude will be too feeble on my part to repay them for the kindness and sympathy with which they have overwhelmed me. And should it ever be ordained that I should return to the land of my birth, I can leave you the assurance that I take away with me no prejudice and no hatred, but a high esteem and appreciation of the qualities which have won so deservedly for your country the proud rank in commerce and navigation which she occupies.

“And is the day-dawn coming abroad,” you ask, “or are they still encompassed with their mistaken commercial patriotism.” There is no doubt that national prejudice abroad is still very great, to which perhaps Englishmen unknowingly contribute their share, by their bearing and behaviour during their travels. A Tweed suit, with a Murray under your arm, and a good income, gives nobody the right to stride about in the conquering hero style in a foreign country. Appreciate the good qualities of other nations, and then they will appreciate your own. From you should come, and has come, the practical message of good fellowship between men; and you it behoves to give that message expression and tangible reality. It is not by Reciprocity that we must influence and persuade foreign nations that they are mistaken, but by the unwearying advocacy of the true principle of which you are the representatives. The laws of Free Trade have existed before Protection was known; why, therefore, should they be wrong? Has not the late leader of the Conservative Party, Lord Beaconsfield, after combating the question as a youthful orator, shortly before his death acknowledged the truth of its principles, which utterance the Conservatives, nevertheless,

seem to forget. We are surely not going to return from light to darkness, after the glorious victory which Mr. Cobden, the great international pioneer, has won, over a wealthy and narrow-minded aristocracy. It is true that the adoption of a free commercial policy will disperse a great amount of capital abroad, but that capital, and the labour which is its nearest of kin, will find other openings, other industries, more congenial to the climatical position and geological formation of the respective countries, and trade will therefore flow in a broader and a smoother channel. Enough of admiration and respect can never be paid to the memory of Mr. Cobden and his gallant band of fellow-workers, for the self-sacrifice with which they led the cause of the Corn Law Repeal and Free Trade from its first beginning to its great and final victory. They have proved themselves worthy of the admiration of every thoughtful man, no matter to what nationality he belongs; they were the heralds of a better state of things, destined to improve the cause of suffering humanity. I maintain that Free Trade is good for the country adopting it, whether others do so or not; in other words, that one-sided Free Trade is better than no-sided Free Trade. Then let it be more congenial to our minds, to meet foreigners half way, to abolish our heavy duties on whatsoever they produce, but which may still be prevented from flowing more plentifully into our markets; let us ease the stringent supervision (almost amounting to prohibition) on foreign cattle, and then we shall no doubt be able to meet and conclude more favourable commercial treaties than we have had in the past, and eventually secure their adherence to the only true and rational principle which constitutes the foundations of every nation's true prosperity and happiness. Fearing that I have transgressed over the allotted space, and feeling deeply my inability to do justice to a subject of such vital importance, I respectfully submit this feeble essay to your examination and criticism. I submit it to you with the determination, if not successful, to try again and again, and with the satisfaction to know that I have at least passed a few leisure hours profitably to myself.—J.R.K.