

the means of improvement. We are astonished, not that France is making such rapid progress, but that she is not making, and has not made for forty years, a more rapid progress. But the progress she has made, though so little in comparison to our progress and the progress of the United States, has been sufficient for the poor ambition of her successive rulers; and, satisfied with it, they have praised and maintained a system of protection which has arrested development. Worse still, they have attributed the little development which has taken place to protection, and accordingly propose to preserve it. With a soil not more than half cultivated, with a deplorable and increasing deficiency of cattle, with the worst iron instruments or tools of any nation of Western Europe, except in rare instances and in a few localities — the great inequalities in the condition of her different provinces being proofs of her backwardness — her rulers have diverted her industry and capital from cultivating her soil, to making tools, implements, and several species of clothing they could have bought with great advantage from other nations. In England protection was chiefly given to agriculture to its ruin; on the Continent the protection is rather given to manufactures keeping them backward, and there the people are taxed to pay some classes for supplying them badly with dear articles, just as they were taxed here to pay landowners and farmers to the same end.

This fact is well proved, we think, in some papers concerning the linen trade of France, recently published in the *Dundee Advertiser*. The Chamber of Commerce of that city has taken much pains to collect statistics of the trade, and from them it appears that in 1842 the duties on linens and yarns imported into France were raised, on unbleached yarns from 4½*d.* to 11*d.* per the 6 lbs or No. 8; and on brown linens from 28*s.* 10*d.* to 64*s.* 2*d.* on 221 lbs, 8 threads of warp to 1-5th of an inch; and on all other descriptions of yarns and linens in proportion. The result of this change was that the value of the yarn and linens exported from England to France fell from £1,088,318 in 1841, to £630,332 in 1843, and to £113,064 in 1854. By this change, then, the French lost all the advantages they derived from trading with us for linen. The consumption was diminished, the price of the article raised, and capital and labor driven from the more needed and more profitable labor of cultivating the ground to making linen.

Of course the French, after a time, could pride themselves on being able to make more linen themselves. The spindles they employed to spin linen yarn increased from 57,000 in 1840 to 395,800 in 1853; but between

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THE LINEN TRADE OF FRANCE.

The present material prosperity of France is undoubtedly great, but it scarcely equals her capabilities. She is in one respect in the condition of America when first opened to the industry of Europeans, with great undeveloped resources, while her people have great knowledge and skill. Between the capability of producing 12 more bushels of wheat from every acre of ground in a great country occupied, and the capability of producing 12 bushels from a great multitude of acres not yet occupied, there is no substantial difference, but what is in favor of the acres already occupied, already intersected by roads, and already provided in their immediate proximity with rich markets and all

those years their agriculture was neglected; the means of improving and increasing cattle were not properly used; and in 1854 and 1855, consequently, they find themselves exposed to actual distress for want of food. The paternal Government, indeed, which unprofitably directed their labor to making linen, took it in hand to supply them with bread, employed to this end the public money, and taxed the whole community to feed the Parisians. It was obliged, also, to make regulations for keeping down the price of meat. Is it not clear that if the Government had not at one time encouraged unduly the manufacture of linen, &c., it would not have had at another to provide the people with bread? Both the supply of food and the supply of linen would have been obtained cheaply and well by the natural course of industry and trade, and the Government would have been spared an enormous deal of trouble, and France would have escaped many disasters.

Louis Philippe was the author of these almost prohibitory duties on foreign linen, and Louis Philippe lost his throne from the French being in want of food in 1846 and 1847. Every revolution in France can be traced up to the hunger of the multitude, and the policy of every successive ruler to the present has been to misdirect industry. They have never allowed it to be guided by the wants of the people, but by an artificial rule devised by ignorance. Louis Philippe, having a family alliance with Belgium, and pandering to the prejudices of certain classes to whom he looked for support, made a special treaty with it, by which linen yarns and linens were imported from Belgium into France for rather less than half the duties paid on English yarns and linens. This difference and distinction still continue, and the French Government therefore actually taxed and taxes its own people, by high duties on the linens of one State, to bestow rewards on the subjects of another State. As not unfrequently happens, the rewarded people are no longer particularly friendly, and France has found its greatest ally and its best friend in the people whose industry the duties, so unjust towards the French people, were intended to injure. Ever since 1842, the French Government has taxed its own people to give money to the linen manufacturers of Belgium. This is rather worse than suicide. It kills industry in France, and stifles it by kindness in Belgium. The natural course of trade between the two countries would rather be an exchange of cattle for corn, of iron and coals for wine; and obviously both would be benefitted by the abolition of prohibitory and differential duties.

We shall never cease to lament the fiscal

necessities which appear to require the retention of our enormous duties on wine, and never fail to use every exertion in our power to recommend their abduction or abolition. The little trade that exists between the civilized people of Europe in contrast to the great trade which exists between Europe and America, is a scandal to the Governments of Europe, and a thorough condemnation of the fiscal and commercial policy they have so long pursued. It would have strangled civilization, in fact, were civilization not the result of natural laws stronger than Governments. Of that ancient, well-meant, and so-called patriotic but injurious system, our enormous duty on wine is one of the worst remnants still left. But bad as it is, it is at least now equally directed against the produce of all our Southern neighbors. Cape wine and other colonial wine is still favored by a discriminating duty, but no discriminating duties like the duties on Belgian and English linens are now levied on the wines of France and of Portugal. The enacting of such a piece of folly, after it had been reprobated by every writer of authority in England and France, and generally repudiated by our statesmen, was reserved for the Monarch of France in 1842. We cannot wonder that he lost his throne. His much renowned sagacity was that of the pedlar who cheats his customers and destroys his own trade.