

THERE IS NO INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE.

The opinion has been industriously disseminated that the policy of protecting home industries by means of duties on imports of foreign commodities is almost exclusively confined to the United States. This is an error. Protection is the policy of many nations; free trade the policy of very few. Of all the leading nations of the world, Great Britain is the only one which professes to practice absolute free trade in the exchange of commercial products; and even Great Britain, as we shall presently show, does this only in a qualified sense. France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland have protective tariffs. Even unhappy Spain is not without its tariff on imported goods, and impoverished Turkey now admits that to the absence of protection is her present condition largely due. The empire of Brazil, the leading nation of South America, imposes duties on imports which average over forty per cent. of their value. All the South American republics impose similar duties. Many of the colonies of Great Britain refuse to follow the example of the mother country, for they impose protective duties; the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria being especially devoted to the protective policy. In India and Canada there are strong parties favorable to the development of home industry by protective duties, and their views have found expression in local legislation. A careful survey of the whole field leads to the conclusion that the protective policy is everywhere stronger to-day than it has been. Only in Germany do we see manifested any disposition to surrender it, and there the effort to establish partial free trade is being most strenuously resisted.

It may be said that, with the exception of France, no other country is so strongly protective as the United States; but this criticism does not affect the proposition that protection is the rule and free trade the exception among all leading nations. The measure of this protection each country must decide for itself.

To show conclusively that Great Britain alone among leading nations professes devotion to free trade, it is only necessary to refer to the tables of import duties levied by the different European countries on foreign products, published by our government in the Monthly Reports for July, August, and September, 1869, of the Deputy Special Commissioner of the Revenue, Mr. Francis A. Walker. It appears from these tables, which are too long to be transferred to these pages, that every Continental European country