

GREECE AND TURKEY.

There is another frontier-rectification looming in the future which is not unlikely to give the "Powers" fresh trouble, and of course England, through that unhappy "peace with honour" Berlin Treaty is again mixed up in it. The news from Constantinople is threatening enough, the Greek Frontier Commission having met, and the Ottoman delegate having presented a counter-declaration in which, after pointing out that the Berlin Treaty merely made a recommendation, the Sultan's Government expresses its willingness to adopt the 13th Protocol as the basis of negotiations, without however, accepting the suggested line as obligatory.

This may be considered as placing the question precisely where it was at the time of previous unsuccessful negotiations, for the acceptance of the Protocol is practically nullified by the reserve that the new frontier recommended by the Congress cannot be accepted by the Sultan's Government. One of the Greek delegates seems disposed to regard this reserve as tantamount to a refusal of the Greek demands, and to propose that the negotiations should be at once broken off; but his colleague thought it advisable before taking such a step to demand fresh instructions from Athens.

If the Greeks maintain their present attitude by refusing to accept any compromise and insisting on the line of frontier proposed being taken as the basis of all future negotiations, the Powers will be called upon to offer their mediation, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. As the Powers are not yet fully agreed among themselves as to the amount of territory which should be ceded, there are evidently grave difficulties in the way of successful mediation; and even if these difficulties should be removed, the Porte may still fall back on the device of demanding from the Powers an effective guarantee that there shall be no disturbances in Albania in consequence of the friendly advice of the Powers being carried out. No such guarantee can be given, for it would necessarily entail a foreign military occupation, which, probably, none of the Powers would undertake, and to which some of them would certainly object. It is evident, therefore, that unless a compromise be accepted by Greece the question may long remain unsolved, for the Powers are not likely to use anything stronger than gentle moral pressure, and the Turks are not at all disposed to cede voluntarily what the Greeks desire.

Meanwhile from Turkey there is no news but the daily recurring reports of disorders and difficulties in the different provinces. The condition of Eastern Roumelia continues highly unsatisfactory. A report of a settlement of the Turkish debt by the Comptoir D'Escompte has been afloat again, probably with as little foundation as all the former ones. In the face of the miserable state of politics and finance in Turkey, the claims of Lord Beaconsfield as the reformer of Turkey, and the claims of the bondholders as her creditors must be quoted at about the same value.

As far back as July of last year it was pointed out in the SPECTATOR how Turkey had broken all her promises made at the Peace Conference in 1856, and that misgovernment and tyranny and corruption prevailed as heretofore, and how soon may the same be written with regard to the more recent Berlin Treaty. The SPECTATOR showed how much trouble had arisen of old from the fact of England having always been ready to guarantee Turkey against something or another, and who can say how much fresh complication is in store for Europe, springing from the same source.

It may not be without profit to speculate at times, how different results would have sprung from a different course of action, with nations as with individuals; the writer of these lines remembers the prophetic utterances of Louis Kossuth in 1849, and it is scarcely too much to assert that if England had given moral support to the Hungarian struggle at that time, the Europe of to-day might have presented a much more peaceful face; a free Hungary, with her seaport on the Adriatic and an open Danube, would have gone far, as Kossuth predicted, "to have given peace to Europe."

The war in South Africa is, perhaps, at an end, but a host of minor troubles are menaced in various parts of the world, and none can tell how soon fresh strife on a gigantic scale may convulse Europe. Besides the struggle in Afghanistan, Russia is engaged in a grapple with the Turcomans, and the War Minister of the Porte is hurrying men and provisions to the Greek frontier in a way that points to but one eventuality in the future. If hostilities break out, Austria would probably take a hand in them by a prompt occupation of Macedonia, and we are told that an alliance between Turkey and Russia is actually in process of negotiation, which, if carried into effect, may easily bring all the great powers of Europe into collision.

These wars and rumours of wars are sadly at odds with the hope of better things that is so often revived only to be disappointed. So far does the world seem from reaching an epoch of universal peace, that the outlook is as dark and forbidding as ever. It appears that so long as some Powers are strong and others weak, and so long as they are collectively disinclined to submit themselves to a universal tribunal of international adjudication, these encounters will continue; the sole remedy would apparently lie in an honourable system of international arbitration, which should provide the certainty of peace, by the expedient of ensuring equal protection for the rights and interests of all.

MODERN PROGRESS AND THE TRADE QUESTION.

A CRITICISM.

In view of the importance of the subject, perhaps you will allow me, very shortly, to criticise some of the leading points in the essay which appeared in your issue of the 30th August, under the above heading. In the first place, I have to charge "Argus" with misunderstanding, or at least completely misstating the position of Free Traders on this question, which, in a discussion of this kind, is a fault of the gravest character. He asserts that Free Traders argue there should be among nations as great a specialization of labour as among individuals, taking as an illustration that "England should manufacture cotton and iron for all peoples, France should devote herself to the production of silk and wines, while the United States should drop manufacturing altogether, and be content to remain the granary and provision store for Europe." Now, the economists argue nothing of the kind. What, then, is their position? This I shall endeavour to explain to your readers and to "Argus" as shortly as possible. We argue that it is for the best interests of the world that society shall be allowed, without let or hindrance, to obtain those commodities which it needs or desires at the least possible sacrifice of its substance; or, in simpler words, shall be allowed to buy its goods in the cheapest markets. As, however, no one society offers within itself the cheapest market for all the commodities which its members desire, international commerce arises, when we add the corollary, that freedom of commercial intercourse should be no more restricted between the individuals of different political societies than between those of the same nation. For instance, it is contended that complete freedom of intercourse between New York and Pennsylvania is mutually beneficial, and the existence of a political line is no reason why the same freedom between New York and Ontario or Quebec should not be equally beneficial. At this point, I would most respectfully ask "Argus," or any Protectionist, what proof they have that free intercourse between New York and Ontario would not be as mutually beneficial as between New York and Pennsylvania? But let me put the question still more broadly: Is the complete freedom of commercial intercourse between the forty or fifty millions of citizens of the United States to their advantage or not as a nation? If it is, upon what principle can it be shown that the same freedom would be injurious between the same number of people inhabiting an area with the same, or as great a variety of resources, in Europe or elsewhere, though living under different political systems? Or, to put the question in a still different shape, if Canada were part of the U. S. A., would free trade with the rest of the States be beneficial, and if so, why not now? To answer these questions by saying that all this is allowed, but that the U. S. A. will not grant us that freedom, is to give up the whole theory of Protection and substitute that of retaliation. "Argus," however, cannot so answer, because he evidently is a pure Protectionist, who thinks we should be protected from Great Britain, which admits us to free intercourse, as much as from the U. S. A., which shuts us out.

The second point in "Argus" essay, under review, which I wish to criticise, is the very common delusion, that the existence of manufactures, in a very special and limited sense of the word, in a community, is essential to the civilization of that community. "Argus" tells us that some writers have classified human progress under the heads of—the savage, the pastoral, the agricultural, the commercial, and the manufacturing. He further seems to suppose that the world passes through these stages in the sense of dropping or growing out of the lower and earlier, as it reaches the later and higher stage, though a dim consciousness of the absurdity of this supposition seems to strike him; for he is good enough to inform us that "commerce, though certainly an advance upon agriculture, may not safely supersede the latter, or attempt to stand apart or on its own bottom." May we ask "Argus" if his idol (manufactures), which he next tells us is "certainly an advance on commerce," may safely supersede agriculture or commerce?

But is it true that the world has advanced through the stages quoted by "Argus," and are they higher or lower in the order of their quotation? By no means. If "Argus" was a little better acquainted with the history of human progress he would know, that since the formation of the earliest communities, agriculture, or the production of food—manufactures, or the production of implements and clothing—commerce, or the interchange of the products of the two former—have always been co-existent, though some communities have been more remarkable for their progress in the one, some in the other direction. If, however, one of these is later than the others, it is not manufactures, but commerce; for it is obvious that there could be no agriculture and very little hunting without implements, which are, however rude, the product of manufacturing. This brings me to a very common, perhaps the most common delusion of the present day, which is, that it is only the products of highly specialized work—carried on, on a large scale, by means of the newest machinery—which are worthy the name of manufactures, and further, that the production of commodities in this way is a necessary preliminary to any community's reaching the highest stage of civilization—all of which is absolutely false, and the offspring of ignorance, as I shall now show. Is it pretended, for an instant, that the rude tomahawk of the hunter is not as truly a manufactured article as the axe of a back-woodsman, or the homespun dress of the farmer's wife as the product