

suggestive one: "Feeling their Pulse." That was what was going on in the camera obscura, feeling the pulse of those delegates to ascertain whether they would submit to a reduction of their protection or whether they would kick and insist on their pound of flesh. I believe that the reporter stated exactly what was going on in the camera obscura: my hon. friend was feeling the pulse of those gentlemen on that question. Well, if such be the case, we know exactly what took place, because after all human nature is everywhere the same. At the time of the American civil war, Artemus Ward said that he also wanted to make some sacrifice to preserve the Union—he was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relations. So, when the country is suffering, and has been long suffering under a protective system, when the complaints of the people are loud and universal, then every monopolist in the land will say to you: There may be some truth in that; my own industry needs to be protected; my own trade needs to be carried on by the country, but the trade of my neighbour should be carried on by himself. Shakespeare has told us of a similar comedy which took place in secret in a tavern at Eastcheap, in the reign of Henry IV. Those engaged in it were Prince Henry, Sir John Falstaff, Bardolph Peto and Poins. Meeting one night at the tavern they determined to have a little play, the subject of which was the rebuke that the prince would be sure to have in the morning from his royal father, the king, for the bad company he was keeping. Falstaff took the part of the king, and rebuked the prince, and afterwards they exchanged their parts, the prince becoming the king, and Falstaff taking the part of the prince. Falstaff, as the prince says:

I would your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?

PRINCE HENRY. That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF. My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE HENRY. I know thou do'st.

FALSTAFF. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff—and therefore more valiant, being as he is, old Jack Falstaff—banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company; banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

Well, Sir, suppose we had gone into this camera obscura at the time the representatives of some of those interests were there to interview my hon. friend. Let us suppose that the reporter had entered just at the moment when the liquor and wine men were present. There would be the king, in the person of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance, stern, with a hard look in his face, telling the wine and liquor men that the complaints of the people are so loud that

he is obliged to make a reduction of the tariff, and that he has to repeat the observations that he made in 1891, when taking the duty off sugar and increasing the duties on wine and spirits and tobacco. Then you would have heard the wine and liquor men reply: Good lord, banish boots and shoes, banish leather, banish woollen goods, banish wall paper; but good wine, valiant wine, banish not from thy Harry's presence. This might have taken place; but this is only guess on my part, because the people were not admitted; the thing was done in secret. But I think I have guessed pretty truly. Why was not the truth known? Why were not the public admitted to those meetings? I have told you the reason: my hon. friend did not want to have public meetings, because he did not want to be lectured on free trade and protection. Let me quote his language in order not to do him an injustice. These are the words my hon. friend made use of at the banquet at St. John:

Instead of revising the tariff without a knowledge of the needs of the people they had taken the business method of examining on the spot all conditions of the tariff. After becoming familiar with the conditions they will make their conclusions, he said, on the fullest possible basis. Their meetings were not open to the press, because if they were they would be subject to a series of set speeches on free trade and protection made for political effect. By holding secret meetings they were able to get fuller information.

So you see my hon. friend did not want to be lectured on free trade because he did not want to be convinced, and he did not want to be lectured on protection, because he was convinced; so he went from city to city, and held his interviews in secret. But he came to meet the farmers at last, and then the policy was entirely reversed. Up to that moment secrecy was the order of the day; but then it was changed to publicity. When the hon. gentleman met the manufacturers secrecy was the rule and reporters were given a wide range, and even if a very inquisitive member approached the Minister to get an inkling of what was going on, he found him as unwilling to give the secret as the sphinx on the sands of Egypt. But when he came to the farmers, the case was different. The meetings were open, if possible in the open air, under the roof of heaven, the press not only admitted, but invited; and what is the fact? Would you believe it? The hon. gentleman who had such horror of set speeches on free trade and protection, lectured the farmers vigorously on their duties. The farmers went there to expose their grievances; but instead of being allowed to do so, they met the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Agriculture, the Controller of Customs and the Controller of Inland Revenue, all armed with blue books, who proved to their own satisfaction—not the farmers' but the Ministers'—