

Atlantic what has already been done on the other. We cannot grow cotton on the banks of the St. Lawrence, but the machinery of a cotton mill can be made to run as smoothly and as efficiently here as in Lancashire or Massachusetts. Every new invention, every step forward made in man's control over natural forces, facilitates the transfer of industries from one civilized country to another. The effect of new discoveries is, not to specialize this or the other manufacture in a certain place, but to render it easy of being carried on in many places, *within certain limits*. Nothing is likely to turn up that would have the effect of establishing the manufacture of blankets in the island of Cuba, but that this manufacture should be established in Canada is one of the most natural things in the world, and only through hindrances, artificially created, can it be prevented. Long ago the process of making cast-steel was a secret, known only to some people in Sheffield, and that town supplied nearly the whole civilized world with the article, but observe what happens now. The Bessemer steel process is discovered in England, and almost immediately taken up and carried on in the United States, and on the continent of Europe. Centuries back the making of cotton cloth (called calico) was a specialty of India, a clear case of that sub-division of functions among nations, upon which Mr. Spencer insists. But the mariner's compass, the discovery of America, the establishment of cotton cultivation in the Southern States, the cotton gin, the spinning jenny, and the power loom, have changed all that. The first effect was to give England, during several decades of years, almost a monopoly of the cotton manufacture; the second and permanent effect is to diffuse this manufacture among civilized nations generally. The time was when for the bleaching of cotton goods a real "bleachfield" was necessary, and only where there existed a large extent of green grass, favourably situated, could the manufacture be carried on. But the discovery of the bleaching powers of chlorine revolutionized the trade, and now the process can be carried on almost anywhere. In the State of New Jersey there are extensive deposits of a certain kind of sand, adapted for the making of stoneware. That this manufacture should have long ago started in the neighbourhood where the raw material was at hand was natural enough, but let us see what the "progress" of which Mr. Spencer discourses has brought about. The building of the Erie Canal, and of several railways, rendered it possible to convey this sand at small cost to the town of Brantford, in Western Canada, and there it is made into stoneware. Here we see what the philosopher calls a specialization of function, created at first by natural circumstances, but afterwards giving way to diffusion, the plain result of material progress. The thing that happens is, not what Mr. Spencer lays down but exactly the contrary. "Progress," instead of confining the manufacture to one nation causes it to be spread to another; the very reverse of what he lays down so confidently.

But there is one modern instance which so much eclipses all others that it demands our particular attention. Long ago the production of sugar was through natural circumstances specialized and made a "separate function" of certain tropical islands and countries where the cane flourished. But it happened that Napoleon was bent upon making the Continent of Europe independent of England as a medium of supply, at a time when England had command of the seas, and when chemists were experimenting on the saccharine juice of the beet. These scientific men obtained at first two per cent. of sugar from the juice, then four, then six, and improvements were continued, until now nine or ten per cent. is obtained on the large scale. In order that the beet-sugar manufacture should be established, Napoleon carried Protection to the extreme of prohibition. To injure English commerce, he closed the Continent against vessels coming from cane-growing countries, and, with this extreme protection in its favour, the new manufacture prospered and became established. Now it stands without protection, except in the form of virtual bounties on the export of refined sugar; but everyone must admit that without protection in the first place it never could have been established at all. The *natural* difficulties that had to be encountered, in bringing the beet-sugar manufacture to its present stage of perfection, were probably unparalleled in the case of any other manufacture whatever. Chemical and mechanical progress overcame even these, much more easily can it overcome difficulties which are not of natural origin, but caused merely by circumstances of man's own creation, and which it lies within his power to control or remove. The successive improvements in this manufacture were part of the progress of the age, and through "progress" it happened that the sugar industry, before specialized as a "function" of a few tropical countries only, was diffused and rendered common to France, Germany, and Russia. Here Mr. Spencer is plainly confuted by facts; he teaches that a certain thing must happen, and what happens is the very reverse.

In the course of a recent address on beauty in arts and manufactures, Mr. Gladstone spoke as follows:—

"If I take, for example, the tissues of this country, thirty years ago all patterns for our cotton goods were obtained from France; but now we take patterns from France and send patterns back to France. The people of Mulhausen—I believe it is in Germany, and not in France, but it does not matter for the purpose I have in view—exchange patterns with England instead of simply sending patterns to England. (Applause). If you take other important branches of production, such as glass and porcelain—well, English glass has now become extremely beautiful and also very convenient. The English glass manufacture (I am not now

speaking of plate glass, window glass, &c., but of glass for services, wine glasses and a variety of all portable articles of that kind) there is no doubt at all, as far as regards both the convenience of the form and the character of the material, has advanced to a very satisfactory position. It is in entire contrast with what it was forty or fifty years ago. (Hear, hear!) It was then a great deal dearer and it was a great deal uglier. A sense of beauty, of valuable beauty, has found its way into that manufacture. If we take porcelain, a similar improvement has taken place. Anybody who is familiar with the tea, coffee and dinner services of forty or fifty years ago, supposing he had been asleep during those fifty years and that he awoke to-day and went to the best shops and repositories to observe the character of the manufactures that are offered for sale, he would think that he had passed into another world, so entirely different are they and so far superior to what was produced in the time of one generation, and especially two generations back."

A certain specialization of function, once peculiar to France, has through "progress" been established in England also, and is now common to both nations. Here we see "progress" interfering with the specialty of one nation, and diffusing it into another nation. And must not further "progress" multiply immensely the number of such instances in which diffusion triumphs over specialization, as the visible result or concomitant of inventions and improvements?

What does the whole vast, and still rapidly increasing array of inventions, and modern improvements generally, amount to, if not to this, that they neutralize or overcome natural obstacles, and render man less subject to limitations formerly imposed? Before, certain natural conditions, along with others of merely artificial growth, dictated that this or the other manufacture should be carried on only at this or the other particular place. Now, the printing press, the steam-engine, and the telegraph operate so to diffuse inventions and improvements, that each new one quickly becomes the common property of civilized nations. It seems really marvellous that a man of Mr. Spencer's wide vision and great power of generalization should have missed so obvious and inevitable a concomitant of "progress" as this. How political and commercial pressure are now working in favour of Protection I may on another occasion endeavour to show; and perhaps I may have something to say to your "Scottish Student" on the subject.

Argus.

BUSINESS ACUMEN.

Modern business has trained men into a wonderful perfection of what we call "acumen" and our American neighbours less euphoniously term "cuteness." There is another and more correctly descriptive title, the use of which natural politeness forbids.

This business acumen takes various forms, does not necessarily require continued prosperity for its development, but flourishes with almost greater vigour in the cold shades of adversity.

One of these points is wonderfully developed here, nor is it unknown in the old country and in other lands. Business men will recognize this particular form of business acumen if described as the process of "unloading accounts." The process is simple; and is intended for the simple, to make them wise. It is performed thus: When a wholesale merchant is largely interested in some trader who has probably been started and largely propped up by said firm, business acumen requires that at the first indication of weakness or mismanagement a portion at least if not all of the amount should be "unloaded" on others who do not possess that visionary line known as "the inside track." What business acumen suggests, business acumen alone can find means to carry out. The kind of will which prompts the thought is the only kind capable of adapting itself to the necessary means of carrying it out. It will do so successfully until experience has no more foolish people left to teach. The gentlest method used is simply to cease soliciting business and do a larger amount than usual of gentle dunning from the office department. If the trader be high spirited and full of hope, he will of his own accord at once seek other sources of supply; and his hopefulness and good intentions, unconscious as he is of any impending doom, will more than probably make the effort a success. But it may be he is somewhat phlegmatic in temperament and cool-headed enough to see that his views of his own position and the views of his supporters differ a little. He wants to get at the bottom of the difficulty, and promptly interviews his principal creditor. Said creditor soothes and mollifies him, but complains bitterly of the scarcity of money, the hardness of the times, finds he must contract all his accounts, values *this* account very highly, but can't increase it just now. If he could buy elsewhere this season and so reduce his indebtedness to their firm he feels quite sure he will be both able and delighted to run his usual amount on him next—doesn't want to close the account, will be glad if he can pick up a few *small* lines as usual, and he can tell any one he is *still buying from them* and send any parcels he likes to them for enclosure. Thus reassured the trader gives his orders right and left for what he may need. No sooner has he got in his stock than the business acumen of his old friend and supporter wakes to life in another form, dunning letters, and drafts at sight which positively must be met, pour in upon him, take his attention away from his trade, and when his new bills to new houses come due, there is nothing to meet them, the crash comes, but—the process of "unloading" has been successfully performed.