

better than to quote from a speech made by Lord Palmerston, thirty-six years ago, on a similar subject: Lord Palmerston said, "But, Sir, there are larger grounds on which this doctrine ought to be repudiated by this House. Why is the earth on which we live divided into zones and climates? Why, I ask, do different countries yield different productions to people experiencing similar wants? Why are they intersected with mighty rivers—the natural highways of nations? Why are the lands the most distant from each other brought into contact by that very ocean which seems to divide them? Why, Sir, it is that man may be dependent upon man. It is that the exchange of commodities may be accompanied by the extension and diffusion of knowledge, by the interchange of mutual benefits, engendering mutual kind feelings, multiplying and confirming friendly relations. It is that commerce may freely go forth leading civilisation with the one hand and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better. Sir, this is the dispensation of Providence; this is the decree of that power which created and disposes the universe; but in the face of it, with arrogant presumptuous folly, the dealer in restrictive duties fly, fettering the inborn energies of man, and setting up their miserable legislation instead of the great standing laws of nature. Sir, I am convinced, whatever may be the result of this night's debate, that reason will prove more powerful than error. I am satisfied that the truth is strong enough to sweep away the cobwebs of fallacy, by which it is attempted to entangle it." But it is not more certain that day succeeds the night than it is certain that the dishonest and barbarous policy upon which we have this Session entered will be overthrown. Look at France before the Revolution. Society was segregated into orders. The rich ground down the poor. Those who possessed most of the nation's wealth were wholly exempt from taxation. Carlyle has drawn a vivid picture of the state of society; of the attempts to grow rich by acts of Parliament; of the visionary schemes of the practical men. We know how the privileged classes—those who ruled—strove to turn the people into beasts of burden, and they became

beasts of prey that devoured their adversaries, and distributed their estates. Why? Because heaven is not mocked; what men sow that shall they also reap. Property, through privilege, had become robbery, and the robber was despoiled. What was the history of the United Kingdom from 1815 to 1845? Was it not the history of the folly of a Government interfering with the industries of its people? Factories closed, workmen idle, poorhouses filled with paupers, cities filled with rioters, jails filled with criminals: the cries of suffering, and the shouts of sedition heard in every part of the United Kingdom. Sir, it is the business of statesmen to profit by the experience of other people, and to avert similar calamities from their own. Look at the people of the United States. Oppressing their fellow-men, they would not believe that Providence would execute the vengeance that justice willed against oppression. The punishment came—five years of Civil War. The waste of life, industry and capital was enormous—more than was ever gained by the unpaid labour of the slave. Another abuse—that of Protection—has taken its place. It has brought in its train mischiefs, industrial, moral and political, of enormous magnitude. It has centralised wealth. It has plundered the poor. It has doomed thousands of the most industrious to a cheerless life of severe toil, with no prospect, but increasing poverty with increasing years. This is but another phase of injustice and oppression, which is doomed to perish by quiet means—possibly, by violence, if necessary. Will the cause of justice and humanity triumph? What is now overtaking them will certainly befall you. There is a power in the world, says Matthew Arnold, which makes for righteousness. Against this power you have set your faces, and you have attempted to found your system of taxation and the industrial pursuits of your population in a system of injustice. It cannot endure. It ever has been so—it must continue to be so—to the last syllable of recorded time, that every such effort is but the continuance of those follies, which, after much disaster, peacefully or by revolution, a progressive people will certainly destroy.