

The Briton and His Commercial Rivals.

Dear Sir:

The bogey of "made in Germany and the reiterated cry that British commerce is being worried in every market of the world, lead me to ask for a little space in your columns to place before your readers one or two reasons why they need not give way to feelings of despair or even despondency over the situation. By the magazines, our foreign trade is made to appear decadent, while that of Germany and America is shown to be as rapidly growing. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him," tell the whole world day by day that the Briton is a degenerate, and that his German and American rivals are cutting him out, and the prophets will bring about the fulfilment of their own forebodings. Merchants and manufacturers will become discouraged, and capitalists will look abroad for more promising fields in which to invest, and then we may write "Ichabod" over the gateways of our custom houses. A great number of writers take it for granted that Germans and Americans have made relatively far greater progress than Britons during the past twenty years. Indeed the opinion of some of the authorities in the symposium on this subject, held in a monthly review this month, clearly is, that Britain has lost its supremacy in the field of foreign commerce, and that it has fallen into a second or third place, behind Germany or America. I have seen enough of German and American factories and institutions to fill me with respect for them, yet I have felt no uneasiness concerning our own prospects. It may be all very well to attempt to spur on the British manufacturer to greater endeavor by warning him of what his rivals are doing, but exaggeration and in many cases, false statements, are not justifiable.

With your permission, sir, I would like to lay the following broad statement of facts before your readers, so that they may draw their own conclusions, from official data:

The annual gross exports of merchandise from the U. K., Germany and the U. S. A. are given in the statistical abstract of the board of trade, divided among the inhabitants of the respective countries, during the period from 1879 to 1899, split up into three equal terms of seven years.

Periods—	United Kingdom.			Germany.			U. S. A.		
	Total exp.	Total exp.	Total exp.	Total exp.	Total exp.	Total exp.	per cap.	per cap.	per cap.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			
1879-1885	.5 4 1	4 17 5	3 2 2						
1886-1892	.8 0 11	4 8 4	2 14 1						
1893-1899	.7 9 0	3 12 2	2 14 9						

The above decreases are due to the fall in value of late years, the actual volume of trade has of course greatly increased.

Besides showing that the Briton is doing more, man for man, than his two great rivals combined, the above statement proves that he is increasing his lead. In the foregoing the export business only has been taken into account, and, moreover, no credit has been claimed for the great preponderance of the British shipping and financial interests, in which this kingdom is facile princeps.

I remain, yours obediently,
G. J. S. BROOMHALL.
Royal Statistical Society's Rooms, London, 9 Adelphi Terrace, Strand, W. C., 25th March, 1901.
P. S.—Had the trade of other parts of Greater Britain been included, the total for the whole empire would have been equal to the combined trade of Germany, America, France and Russia.

Comparative Prices of Staples.

Comparative prices of staples in New York:

	Apr. 5, 1901.	Apr. 7, 1901.
Flour	\$.3350	\$.3350
Wheat	77 1/2	77 1/2
Corn	40	41
Oats	30 1/2	29
Rye	31	32
Cotton	87 1/2	87 1/2
Printcloths	2 1/2	2 1/2
Wool, Ohio	24 1/2	24 1/2
Wool, No. 1	27 1/2	27 1/2
Fork, mess	\$15.50	13.2
Lard	8.00	7.00
Butter	22	21
Cheese	12 1/2	11 1/2
Sugar, gran	5.25	5.00
Coffee, No. 7	7	5
Petroleum, fld	7.5	9.00
Iron, Besse	17 1/2	21.00
*Steel billets	24.00	25.00
Steel rails	20.00	23.00
Copper	17.00	17.00
Lead, No	4.37 1/2	4.75
Zn, B	25.80	26.00
*Pittsburg		Bradstreet

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