

amount of the worthless bill. The case of the preventive officer is a somewhat similar one, and the cost (not necessarily loss) to the country is simply the salary paid him. Free trade theorists should have better arguments than such as the above to support their views.

#### ENGLISH POLITICS.

The political condition of England is at the present time one of intense activity. The two great parties there are mustering their forces for the great battle that, to all appearances, must shortly be fought between the opposing Conservative and Liberal elements. The great Liberal chieftains challenge the aggressive and, what they term, the meddlesome, blundering and costly foreign policy of the dominant party, and there are not wanting some of England's best men, even on the Conservative side, who are alarmed at the foreign policy of her present rulers. The influence of her warlike enthusiasm of the last five years has not alone influenced the feelings of her own people, but has affected the European continent. The armaments of Europe have been enormously increased, and the expenditures of the great powers in warlike preparations have grown into alarming proportions. Jealousy and distrust pervade the society of every European capital. Under the influence of these passions, the newspaper press teems with inflammatory appeals to what ought by this time to have been forgotten issues. France, with a new and expanding destiny before her, is yet cherishing in her secret heart hopes of wiping out in German blood the humiliation of Sedan. Germany fosters a warlike spirit of aggression by way of amusing her citizens and turning their attention from the progress in material wealth her ancient rival, in spite of the milliards of indemnity exacted from her, and in the face of a fearful amount of national debt, is making. Russia, distracted by discontent within her borders, armed to the teeth and bristling with menaces, seeks oblivion of her inward complaints by growling generally, and the second-rate powers add their quota to fill the already overcharged political atmosphere of Europe. In England, the signs of a re-action may, however, be distinctly read. Perhaps the greatest manifestation of this may be found in the withdrawal during the last few years of two distinguished Cabinet Ministers from the Government. One of them, Lord Derby, has severed his connection with the party, never to re-unite it. He has said during the past twelve months more to unpopulize the policy of his late leader than was ever uttered by John Bright. His manly, cool, sober statement of fact in homely Saxon will count for as much as some of the speeches on Birmingham platforms, or perhaps even the eloquence of Gladstone. England's home affairs have been neglected for the supposed interests that lie in the tangled skeins of European diplomacy. The long and protracted feeling of distrust abroad, has awakened her manufacturers

and merchants to a sense of danger. Now, a suffering and disappointed people have risen to demand the cessation of statescraft and political conjuring. England's finances are at fault, and her most competent financiers declare it to be the result of the Government's policy, and indeed it must be, when it is spending about fifteen millions sterling more to-day than was spent in the year 1873. The election which has just taken place in Liverpool, although not resulting in the return of a Liberal politician, gave a much larger vote than has been polled before. The election which must take place in a few days in Southwark will test the party strength in that ancient borough, where Conservatism has been growing in power during the last ten years. It is quite clear that the commercial aspect of politics is taking a firm grasp upon the minds of the English people, who are beginning to enquire whether a so-called brilliant and spirited foreign policy, involving increased taxation and a heavier strain upon the resources of the nation, and consequently greater privation among the operative and laboring classes, is, after all, calculated to advance her truest interests. No one questions for a moment the devotion of the present Tory leaders to the British Crown and Constitution, but if they have exceeded the wishes of the people and done what may clog the wheels of that industry which after all has done as much for England as all her victories by sea or land have ever done, and which must prove the soundest basis for her future aggrandisement, the voice of the people will ere long be heard in trumpet tones; and, as Mr. Gladstone said at Blackheath eleven years ago, the Government may read in it the only reproof which can exercise influence and dissolve a cabinet like a "mockery king of snow." That England has now reached a point in her career when it has become absolutely necessary to turn her attention more assiduously than ever to questions of economy and less to the rectification of frontiers and the annexation of foreign territories, in the face of the rivalry of the United States, France, Germany and other powers, few will deny; and in the solution of this and other domestic problems she will find abundant outlet for the administrative talents of her rulers, whoever they may be, for many years to come.

#### COMMERCIAL MORALITY.

While the Government has been doing a good but difficult work in the direction of compelling men to be honest by act of parliament, so far as that *can* be done, by requiring them, under heavy penalties, to maintain just and true weights and measures wherewith to dispense their wares to the public, it is to be regretted that the moral sense of the community does not seem to be exercised strongly in the same direction. Not to speak of the various methods of fraud practiced in the adulteration of food, and which, it would seem, a system of pains and penalties is powerless to reach,

nor the equally questionable morality of those traders who represent the goods they sell as possessing desirable qualities they well know them to be absolutely devoid of, or the thousand and one artful devices by which the "accomplished" salesman palms off an inferior or a damaged piece of goods on the unsuspecting purchaser at the price of a first-class and perfect article; there is a growing tendency apparent, among those who should steadily oppose the lowering of the standard, to compromise the wrong at the expense of commercial morality. When this is done the whole fabric of confidence between man and man, so essential to refined civilization, sustains a deadly blow. Within a very short period a trusted employé of a large firm in this city, enjoying an excellent income, and with no excuse for his fault, was discovered to have purloined large sums of money that had been confided to his care. When accused of the crime, and finding no possibility of escape open, of course he confessed what he had done. Of course he was handed over to the authorities. Not a bit of it. Our enterprising firm had too many other irons in the fire, and the confidential clerk was not only allowed to fly the country, but the firm in question actually, it is said, furnished him with the means to do so. Doubtless, they found their course to be cheaper than if they had gone to the trouble of prosecuting. At least this is the only explanation we have of the matter. In another case a prominent bank and one of its local managers figure rather unenviably. The manager had embezzled a very large sum of money. He was arrested and held for trial. An application to the courts was made for bail. Bail was accepted with the consent of the bank. The manager was liberated, and, of course, he too fled the country, and it is now understood that the bailsmen have effected an arrangement for a consideration of a few thousand to be paid to the bank for a withdrawal of the case. We have no wish to interpose any obstacle in the way of the return of a repentant sinner to the paths of virtue; we frankly admit that if judgment was not tempered with mercy, the best of men would sometimes come under condemnation. But this is not a matter of sentiment. The exigencies of commercial life demand the application of inexorable justice. We do not so much require punishment for the guilty as protection for the honest. If it comes to be known that a dishonest servant is to escape the consequences of his offence by the indifference of his employers, or that he is only to take enough, not only to satisfy his own propensities, but to enable him afterwards to compromise with those he has robbed—in short, that if he has stolen twenty or thirty thousand dollars, he has only to make it a few thousand more with which to buy off the prosecution, what a lesson does this afford for our young men. Emerging from the parental home where have been inculcated the strictest ideas of right and wrong, he sur-