

## II

Does Mr. Balfour seriously wish to increase the "viscosity" of trade, capital, and labour? It is open to M. Méline and other logical protectionists to take the slug as their ideal; but knowing as Mr. Balfour does that England can never be self-sufficing, that she must always import at any rate corn and meat, that her industrial classes cannot live on internal trade alone, however brisk, it is impossible for him to believe that the future can belong to the more stagnant forms of civilisation. No; it belongs to the more fluid forms, those in which the human molecules roll unceasingly over one another. Caste has disappeared; it is no exaggeration to say that England herself is a democracy.

Stripped of its rather pedantic dogmatism Mr. Balfour's proposition amounts to this: "Other nations close their doors; let us close ours, so that the others may have to knock if they want to bring their goods in." It is the policy of the closed door, the converse of the policy of "the open door." I could understand this argument from a man who sees only one side of the question, but I cannot understand it from one who sets up to be a philosopher, that is, to be able in considering questions to take points of view which are beyond the sight of others.

No doubt, when a trader is in need of a market, it makes him angry to find his wares confronted by duties which in the case of Russia are as high as 130 per cent., in the United States 72 per cent., in Austria-Hungary 32 per cent., in France 30 per cent., in Italy 27 per cent., in Germany 25 per cent., in Canada 16 per cent., and in Belgium 13 per cent. I can understand his saying, "Oh! they refuse to let me in, do they! Let us treat them in the same way." This is "hitting back when I am hit"—the policy of the pavement.

But consider: before this trader is in a position to sell any of his products he has already been a consumer; a consumer