

On the contrary, I maintain with energy that good technical education is the prime necessity of this time and this country. It is true that the enormous, I had almost said the immeasurable, increase in the amount of manufactures, the multitude of the workmen, the width and variety of the markets, the necessary substitution to a great extent of machinery for handwork,—these things have made it impossible that our manufactures should have the refinement, the perfection, the thoroughness of the *old* manufactures (I use of purpose a vague word, for I am too ignorant to be accurate as to date) of Italy, of France, of Holland and Belgium, of North and South Germany. But it is not, to my mind, by any means certain that those who are wisely and gradually submitted to technical education would not be the better for more general cultivation. An uneducated mind is very apt, even in technical handicraft, to suffer for want of breadth of view and largeness of understanding.

These seem fine words to use as to matters so purely practical. But let me explain. I will give you two instances, one which fell under my own observation, the other I came upon in reading the report and the evidence of the Commission on the alleged Depression of British Trade, presided over with such skill and ability by the excellent and very able man more generally and widely known as Sir Stafford Northcote. A man I knew desired to have six candlesticks made of old Sheffield plate, which he preferred (as most people who know anything about it do prefer it) to its modern substitute, electroplate. He was willing to pay the price, and he wanted six candlesticks of separate patterns. The Sheffield plate he was obliged to abandon; he could not get it; at least, he was told so. The six candlesticks he could not at first get of

separate patterns. Why? The workmen objected to use six separate models for a single order. Was it more trouble? Scarcely any, but they positively refused. At last he got what he wanted, picking up one here and one there, and with much trouble. Now, I am not going to say a syllable against the workmen. England is a free country, and they have a right to sell their property—that is, their labor—on what terms they choose. But no man in his senses can doubt that self-created difficulties of this sort have a tendency to injure trade, and if carried much further, and happening oftener, to drive trade away from England altogether, and to do great mischief not only to trade, but to the workmen. This is entirely apart from the thorny and disputable questions as to strikes and combinations, as to which, so far as my understanding of the law allows me, I have always done what I honestly could in favor of the workmen's freedom. But there are limits of fairness and good sense which cannot be transgressed without direct harm to those who transgress them; and I think in cases such as these they are obviously transgressed. The case mentioned in Sir Stafford Northcote's Blue Book was stronger still. The Chinese, it seems—at least, large masses of them—like to use a particular kind of scissors, which are not in the shape in which English scissors are commonly made. The English makers would not make them according to the Chinese form. They said, and, as I understand, rightly said, that the English pattern was really the best. But the Chinese did not think so. They preferred their old "mumpsimus" to the English "sumpsimus." The Germans wisely consulted the wish of their customers, and at the date of Sir Stafford Northcote's Blue Book the Germans were largely supplanting, and threatened entirely to destroy, the English trade, because