

shot through and through with idealism, with the knowledge that the economic well-being of man is part of the natural order of the will of God. As the Puritans had overthrown the restraints of the mediæval Church, so the free-trader was to overcome the restraints of a self-centred nationalism. Spiritually and intellectually, as well as economically, the shopkeeper was the strongest man in Britain, and the shopkeeper's philosophy conquered.

There were two grave defects in the system ; for one of them the shopkeeper was directly responsible, for the other he was not. In the first place the system contained a hideous logical error, which can be stated shortly as follows : the free-traders accepted self-interest as the motive in a system whose main doctrine was equality of opportunity, when of course these two principles are incompatible, the wolf and the lamb ; self-interest as generally understood must destroy equality of opportunity. As a matter of fact, this defect has vitiated our economic system through and through ; in the United States its ravages have been even more fatal. Secondly, the system was one-sided ; besides commerce and industry, it was necessary that cosmopolitanism should take religion and nationality into account. To this, however, the shopkeeper might fairly retort that it was not his business, he had done his part ; let the Church take religion and the landowners nationality.

Upon the whole, it is true that the Church and the landowners have been very dilatory in doing their share of the work, and even negatively their criticism of the shopkeeper was for long ineffective ; as a result of the French Revolution they both had become reactionary and obscurantist, and having lost faith in the things of