

A CRITICISM.

If the readers of the SPECTATOR are not already weary of "Argus" and his critics, perhaps I may be allowed very shortly to fulfil "Argus's" desire that I should state my views on Mr. Herbert Spencer's argument on the continued differentiation, not only of individuals, but of nations, and on his reply to that argument. I should also wish to correct one or two misstatements and misapprehensions of "Marih" in his attack on my criticism.

As time and space press, I may shortly say that I quite agree with Mr. Herbert Spencer, that as progress continues there is a tendency for the *leading* industries of different nations to become more specialized in the same manner as in individuals. "Argus," however, fails to grasp—from the absence, in his quotation from that author, of any such word as *leading* or its equivalent—what I take to be the drift of Mr. Spencer's argument. Let us see what must be the true interpretation of Mr. Spencer's argument, and then we can measure the value of "Argus's" reply. The former says that one of the tendencies of modern progress is, that not only is there an increasing subdivision of labour among individuals, but among localities and even among nations. Now, as Mr. Herbert Spencer is not wanting in intelligence, it is to be presumed that he did not mean to say that all the people of this or that nation should become engaged in one pursuit; but that where a particular people had, owing to circumstances, special facilities for the production of some commodity in large demand, the production of that commodity would become their *leading* industry. Let us take an illustration. Suppose that, owing to her soil, climate and population, France can produce wine cheaper than any other nation, then the production of wine would become the *leading*, or one of the *leading* characteristics of French industry; but as it is obvious that a very large proportion of the nation could not be directly employed in the production of wine, but must be needed as merchants, lawyers, doctors, &c. &c., it is inconceivable that the French people should ever become exclusively wine-growers. More than this, though there may be a tendency for different nations to specialize their leading functions, the degree of this specialization must be greatly limited by the specialization of the natural facilities of various peoples for the production of certain commodities. For instance, though the physical conditions of Great Britain to-day are such that she has special facilities for the production of certain commodities, to-morrow, owing to a variety of circumstances, she may lose those facilities, or other nations may acquire them in an equal degree,—in which case, the national specialization of these industries would cease. On which, a true Free Trader would say no artificial interference should prevent their diffusion.

"Argus" states that Mr. Cobden laid it down that cotton-growing countries *should* not be cotton-manufacturing countries. If such is the case, I regret that Mr. Cobden ever made so foolish a speech, and I, for one, should certainly repudiate any such statement; nor do I think that any economist could ever have laid down any such rule, seeing it would amount to the statement, either that cotton-growing countries were, from the nature of the case, unable to manufacture cotton as cheaply as certain non-cotton-growing countries,—in which case *could*, and not *should*, would have been the proper conditional to have used,—or that cotton-growing countries should not be allowed to manufacture their own raw material, which would be a self-stultification quite beyond any Free Trader.

Now, how does "Argus" reply to Mr. Herbert Spencer's argument, that individuals, localities and nations show a *tendency* (in greater or less degree) towards functional differentiation? He argues that even individuals, as they advance in culture, become more alike, instead of more unlike, or differentiate less rather than more. Here he seems to me to have misapprehended the significance of the functional differentiation cited. In point of fact, both in the case of individuals and nations, we find they have at one and the same time the twofold tendency both to specialization and its opposite. This, however, is by no means contradictory, as I shall shortly show. The individual and the nation may be regarded in two characters,—the individual, or the national producing machine, and the individual, or national personality. In the former character, the tendency is to greater and greater subdivision; in the latter character, the tendency is to a greater width and comprehension.

As the best illustration of my meaning, let me remind "Argus" of (I think), the "*Saturday Review's*" definition of the modern man of culture: "that he should know everything of something and something of everything." What does this mean? That in his character of intelligent machine, if I may so call him, he was to know everything of that which was his special function, but that in his character of man, he was to know something of, and to sympathize with, at least a great number of different branches of knowledge. Therefore I cannot but think that "Argus" must recognize that his argument, that the man of culture in different countries tends not to unlikeness but to likeness, is at once true and untrue. It is true of him as a man: it is untrue of him as a producing, or perhaps I had better say bread-winning machine. In the same way the tendency of civilized nations is at once to a likeness in their general humanity, and to an unlikeness in the means by which they support their humanity.

Not to prolong this argument, I wish to draw "Argus's" attention to the fact that he has failed to appreciate this, because he fails to see that an advance in general culture on the part of a people does not depend on that people being engaged in a multiplicity of special functions, any more than the individual advance in culture is dependent upon the individual being engaged in an equal variety of occupations. To make this clearer, I contend that France might become much more exclusively a race of wine-growers, and England a race of cotton-spinners, and yet the French and English grow more and more alike in their general human characteristics. It was this fact which I tried to bring out in that part of my former criticism, wherein I thought I showed that man's general civilization was not necessarily affected by his special function, but was the result of his whole material and mutual environment.

In reference to this point, I would say a few words on "Marih's" criticism. He seems altogether to have failed in understanding the drift of my argument above alluded to, and has also credited me with various assertions which I did not make, and which I wish to correct. The general value of his criticism may be illustrated if I take his answer to one of my points. I said that the maker of a tomahawk was not necessarily less civilized than the man who tends a machine. "Marih" answers "yes he is, because the intelligence required to make a Whitworth gun is greater than that required to construct a tomahawk." Now, in one sense this is true; in another, it is not. The intelligence required to originate the Whitworth gun even, I know is immensely greater than that required to originate a tomahawk; but the man who tends a machine is not the intelligence which originates the Whitworth gun. On the other hand, the intelligence required to make a particular tomahawk may be quite as great as that needed to tend the machines which turn out the Whitworth gun. But in neither case is the intelligence required to make or originate a tomahawk or a Whitworth gun a true measure of the civilization of those who produce the one or the other.

Further, I did not say that certain factories established—for instance, in India or Egypt—were not originated by civilized people, nor did I say that a man might not study Political Economy and remain a Protectionist; but I did say, unless a man had studied Political Economy he had no right to an opinion either as Free Trader or Protectionist. "Marih" asks whether a "merchant, with great interests to look after, has not a right to hold an opinion, even if he has not studied Ricardo," &c.? Certainly, a merchant has a right to an opinion on his own interests; but that gives him no necessary right to an opinion on the interests of the country at large, to which his own may or may not be antagonistic. I might go on to answer other of "Marih's" criticism did not pressure of time and space prevent. I trust, however, enough has been written to show their value.

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IRELAND.

In the capital of this highly favoured Canada there is, it appears, a spirited journal that seems not inclined to allow things to be said about Ireland which it thinks ought not to be said.

It is not probable that any one could be found sufficiently envious to find fault with a disposition at once patriotic, and therefore commendable. But as there are some things that must be said concerning that troublesome island—unpleasant to say and unpleasant to hear—it was not deemed too much for an unpretending contemporary pen to endeavour to write what there was to be written in relation thereto.

A late issue of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR includes an article on Ireland, of which its contemporary does not approve, but roundly avers that the author of the objectionable writing has not "the slightest knowledge of the subject which he treats." A criticism if thus somewhat robust, has at least the merit of simplicity, and might be looked upon as a comprehensive and summary method of dealing with an opponent and his opinions. It is, however, to be observed that a whole column is a good deal for a spirited journal to devote to the statements of a writer who is said to know nothing of his subject. Whether that writer is to be censured for, or congratulated upon, his alleged ignorance of Irish affairs may be a question. There are people so addicted to the ways of peace and quietness, so inclined to the belief that respect for law and orderly habit are favourable to the well-being of mankind, as to be very much of the opinion that the prosperity and progress of the world in general would not be seriously impeded if a good deal less were heard of Ireland and Irishmen. "The true bearing of Irish politics" being rather beyond the grasp of ordinary comprehension, it is not presumed to express any opinion as to how far such people may be correct in their views; but, on the other hand, those—if any such there are—who probably desire to investigate the phenomenon presented by the Irish political mind would do well to commence their studies by laying aside the preconceived notion that a spade is a spade. The ingenious evolution of Hibernian ethics, shewing that a spade is not *always* a spade, might tend to diminish a natural feeling of surprise on learning that when Irishmen hiss at the Queen they are to be understood as expressing their loyalty and devotedness, that threatening to murder their landlords is "only