

Coleridge also says:—

'Tis the merry nightingale
That crowds and hurries and precipitates
With fast, thick warble his delicious notes.

John Burroughs, in his "Birds and Poets," says: "I gather from the books that its song is protracted and full rather than melodious—a capricious, long-continued warble, doubling and redoubling, rising and falling, issuing from the groves and the great gardens, and associated in the minds of the poets with love and moonlight and the privacy of sequestered walks. All our sympathies and attractions are with the bird, and we do not forget that Arabia and Persia are there back of its song." If Mr. Burroughs has gathered from the books that the song of the nightingale is more protracted than melodious, it is a pity the genial writer has not gathered a better idea of the bird's song from the original; but Mr. Burroughs has commissioned himself to crown the mocking bird as the finest singer in all creation and has to excuse himself in some way for stealing the coronet from the nightingale.

Many attempts have been made to produce a linguistic imitation of the bird's song, but it is so varied and continuous that the task is in reality impossible. To score down the notes in a match between canaries is not an uncommon practice among bird fanciers in London and is very interesting to watch; but such a notation could never be made with nightingales.

Petrarch only refers three or four times to the bird in his immortal sonnets. When he invites Stefano Colonna to visit him in the country he mentions among other attractions which the poet-soul may revel in—

E'l rosignuol, che dolcemente all' ombra
Tutte le notti si lamenta e piagne,

which has been translated by Macgregor:—

While Philomel, who sweetly to the shade
The live-long night her desolate lot complains,

and by Wollaston:—

Whilst Philomel her tale of woe repeats
Amid the sympathizing shades of night.

In his sonnet on "Returning Spring," Petrarch has this line:—

E garrir Progne e pianger Filomena,

which Lady Dacie translates:—

And Progne twitters, Philomela sings, taking a liberty with the word *pianger*, which means the opposite of singing. Charlemont turns the line thus:—

Now Progne prattles, Philomel complains.

As a matter of fact Progne never could prattle; but as the swallow might very properly twitter or chirp it is evident the alliteration of "Progne prattles" tickled the translator's ear and spoiled his line of Petrarch.

The next sonnet—the forty-third of the "In Morte" series—is the only one directly addressed to the nightingale. It commences thus:—

Quel rosignuol che si soave piagne
Forse suoi figli o sua cara consorte,
Di dolcezza empie il cielo e le campagne
Con tante note si pietose e scorte;
E tutta notte par che m'accompagne
E mi rammenta la mia dura sorte:

One translation of this I have seen is that in an anonymous publication of Petrarch's Sonnets, dated Oxford, 1795, and reads as follows:—

Yon nightingale, whose strain so sweetly flows,
Mourning her ravish'd young or much-loved mate,
A soothing charm o'er all the valleys throws
And skies, with notes well tuned to her sad state:
And all the night she seems my kindred woes
With me to weep and on my sorrows wait.

Here the double quality of plaintive sweetness is maintained by the poet. All the translators of Petrarch have largely sacrificed exactness to the exigencies of rhyme and have often spoiled simple and beautiful passages in order to preserve the structure of the original sonnet—a feat that the difference of the languages effectually prevents.

Mr. Charles Tomlinson has preserved the original more closely, however, in his translation:—

Yon nightingale that thrills out his lament
May be for nestlings lost, or consort dear,
With sweetness fills the air, the plains, intent
In piteous, varied notes to express his care;
And all night long his woes with mine seem blent
Reminding me too well of my despair:

This, however, is not so close as is desirable, though better than those of Wrangham or Charlemont. A more rigid, though probably less poetical, version would be the following:—

That nightingale, which softly doth lament
Perchance his offspring or his consort dear,
With sweetness fills the fields and firmament
By countless notes so pitiful and clear,
And all night long seems my accompaniment
And sad reminder of my lot severe.

The remainder of the sonnet is reflective and has nothing to do with the nightingale. Jean le Houx in one of his Vaux-de-Vire has quite a characteristic address to the nightingale, in which he expresses a sentiment not likely to be repeated in poetry:—

Rosignolet musicien,
Au printemps tu chantes fort bien,
Quand tu vas saluer l'aurore;
Mais, si j'étois rossignolet,
Beuvant de ce bon vin clair,
Je chanterois bien mieux encore.

But to return to the sonneteers, many other sonnets than those quoted have been written of or to the nightingale; but they are usually of a pensive and melancholy vein, addressing the hen bird as the singer and speaking of the thorn and its sad results. Tennyson Turner has written most and best on the subject; but the highest water-mark has never been reached.

How Tennyson Turner loved this songster is best told in the following sonnet:—

TO A NIGHTINGALE ON ITS RETURN.

And art thou here again, sweet nightingale,
To reproduce my happy summer mood,
When, as last year, among these shades I stood,
Or from the lattice heard thy thrilling tale?
This May-tide is but cold; yet, none the less,
I trust thy tuneful energy to sing
Through the thin leafage of this laggart spring,
With all thy blended joy and plaintiveness.
How often have my lonely steps been led,
By thy sweet voice, on to thy magic tree!
How often has thy wakeful spirit fed
My thoughts with love, and hope, and mystery
How often hast thou made my weary head
A music chamber for my soul and thee!

It is doubtful if the subject is as suitable for sonnet composition as for song-writing or descriptive verse. It is certain that no sonnet can ever be written on the nightingale that will approach Keat's magnificent burst of lyric song; and, if the truth be told, sonneteers and other poets have usually made fools of the birds—and of themselves; but rhyme and metre often cover a multitude of sins and the poet is a privileged character. After reading all the sonnets at hand that have been addressed to the nightingale, the memory of some early summer nights nearly twenty years ago (when half a mile's walk from a moonlit English village led me to a wood not far from Hughenden, where the amorous bird was often in full song) makes it seem wonderful that human pen has ever attempted the impossible.

SAREPTA.

THE FREE TRADE QUESTION AGAIN.

We have no chance of moving in unison with the counsels of the Power, whatever it be, which rules this world, or of prospering accordingly, except by keeping in the allegiance of the truth.—*Goldwin Smith.*

TO THE WEEK of October 2nd, I contributed an article entitled "How Free Trade With the World Would Benefit Canada," which has had the fortune of being copied by a number of newspapers throughout the country, and the misfortune of being adversely criticized in THE WEEK of Oct. 16 by a Mr. C. H. Church. If the editor of this journal is willing I would be glad of an opportunity to append some further remarks to my former article, as well as to deal incidentally with some of Mr. Church's more important strictures.

And, at the outset, let me compliment my critic on the shrewdness which enables him to discover that it is "the N. P. at which Mr. S. appears to aim his blows." That is quite true. I did not refer once directly to the fallacies of Protection, nor did I refer once to any of the promises that have been, or are being, made regarding the National Policy. I simply endeavoured to show what I believed would be some of the main benefits likely to be manifested in the country at large by the adoption of free trade. If the arguments militated against the principle of Protection, so far as to appear to an advocate of Protection to be blows aimed at the N.P., surely they may be considered to have acquired that kind of support which is sometimes found in evidence obtained from an adverse or an unexpected quarter.

My critic also shrewdly finds that "a very superficial reading of the article reveals the fact" that the "point which Mr. S. evidently aims at is to prove that a free importation of foreign goods into Canada is beneficial, regardless of restrictions placed on her exports by hostile tariffs." I certainly did aim to prove that, and fail to find, after several careful readings of Mr. Church's brief letter, that he has succeeded in showing that my arguments are "based on false notions that are altogether misleading." Several of his statements, indeed, are open to direct challenge. He says, for instance:—

"When Great Britain adopted the policy of free trade some years ago she had free markets, which have since been closed to her, and she then had little competition, which has since grown into gigantic proportions to the detriment of British trade."

When Great Britain adopted the policy of free trade she did so alone against a world of hostile tariffs, which since that time have become in certain lines more hostile, and in certain lines less hostile, but during that period the development of British trade has been more remarkable than that of any other country in the world. And (although this may be questioned in certain quarters since Mr. Vincent's visit to Canada) there is no sign that the people of Great Britain are anxious to exchange their present policy for one of protection, however named.

So far with regard to Mr. Church's criticisms. But let me take his perfectly correct statement that "the point which Mr. S. evidently aims at is to prove that a free importation of foreign goods into Canada is beneficial, regardless of restrictions placed on her exports by hostile tariffs" as the text of some further remarks on the subject of my former article.

Perhaps to the man who believes in free trade "only when the rest of the world adopts it" there is no difficulty greater than that of appreciating how a country can hope to compete with other countries in its own products by opening its ports to those other countries while they are maintaining restrictive tariffs. It is so much easier to believe that the only way to fight the devil is with fire! It is at this point, indeed, that the great majority part company with the science of political economy and seek refuge in innumerable untenable positions. Even so great a student of the science as John Stuart Mill once conceived it expedient that protection should be given to certain

industries in new countries, provided that the country had good natural resources for the successful prosecution of such an industry, and the protection accorded be only temporary. But the logical reply of the late Thorold Rogers may be placed against Mill's recusancy. He says:—

"Apart from the fact that new countries never possess a superfluity of capital and labour, and therefore are least of all well advised in directing these elements of wealth into channels where they would be less advantageously employed than they would be in others; apart from the considerations that all countries have a natural protection in the cost of carriage, and the comparative ease with which they can interpret demand; and apart from the fact that good natural advantages for any particular industry are sure to suggest that industry at the very earliest time at which it will be expedient to undertake it—the circumstances which invariably affect a protected industry render it impossible that Mr. Mill's rule of a temporary protection should be applicable. Who is to determine at what time the protection should be removed? Not the consumer, as represented in the Legislature, for he would naturally object to the protection from the beginning, since the regulation inflicted a loss on him at the very instant that it came into operation. Not the manufacturer, for until the time comes in which he dreads no rivalry he believes that the regulation is the guarantee of his ordinary profit, and that its removal will expose him to certain losses. Not the labourer who is engaged in producing the favoured product, for the wages of labour are adversely affected, in the fall of prices, at an earlier stage than any other object into which gross value is distributed, and are advantageously affected, on the other hand, at a later period than that in which any other interest, other than that of manual labour, is benefited."

It is to be noted, of course, that Mr. Mill argued only in favour of temporary protection, and his critic proceeds to show that while it is maintained it only does the minimum of good to the country, and that when it is removed it does the maximum of injury to those directly concerned in the industry.

I suppose it will be admitted that a very considerable proportion of Canadian protectionists are really believers simply in temporary protection. It is certain, at any rate, that when the sugar duties were lowered last session the apologists of protection claimed that that was in full accordance with their principles, and that the sugar industry was maintained merely until it could stand alone. It would be interesting to enquire if it was not maintained (at the expense of the consumer) somewhat longer than was necessary to enable the proprietors to stand alone. It would be interesting, also, to estimate the amount of readiness displayed by the proprietors in conceding, at the demand of Government, a considerable share of the profits to the previously highly taxed consumer.

The case of the sugar duties is a single instance out of many that might be adduced from Canadian experience in support of the contention that temporary protection does the minimum of good to the community while it is in force and the maximum of injury to the proprietors when it is withdrawn. But in the present argument we are concerned mainly with that great lesson that was at last driven home to the minds of the people by the reduction of the sugar duties, namely, that *the consumer pays the duty*. I fear that my critic, Mr. Church, will find "nothing new" again in this statement, but those of us who remember the arguments of two years ago in the American and the Canadian press on the sugar question can remember, also, that it was asserted time and again that sugar was as cheap as it could be obtained under free trade, and that the consumer did not pay the duty. This argument is, indeed, being employed at this present moment with regard to tin plate and other articles by the Republican press; and I have sometimes thought that this fallacy, so industriously and cunningly used, has done more than anything else to prevent a united and intelligent agricultural vote on this continent. For I hold (1) that the best foundation for successful farming in Canada is cheapness of production; (2) that cheapness of production can only be obtained by free trade, and (3) that the wealth of the whole country depends, not so much on the amount of, but on the profits to be derived from, her agricultural exports.

J. C. SUTHERLAND.

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P.S.—In my article of Oct. 2nd the words "bald outline" were printed "bold outline." In the connection in which it was used the latter phrase sounded egotistical.

J. C. S.

THE tallest men of West Europe are found in Catalonia, Spain; Normandy, France; Yorkshire, England, and the Ardennes districts of Belgium. Prussia gets her tallest recruits from Schleswig-Holstein, the original home of the impressive Anglo-Saxons; Austria from the Tyrolean highlands. In Italy the progress of physical degeneration has extended to the upper Apennines, but the Allanian Turks are still an athletic race, and the natives of the Caucasus are as sinewy and gaunt as in the days of the Argonauts. In the United States the 38th parallel, ranging through Indiana and northern Kentucky, is as decidedly the latitude of big men as the 42nd is that of big cities. The tallest men of South America are found in the western provinces of the Argentine Republic, of Asia in Afghanistan and Kaypootana, of Africa in the highlands of Abyssinia.