

manent improvement on the contrary. Again, if such a bill became law they would doubtless find landlords and tenants making special bargains founded upon a contract that the tenant was not to put the laws in force against the landlord.

Mr. RANDAL M'DONNELL expressed his opinion that the fallacy of Mr. Heron's plan was his application of the principle of John Stuart Mill—that when a country became unfit to be habitable, owing to the conduct of the government, that government when put on its trial, must be found guilty—to the case of Ireland. He denied that the principle had any application to Ireland. Decrease of population and decrease of wealth were not of themselves the test of prosperity or non-prosperity. True prosperity consisted in a certain ratio between wealth and population. “The more the merrier” seemed to be the motto of Mr. Heron, but the merriness really depended upon the capacity to comfortably maintain the numbers. If twenty-four persons were put down to a meal that was only equal to feeding twelve, would it be contended that the twenty-four badly fed were more prosperous than the twelve well fed? He believed the population of this day were much more comfortable than the population of ten years ago. He found that Mr. Heron used in his paper language which was scarcely in keeping with a grave and sober discussion of an important subject. Thus the misery of the poor in the workhouse was, according to Mr. Heron, beyond description, and the emigration unparalleled. He deprecated the use of such language. Free trade had been injurious to the Irish farmers by bringing them into competition with the great grain producing countries of the world. The true remedy was to abandon the cultivation of corn, to adopt that of flax, and to extend their pasture system, which, in consequence of the amount of green crop cultivation which it necessarily involved, would increase rather than diminish the employment of the people. Manufactures should also be encouraged.

III.—*Free-Trade : Abolition of Customs and Excise Duties ; and a Sketch of a simpler and better mode of raising a Revenue.* By James Haughton, J. P.

[Read Wednesday, 20th April, 1864.]

THOSE who live in the present era have great privileges conferred on them, particularly those of us who live in these free lands, where it may be said our thoughts are permitted to flow as freely as the air we breathe. A grand responsibility for the proper use of those intellectual faculties with which we may be gifted rests upon us. The young people of our time have a fine future before them, for the spirit of enquiry is abroad; I hope many of them may make a good and wise use of it; that they will be indeed in earnest in doing their

part in bearing onwards the civilizing influences which are now in motion; and which, if sustained by a high moral bearing, will lead to good results; even superior to those which have marked the advances made in social enquiries, in scientific discoveries, and in intellectual pursuits, during the last quarter of a century. We have associations scattered around us for the improvement of the condition of man, almost in every direction; and fashion and public-opinion combined with inclination, induce our most eminent men to take an active part in promotion of the public good. Our own Association is a star of no mean magnitude in that galaxy of useful institutions which are scattering seeds broadcast, that will make the future even brighter than the past. Social reform, sanatory reform, law reform, financial reform, and many other kindred good works, are now seriously engaging the attention of many associations, and of numberless individuals; so that we may look forward to the future of our country with the brightest anticipations.

Among those many useful topics to which I have alluded, the discussion of Free-trade, and its partial adoption by us, and other nations, has been attended with many beneficial results. It is my main object in this paper to press on our members, and on the community at large, the necessity for the full and complete adoption of this principle, in all our commercial relations throughout the world. Whatever may be the delays in carrying out to its full completion this great principle for bringing mankind into more peaceful relations, and in extending the traffic with all nations, which results in the greatest good to all, whatever difficulties may impede its grand and speedy consummation, I have no doubt of its ultimate success among all civilized nations. The march of the great truth, that it is for the interest of all, to leave trade as free as those winds of heaven which waft our ships round the world, cannot now be much longer arrested by ignorance or cupidity. Every impediment which yet stands in the way of free intercourse, must be removed; and the sooner these great commercial nations of which we form a part, sweep them all away, the better it will be for us all—the happier, the wealthier, and the more steadily prosperous, our people will be.

This grand consummation of the work which it may be said was inaugurated by the late Sir Robert Peel, only a few years ago, and which has already produced good results, exceeding his most sanguine expectations, will be for a while delayed by the timid, who are a numerous class, and who can never step beyond the narrow circle which encompasses little minds, and who are always found opposing human progress. (Some imagine, and perhaps not without reason, that such men are a wholesome drag-chain on enthusiastic reformers). The unwisely selfish, also a numerous class, who are satisfied with things as they are, and who see evil, and only evil, in all progressive ideas,—will actively and passively oppose all further extension of liberal and enlightened principles of commerce. The self-same reasons that were urged against any encroachments on the unwise restrictive system of former times, will be urged over and over again to prevent the full adoption of those principles and practices of free trade, which, when adopted in their entirety, will so unite all nations

in those bonds of a commercial intercourse, which are conducive to the prosperity and happiness of all, that fears of unjust invasion on each others rights will no longer be entertained, and thus wars will be put an end to, or be of much less frequent recurrence. The warlike propensities of mankind are but too easily stimulated. Commercial intercourse, is one of the best counteracting forces to this evil.

The extension of our foreign trade, since the principles of free trade have been acknowledged by us as sound and good, and partially acted on to some extent, has been very great indeed. By a return of imports and exports in the *Financial Reform Almanac*, for 1864, I find, that since the year 1835, when the total amount was £106,831,113, they had increased in 1862, to £393,782,118. The intermediate years exhibit a steady progress from year to year. How immensely these great results would be increased, if all our ports were free, and that no Custom Houses cast their blighting influence in the way of numberless floating messengers of peace and plenty from all the nations of the earth. If every customs' duty, and all excise duties also, were abolished, prosperity, such as the world has not yet witnessed, would be seen in these happy lands. These are no longer the visions of wise men in their closets, who long since presaged those good results, but the seen and proved consequences of the wiser policy of our statesman of late years, the policy of free trade, pressed on Parliament by the growing enlightenment of our times.

From the events that are now progressing in some European countries, in relation to this great question, it looks as if England would soon be left behind in the race. (I wish our Irish merchants had sufficient public spirit to take a leading part in this great work. but they are like stagnant water, which shows no signs of life). The following extract from a recent letter written to E. K. Muspratt, Esq., of Liverpool, by a leading free-trader in Antwerp, affords us some "signs of the times." "You love your country, and therefore desire that England should lead the way. Every thing indicates to me that this honour is reserved for Belgium. The agitation in all minds against the custom house is so strong here, that only a short time can elapse before measures will be taken to satisfy the national will."

At the last annual meeting of our Chamber of Commerce in Dublin, I brought the question of enlarged freedom of trade under the notice of that body, but my suggestions were not received with any favour. I sent a report of that meeting to a friend in Brussels, and the following are some of his remarks on it:—

"Brussels, 17th June, 1863.

"My dear Sir,

"I thank you for the newspaper which you kindly addressed to me, I see by it that you made an effort to bring before the Chamber of Commerce of Dublin the question of *free trade*. I am sorry to observe that the opinions which you expressed in favour of such a vital question did not meet with any support amongst the merchants

of Dublin, and that the meeting carried their restrictive opinions so far as to prohibit even the discussion of that question.

"It has happily become a great novelty to see any chamber of commerce in the present day cherish the principles of prohibition, it would appear from the proceedings of the meeting in question that that novelty is to be found with you.

"Your secretary considers that your Chamber is not instituted for the purpose of "giving advice to governments," or interfering with social questions. I am sorry to see the secretary of a board of merchants reject with so much warmth even the examination of a question of such international importance as that of free trade.

"I am sorry to hear from you that Ireland is now in a distressed state owing to three bad successive harvests. When I first went there in 1853, it appeared that its remaining inhabitants were steadily improving and comparatively well off; it is a sad thing to reflect that such a fine country should so entirely depend on agricultural labour as Ireland appears to do. This is an additional reason for your Chamber of Commerce to give their attention to international commerce and industry and not to turn away altogether from the consideration of what may be useful in the continental commercial bodies.

Yours very truly,

CORR VANDER MAEREN."

The Report of the "Brussels International Association for Custom House Reform," published May, 1863, gives interesting evidence of the steady progress of free trade principles in Belgium. Some of the most enlightened men in that country are earnestly pushing forward this question to its logical results. Commerce must be free from all the shackles of import and export duties; and the sooner we take up this question with vigour, the better it will be for our country. The "Financial Reform Association" in Liverpool, are doing a good work; they deserve the support of all who wish to see more widely diffused abroad, especially among the working classes, those comforts of life which so many of them are deprived of, partly I grant, because of their own improvidence, but in a great measure also, because of the unjust system of taxation which prevails in these lands, and which bears with much unequal severity on the great bulk of our population, whom the Government is bound in honour and in conscience, and for the public safety also, to protect against such oppression. If the masses of the people were enlightened on this question, they would protest vigorously against the injustice done them, and their protest could not be resisted. They are the largest consumers, therefore they pay the largest share of the taxes raised on articles of consumption, and individually they are thus deeply wronged by our present system of customs and excise duties. The rich man consumes no more than the poor man, and yet the latter actually pays in duties on the various taxed articles of consumption, one fourth or one fifth part of his earnings, when these earnings are £50 and £60 a year. With how much greater severity must these taxes press on multitudes whose wages are not half of these amounts! These are altogether deprived of the little luxuries they might otherwise enjoy, because

of the duties on tea, coffee, and sugar, and many other articles they would gladly consume, if their cost came within the reach of their means.

The hardships endured by the poor, who are lowest in the scale of wages' earners, and indeed of a large proportion of our population who are far above these parties in the means of obtaining the comforts of life, would have been greatly aggravated of late years but for the repeal of the corn laws. That measure secured to the people an abundant supply of food, at moderate prices. But still the cost has been enhanced one shilling a quarter on the entire consumption of the kingdom, by the retention of that duty on foreign corn; and some idea of this burthen may be conceived from the fact, that this duty produced last year not far from £900,000.

The importation of foreign grain and flour in the

Year 1840 was,	Corn of all kinds	3,474,058 qrs.
"	Flour and Meal	1,546,523 cwts.
1862	Corn of all kinds	16,307,563 qrs.
"	Flour and Meal	7,203,528 cwts.

Some twenty other articles of foreign importation exhibit, in an equally striking point of view, the wonderful results of the limited measure of free trade permitted by our government, or which the people are yet sufficiently enlightened to demand. Landholders are as great gainers under the new system as any other portions of the community; and when the whole of the customs and excise duties shall be swept away, and an equitable system of direct taxation introduced in their stead, like good results to them and all other classes, will follow. Traders will gain largely by the change; land will rise in value, as capital increases, far beyond the amount of any taxes that may be placed upon it for supply of the nation's wants; and more and better than all, the wages' earners will be placed in a position to enable them to have all the comforts, and some of the luxuries of life, and to hand down to their children the same happy prospects; and this is the only means whereby the tide of emigration, which is carrying away the life-blood of our country, can be arrested in its perennial flow.

With all her greatness, and she is great, and with all her growing wealth, amounting, according to *The Economist* of the 19th December last, to 130 millions a year, England is yet a land of paupers; one-twentieth of her population are receiving their support from the poor-rates—living upon the industry and the thrift of others, multitudes of whom are on the verge of destitution; and yet they are forced by law to contribute, of their penury, to the wants of those who are nearer starvation than themselves. Does such a state of things as this exist in any other country under the sun? Wealth so unbounded, on the one hand, that no use can be made of it by its owners; and poverty so pinching, on the other, that nearly a million of her people are not ashamed to beg.

What is taxation for? Much of it is wasted in various ways, which I need not now enumerate. Its only legitimate use is, to protect life and property; these are the only functions which Government should be called on to perform. Then, in the name of common

honesty, as well as of common sense, let our taxes be so raised as to press as lightly as possible on those who are least able to bear them—in a word, let every one only have to pay according to his means.

Many centuries ago—I think it was in the reign of King John—a land tax limited to four shillings an acre, was levied to meet the national expenditure; previously a land tax defrayed nearly the whole government charges. I presume it was only levied on cultivated land. Some hundred of years after, the landholders, fancying themselves wise in their generation, shifted this imaginary burthen off their shoulders, and commenced a system of indirect taxation, which has continued to their own detriment, and to the detriment of the whole population, up to the present day. This land-tax was never wholly repealed, but by some species of parliamentary chicanery (relative to the value of land at the time it was imposed) the landholders got nearly rid of it. Now it produces something over a million a year, it should be some fifty or sixty millions, taking the present value of land into account; and if this sum were now actually placed in the exchequer, from that source, and that such had always been the case, in just proportion to the value of land, from time to time, and according to our necessities, the landholders would be richer men than they now are, for their wealth depends on the prosperity of the whole nation, of which they form a part, and ultimately all, or nearly all, taxes are derived from the land; so that its legal owners, by their ignorance of the laws which govern the production and the accumulation of wealth, have been, for long years, injuring themselves and others by their shortsighted policy. If they had been still powerful enough to maintain the corn laws, either violence would repeal them, or universal poverty would be a bluster on the land, in the shape of poor-rates, far more onerous than the ancient levy of four shillings in the pound.

I am not such a visionary as to imagine that we can by legislation secure to every man the comforts of life. I entirely believe that it is only by thrift, industry, and temperance that men can rise above want, and permanently set that gnawing evil at defiance. But I am, at the same time, of opinion that there is great unmanliness and downright injustice in our present system of taxation, which throws the burthen of the revenue of these countries on the shoulders least able to bear it.

Adam Smith, who is usually taken as an authority, says to this effect: "The subjects of every State ought to contribute to the support of the government as nearly as possible in proportion to their respective abilities."

In a pamphlet, entitled *Report on Taxation, Direct and Indirect*, issued by the "Financial Reform Association," Liverpool, October, 1859, it is stated, as a pretty accurate approximation to the truth, that the taxes on trade and industry are £48,600,884, and on property only £12,196,929. Such a disproportion as this is indefensible on any principles of justice, and the sooner we insist on parliament replacing it by an honest one, the better it will be for all parties—for the capitalist, as well as him whose labour is his only capital; for the growth of wealth is injured by every act of injustice,

by every restriction on free trade. We give the poor man no voice in the legislature, and against every principle of justice we tax him far more heavily in proportion to his means, than we do the makers of those laws which keep his nose to the grindstone.

I would put an end to this unequal state of affairs by an entire change in our fiscal arrangements. Various plans for effecting this desirable object have been proposed from time to time. The one which, in my judgment, is the simplest, the cheapest, the justest, and of course the best, was that submitted to parliament in the year 1831 by the late James S. Buckingham, M.P. for Sheffield, who was for several years their able and enlightened representative in the House of Commons. He was a man who lived far in advance of his times, and of course his views were denounced as visionary. Many of them have, however, since found an echo in the public mind, and are embodied in our statute book. His financial reform system remains yet to be adopted. According to my recollection, the late Lord Althorpe was Chancellor of the Exchequer when Mr. Buckingham laid his plan before the House, and it was pronounced by that nobleman to be excellent in theory, but that the people of England were not yet ripe for such a system. I now revive the idea for your consideration, and in the hope that the warm sunshine of some thirty-two summers has so ripened the judgment of our political economists, and other intellectual men in these kingdoms, that they are better prepared for this intelligible and equitable mode of raising a revenue for supply of all our wants—governmental and local—in church and in state.

The few minutes I have yet to spare, according to the rule of our Society, for addressing you to night, will only admit of my giving you a hasty sketch of my late highly valued friend's elaborate plan, in which he has met and answered many of the objections which it occurred to him would most likely be urged against it; but which course of reasoning I shall have no time, in my present paper, to bring under your notice. We are all apt to see only the bright side of our own projects; but in the enlightened Society that I have the honour and the pleasure to address, no dark shades upon the measures proposed by any of us, can pass without discovery and suitable animadversion.

Mr. Buckingham laid down "seven principles of just, easy, and productive taxation," so plain and simple that I believe all intelligent men would admit them as axioms. Want of time prohibits my quoting them. He then shows that every one of them is violated by our present system; and he goes on to develop his plan, which will be found consistent with them all; and, as I believe, fully suitable to our present circumstances, and to all such changes as time may bring about in our country.

The plan is a tax on rank or station, and a graduated property tax thereon, on such a system as should commend itself to all, because of its equity, its suitability to the means of all, and to the largest wants, in the shape of taxes, for sustaining the power and influence of this great nation. Its great distinctive feature is, that it allows every man to fix the scale of his own taxation or quota to the national revenue.

At the time this new system was proposed, the sum raised by taxes, for various purposes, by the government, in customs, excise, post-office, &c., by the church, the universities, and public schools, by the county and parish rates, poor rates, &c.; by the law, for all its purposes, and by various other bodies, amounted to eighty-five millions of pounds sterling; collected in the present unsatisfactory and expensive manner. It was on this scale that Mr. Buckingham formed his scheme. He laid his foundation on the then existing circumstances, to show that the people did actually pay, in a round-about, a disagreeable, and an expensive way, an immense sum annually; which amount he would obtain from them in a manner, in no way galling to the feelings of any just man in the community. To all contributors to the revenue, this plan gives political privileges in proportion to the amount of his contribution. All women and young children, and every person not earning £50 per annum, to be entirely exonerated from payment of any tax. So that out of the whole population of Great Britain and Ireland in 1831, not more than three millions would have been called on to pay taxes in any shape or form. The increased wealth of the nation since that period, would of course greatly alter this proportion. Indeed, it would alter year by year; as every year, each man would decide for himself, which rank or class he would enter, and pay to the state accordingly.

It was not proposed, nor do I propose, to make any alterations or changes of any kind, in the existing social arrangements of society. These are to remain just as they are; all ranks and classes will retain their position and privileges as they now exist. The only change contemplated is, the mode of raising the amount of revenue now obtained, by an easier, a more popular, and much less expensive plan, than that which has long been in operation.

For the purposes of taxation, the community is to be divided into three classes. The first comprising

	Supposed Income	£
30 Dukes		100,000
70 Marquisses	"	70,000
100 Earls	"	40,000
150 Viscounts	"	20,000
250 Barons	"	10,000

On these a tax of 30 per cent. to be levied, which would produce £5,150,000 per annum, and these parties were to have increased privileges as Peers of 6, 4, 3, 2, 1 votes.

The second class, comprising

	Supposed Income	£
1,000 Rt. Hon. Baronets ...		5,000
3,000 Right Honourables	"	3,000
6,000 Honourables	"	2,000
15,000 Knights	"	1,000
25,000 Burgesses	"	500
150,000 Esquires ..	"	250

On these a tax of 20 per cent. to be levied, which would produce

£18,200,000 per annum, and these parties were to have increased privileges as voters, of 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 votes

The third class, comprising :—

	Supposed Income	£
400,000 Wholesale Dealers		400
600,000 Retail Dealers	„	300
800,000 Master Tradesman	„	200
500,000 Clerks and Students	„	100
500,000 Free Artisans	„	50

On these a tax of 10 per cent. to be levied, which would produce £57,500,000 per annum, and these parties were to have increased privileges as voters, of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 votes.

Recapitulation :—

	£
600 Nobility	5,150,000
200,000 Gentry	18,200,000
2,800,000 Tradesmen	57,500,000
Total,	£80,850,000

The above, in lieu of all other taxes—for civil, religious, and educational purposes—leaving agriculture, and trade, and commerce, free to promote their civilizing influences, to an extent hitherto unknown. This scheme appears to me grand in its conception and unexceptionable in its leading principles. It would not bear with undue weight on any man ; its pressure would scarcely be felt by even the poorest members of the community who would be called on to contribute to the exigencies of the State.

I do not see one solid objection to its acceptance by all parties. It would not infringe to any oppressive extent on the luxuries and comforts of any class. To the untaxed I need hardly say it would be a great boon. To me it seems that this part of the scheme is an unnecessary exemption from a plain duty which all men owe to their country. I think all who possess property or income should pay some proportion of it for good government.

It is obvious, on looking at Mr. Buckingham's Table of Taxpayers, that he has greatly underrated their incomes, and I should say their numbers also. So that the per-centage of taxation which he proposed might bear a reduction ; or, if a small increase were made to it, an annual surplus of revenue to a large extent would be raised, without overburthening any one ; that would, ere long, wipe out the National Debt. The wealth of the country is sufficient to secure that great object and to accomplish much more in the interests of civilization. We have the power, we need only the will, to accomplish much good for all the people.

To place the needed revenue in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at very little cost, and with little or none of the trouble he has now to undergo in the preparation of his Budget and its realization in the hands of innumerable officials ; it is proposed that every tax-payer shall be called on, once every year, to enter his class, and to hand in his quota of taxation to the proper officer, (we now pay our income tax in this way), and the penalty upon all for

neglect of this duty to be his deprivation of all his rights and privileges as a free citizen, and his exclusion from all legal power of contracting engagements of any kind, or of recovering debts, until he shall assume his rank or class, and pay the debt attached to it—placing him, in short, in the condition of an uncertified bankrupt or outlaw ; but from which disabilities he had it in his power to free himself at once.

Mr. Buckingham with much ability brings under review the various objections that might be urged against his proposal ; and with great force of argument replies to them. I have no time to bring them under your notice in detail. To do so would occupy more than another paper. His fundamental idea is that all men wish for rank, and power, and influence in society. That this is proved by the universal exhibition of wealth—which is the great index of rank, and power, and influence—by all who possess it ; and that by taking advantage of this feeling, and making it ancillary to the possession of these desired qualities, by resting their possession on the rank assumed, and the money paid into the exchequer, and the privileges united with these acts, that, in practice, it would be found that all would take the highest place in the social scale which was warranted by their means. A few misers and dishonest persons would do as they do now but that would not sensibly affect the general result. As a general rule, men finding that the rank they took, and the taxes they paid, indicated their station, they would be just as anxious to comply with these necessary requisites of position, as they now are to live in fine houses, to keep many horses and carriages, and to obtain patents of Nobility, Baronetcies, and other honours, which bring privileges with them, that all men and women like to be the possessors of, and to possess which is the only value which great wealth confers on its individual owners.

Having thus re-opened this interesting proposal, which emanated from one of the most enlightened minds of our time, which is proved by the fact that many of the reforms he long since suggested, or warmly supported, have since been carried out with universal approval, I now leave it in your hands. To me the idea seems a beautiful and a perfect one ; I believe it will live, and yet produce the ripe and rich fruits of a more generally diffused prosperity and abundance of the comforts of life than has yet been known in these lands, where it is sad to see poverty such as is almost unknown in other civilized countries, side by side with wealth so superabundant that, as I have already intimated, its possessors are at their wit's end to know what to do with it.

I conclude with a few words on treaties of commerce.

Mr. Cobden's commercial treaty with France, and all other treaties of a like nature, seem to me unnecessary—not to say unwise—proceedings. All such treaties are, in my mind, opposed to sound commercial principles. They seek unnecessarily to create reciprocity ; there can be no trade without reciprocity. Trade should be free as the winds of heaven ; and then it would be beneficent as the sunshine, which imparts life to all animated beings. Treaties pre-suppose some peculiar advantage to either party. The course these countries should

pursue, in relation to all countries—and entirely independent of the action of other governments—is, to open their ports without let or hindrance of any kind; no port-dues on ships, no customs-duties on merchandize. Whatever products from other lands reached our shores, must be paid for in the products of our own country. The products of our lands, of our mines, and of our manufactures, must go in exchange for the merchandize that would flow in upon us in an ever increasing stream. Some say, No! it is gold that would depart, and we should soon be left as poor as Job. But do we get the gold for nothing? By no means; every ounce of it which comes to us, represents its value in the industry of our looms and our workshops. Every impediment cast in the way of the freest commercial intercourse; every custom-house duty which enhances the price of foreign articles that we desire to possess, and which thereby lessens their consumption, impedes trade, and diminishes the wealth of the country, is an injustice and an injury to our people, and lessens their ability to contribute to the revenue needed to carry on the affairs of the nation. This mischievous state of affairs is therefore a mutual injury to all classes of our population; and I presume it is still adhered to under the erroneous impression that what one country gains by commerce another must lose. England has, in a great measure, outgrown this fallacy; she has yet to get rid of her swaddling clothes on the subject of customs and excise duties, which are equally opposed to sound principles; that we should stick to these modes of raising our revenue, will be looked upon by another generation with the same wonder we manifest at many of the expedients of our forefathers.

I may now name a few pamphlets on free-trade and financial reform, and other matters referred to in this paper, in which those who desire further information on the topics alluded to, will find ample details given. The book from which I have taken Mr. Buckingham's plan of financial reform, is entitled "*Sketches illustrative of the Life, Travels, and Opinions of J. S. Buckingham.*" It was published about the year 1831 or 1832, and may perhaps be had at some of the London Booksellers, price 7s. 6d. The following pamphlets may be obtained on application to the secretary of the "Financial Reform Association," 20, South John-street, Liverpool.—*Rights of Rich and Poor, Just Taxation; Report on Taxation, Direct and Indirect*, October, 1859; *Direct Taxation and Freedom of Trade*, Edinburgh, October, 1863; *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Taxation*, London, June, 1862; *The Cost of Customs and Excise; Direct Taxation—Prize Essay*.

Since I wrote the foregoing, there has been a meeting of the "Council Superieur" of industry and commerce at Antwerp, at which it was unanimously resolved, that, "Considering that the absolute suppression of customs duties is of a nature to exercise the greatest influence on the prosperity of commerce and industry, the council recommends that government should study the fiscal part of the question." This unanimous vote of the council, which was passed in opposition to the recommendation of a committee for the

remission of duties on raw materials, &c., was considered a real triumph for the promoters of entire freedom of trade.

Verily, progressive and enlightened ideas are making their way through the clouds of ignorance and obstruction, and must soon gain the ascendancy. I wish Ireland was prepared to take a leading part in their development.

On Monday evening last, the value of free intercourse among all nations was illustrated in a very striking manner by Dr. Barry in his paper on Queensland. The native grasses there have been entirely superseded and rooted out wherever English seed has been sown; and the produce in milk, in consequence, has risen from three quarts per day, from each cow on the average, to eight quarts.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. SHANNON attributed the present sufferings of this country to the operation of Sir Robert Peel's free trade measures.

Mr. URLIN thought that few persons would agree in the condemnation of free trade expressed by the last speaker. Free trade had increased greatly the wealth of the empire, though it was possible that some portions of the country had suffered from it. He looked upon the scheme put forward by Mr. Haughton as impracticable and visionary.

The CHAIRMAN (The SOLICITOR-GENERAL) expressed the pleasure it always gave him to hear from Mr. Haughton his views on any subject. He always received them with respect; but he wished to call his attention to the fact that the course and tendency of taxation had been, as it ought to be, in the direction in which it had been pointed out—namely, that no duties ought to be imposed but for the purposes of revenue. And then, with respect to free trade, they all knew that if it were not for free trade the people of this country could not have been fed. It would have been impossible to have given food to the people here but for its introduction. What Mr. Haughton proposed was to tax the landowners to an enormous amount. It was not to be lost sight of that, since that plan was proposed, very great taxes had been imposed upon land. The succession duty, and taxes for local purposes had imposed upon the owners of land a very serious burden. But with respect to the possibility of taxing capitalists, and persons of large incomes, on the enormous scales proposed, the effect would be to drive those persons, who lived on the interest of their money, away to some country where they would not be so enormously taxed. It appeared to him that the views of the Financial Reform Association were, to a very great extent, impracticable. He had heard them brought forward at Edinburgh, and took some trouble to controvert them there. If there were a country that had no national debt, the customs and excise might there, perhaps, be dispensed with; but that was not the condition of this country, and, as long as it was as it is, with the obligations they had to meet, they should have direct and indirect taxation. Either exclusively would be found oppressive and intolerable.