

city than before—all these tell of the increase of wealth, and speak still more strongly of the public and patriotic spirit of the people.

"To me, who visited the United States on a former occasion, but so long ago that Chicago was then but a village, and Philadelphia had not more than one-half its present population, when its railways were only beginning to be made with wooden bridges and almost temporary works, when its vast mineral wealth was nearly untouched, and wood was burned where coal is now consumed, the astonishing changes and the vast progress since made, appear greater than perhaps they will do to others whose visits have been more frequent. However this may be, what I witnessed at the Exhibition at Philadelphia and in the districts I visited, impressed me very strongly with the energy of the people and the vast resources of this great country."

It would be well for the Minister for Works to consider whether a bridge of great durability could not be erected over the Parramatta River, designed and contracted for in America, by which £20,000 would be saved. I may here add that a friend has written to me from Philadelphia that the president of the American Dredging Company informed him that, in consequence of what I said in my reports from that city on dredging, some gentlemen from one of the Australian Colonies had visited his Company's works, and, being satisfied of the superiority of the American system, had made purchases satisfactory to both parties.

Mr. Lothian Bell, M.P., F.R.S., deals in a long and most attractive report with the iron manufactures of the United States. His report abounds in statistics, exhibiting the marvellous abundance and richness of the iron mines, and the progress made in converting the ore into pig, and then into the numerous articles of which it is capable. Mr. Bell does not spare to expose what he considers to be the evils and fallacies of protection, just as I have often heard him attempt to do, surrounded by a host of its most strenuous advocates. The following extract will give an idea of his line of argument:—

"Great force is attached by Americans to the immense advantage of providing the farmer with a ready market at his own door, and no one will deny that, unless the position is acquired at the expense of sound commercial principles, there is much to be said in its favour. The population of Indiana is probably about one and three-quarter millions, and so far back as 1870 its agricultural produce was estimated at something over two and a half millions sterling, and is probably far more at the present day. Ten years ago it was essentially agricultural, and, indeed, may be still so regarded. Upon the occasion of my first visit I examined a pork-curing establishment at Indianapolis, where 1,600 animals were slaughtered every day, and of these no inconsiderable proportion found its way to Great Britain. The inhabitants of Indiana were formerly in favour of any policy which was likely to promote their intercourse with ourselves, and, believing free trade the best calculated for this, the members sent to Congress, according to my informant, were anti-protectionists. About 1867 an iron furnace or two were built; the total number now in existence is nine, and the estimated annual make is 71,000 tons, or about 90 lb. per inhabitant per annum, that of Great Britain being close on 400 lb. But this production, along with a similar development of other branches of industry, has led the people of this State to do their best to exclude a return cargo from one of their best customers by sending as their representatives to the National Legislature gentlemen pledged to the maintenance of a high tariff. What must be highly satisfactory to such political economists is that in spite of the protective duty of 28s. per ton, most of their furnaces are out of blast, extinguished, not by the dreaded pig iron from Great Britain, but by the produce of those States which along with themselves are so loud in favour of protection to native industry, protection which in this particular case has utterly failed to secure its chief recommendation of providing a customer at the farmer's door in Indiana."

The protectionists answer this by asking if Indiana, or any other State of the Union, would have had any furnaces if the foreign manufacturer had been permitted to undersell in the market before the newly-established firms could produce the raw material, or whether it is not better to have furnaces out of blast than none at all? In the course of his observations, he remarks:—

"In the matter of intemperance it is extremely difficult for a stranger to draw any comparison which discloses accurately the real state of the case. All I can say is that the complaints of the employers in America were quite as numerous and quite as severe as those I am in the habit of hearing and experiencing in this country. In one case, that of the railway shops at Altoona, the plan of forbidding the sale of intoxicating liquors in the town had been tried with such unsatisfactory results that, on the petition of the railway company, the old order of things was re-established.

"According to my information, the native-born Americans evince more than a disinclination to apply themselves to the severe labour of the mine and the ironworks, and, in consequence, fresh hands are almost exclusively recruited from immigrants. What struck me upon many occasions was the number of small shopkeepers in places of comparative unimportance, indicative, it might be, of a preference for the greater ease of the employment as compared with severe manual labour."

Mr. Bell condenses his views into the following terse statements:—

"1. That the powers of iron-production between the years 1870 and 1875 were increased in the United States far beyond any possible requirements of the country.

"2. That the high prices which led to this permitted and induced the manufacturers to accede to demands from certain sections of the workmen which are now acting adversely to the true interests of the trade.

"3. That the same causes, reacting on the value of the raw material, along with the increased value of labour, as above stated, have unduly added to the cost of iron.

"4. That the interference with the laws which regulate the prices of commodities has in the case of anthracite coal added to the difficulties of the iron-smelters; and the sudden demand made on mines incapable of meeting it has increased those difficulties by an unhealthy addition to the selling price of iron ore.

"5. That the protective duties levied on foreign iron entering the United States by raising the price there are chargeable with a portion of the mischief.

"6. That the natural resources of the United States of America are such as to render any protective tariff on iron unnecessary, which tariff, moreover, is an injustice to other branches of industry."