

sessed from the beginning, but which it is the chief aim of a great many men in office to keep from it.

A large proportion of the public officers in this city, we venture to assert, would like the business of their offices to be considered strictly private and a large proportion of their subordinates "confidential" agents; but nothing worse could happen either to them or the service. There is hardly a man in any public office who is not helped and fortified, not only against other people's badness, but against his own, by having the world know what he is about.

Take, for instance, the case of this Aqueduct Commission. Nearly everything of an objectionable or disreputable character which has been revealed in the evidence is the result of secrecy. The Commissioners were expressly directed by the statute to open the bids or proposals "publicly." They evaded this with the connivance or consent of men of Mr. Dowd's standing, by secretly ascertaining beforehand what bids would be made, and what bids they would accept. They took, moreover, every precaution possible to keep from the public all knowledge of the motives which animated them in performing this most important of all their official duties, by failing to keep any minutes or other record of their proceedings. Had these proceedings been public, as they ought to have been, there is little doubt the work would not have been awarded in two huge sections to two firms of contractors, because the flimsiness of the reasons for this arrangement, which is now acknowledged, would have been detected at the outset. The theory that from any point of view it was desirable to give the work out in two large slices would, of course, have never been produced when all concerned knew that the job was immediately to be divided up among a large body of sub-contractors. Nor is it at all likely that Fish would have got up his little scheme of reorganization had he known that the other Commissioners would not give him the shelter of silence, and that he was going to intrude himself into a body of men who were in frank and loyal relations with the people of the city, handling the public money on the table with open books.

#### BRITISH WAGES.

THE present agitation of the tariff question has given rise to a great demand for statistics bearing upon the various aspects of the subject. It is, however, almost a commonplace that no cause is so poor but that it can find statistics which can be made to appear to support it. The complexity of most statistics is such that a skilful and not too scrupulous advocate can make them tell strange tales. But this is not all, nor the worst; there always remains the connection of cause and effect, which statistics alone cannot enable us to determine. Those who laud our protective system as the corner-stone and the only safeguard of our prosperity and of the welfare of our workmen, usually consider

their task accomplished when they have written down the figures which record our progress during the past generation. This progress has taken place under protection, and they think they are acquitted of the task of showing that protection has been the cause of it. But, fortunately, our own is not the only country which has statistics; and any one who examines the statistics of other countries will soon convince himself of the absurdity of the claim that our indebtedness to the protective system is shown by the evidence of statistics.

There are two classes of facts, especially, which are a dreadful stumbling-block to the protectionist statistician: the superiority of English to Continental wages, and the rise of wages in England during the free-trade era. As to the latter point, we have fortunately very high authority for determining it. On the opening of the fiftieth session of the Statistical Society of London in 1883, its President, the eminent statistician, Mr. Giffen, chose for the subject of his inaugural address "The Progress of the Working Classes in the Last Half-Century." The table which he there presents, though itself showing in a striking way what opportunities such tables offer for intentional perversion, exhibits unmistakably an enormous rise in the wages of British labor. The least increase shown by any occupation in the fifty years is 20 per cent., in nearly every case the increase is more than 50 per cent., and in one case, that of the Bradford weavers, it exceeds 150 per cent. From a table showing so great a diversity in the different occupations, it is difficult to draw an accurate numerical conclusion; what is plain is, that the workmen of England have made an enormous advance in their rate of wages. Nor is this all. At the same time that his wages have been increased, the English workman's hours of labor have been diminished, the nine-hour day being now almost universal in England; Mr. Giffen estimates the average reduction of hours at 20 per cent. A French economist, M. Émile Chevallier, in his work on 'Wages in the Nineteenth Century' (Paris, 1887), to which was awarded the prize of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, sums up the matter in this way (p. 100): "The English workingman has obtained in fifty years an increase of from 50 to 100 per cent. in his money wages; and a diminution of 20 per cent. in the duration of his daily work; he has therefore made an advance in round numbers of from 70 to 120 per cent."

As to the comparison between English and Continental wages, that is a less simple matter; the variations are great in each country, and the classifications of employees vary from one country to another. The fact, however, that there is a vast difference in favor of the English workingman is notorious; it is as unnecessary to prove it by statistics as it is to prove that our own workmen have better wages than those of Great Britain. As to the exact figures, one can only appreciate the difficulty of arriving at them by taking a glance at the bulky volume published by

the United States Bureau of Statistics in 1875, under the title of 'Labor in Europe and America.' No mode of striking an average could lead to a really accurate result; and any result arrived at by one who was illustrating a thesis might be suspected of being more or less influenced by bias. We shall, therefore, quote the figures given by the French economist already cited as being apparently the best attainable, though no special importance should be attached to them: "The United States, then, hold the highest position; wages there are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. higher than in Australia, 84 per cent. higher than in the United Kingdom, 162 per cent. higher than in Germany, and 205 per cent. higher than in France. Great Britain, in its turn, shows a rate of wages higher by 42 per cent. than that of Germany, and by 65 per cent. than that of France."

The statistics we have cited as showing the increase in British wages during the past fifty years are not adduced to show that free trade raises wages. They are merely given in rebuttal of the ever-recurring fallacy that any improvement which has taken place in our own country under the régime of high tariff is to be attributed to that institution. But the contrast between English and Continental wages—which, we repeat, does not rest upon any special statistics, but is matter of common knowledge—this contrast is something more than a mere rebuttal. Not only does it utterly break the force of the position that the superiority of our wages to those of Europe is due to protection, but it constitutes in itself a positive proof that a high rate of wages has its source in something deeper than a system of taxation, and may be maintained by an energetic and favorably situated people in the face of the inferior wages of inferior and less fortunate competitors.

#### ARGENTINE FINANCES.

THE remarkable material expansion of the Argentine Republic during the last seven years of peace has not entirely escaped notice in our own country, despite our limited commercial relations with the great Power of the Plate Valley. The rapid extension of her railroad systems, the vast sums devoted to other public works, the reclaiming of immense areas of fertile land from the danger of Indian forays, the marvellous quickening both of domestic and foreign trade—of all these things we have heard vaguely, though, at the same time, color has been given to the suspicion that the whole might be an unnatural inflation to be followed by a disastrous collapse. Argentine credit, for example, has all along been comparatively low, inferior to that of Chili or Brazil. A new 5 per cent. loan, negotiated in January, 1887, commanded only  $85\frac{1}{2}$  in London. Specie payments had to be suspended early in 1885, and when the two years had elapsed which had been fixed as the limit of the suspension, its term had to be extended, resumption now being promised for the 9th of January, 1889. Meanwhile, the national income had been steadily falling behind expenses, the foreign and domestic debts were each mounting higher and higher,

so that the remark of the Argentine Minister in Washington, in 1885, that the financial condition of his country was "not quite satisfactory," was as mild a phrase as could well be used under the circumstances.

Still, there were all the while hopeful features. The republic has a splendid record for fidelity to her public obligations. The interest on her national debt has always been punctually met, and one of her Presidents once solemnly asserted, with general approval, that the nation would suffer hunger and thirst rather than fail to pay its debts. At a time of civil war, thirty-one landed proprietors in the Province of Buenos Ayres signed an agreement to pay the interest on the national debt until after the termination of the strife. Then, too, the expensive system of internal improvements was accompanied by a great development of natural resources and enlargement of foreign commerce. A total foreign trade of \$83,202,750 in 1877 had swollen to \$218,000,000 in 1887. And if the debt had gone on increasing in great leaps, so had the revenue, the national revenue rising from \$14,824,096 in 1877 to \$59,138,000 in 1887.

In fact, the recent message of President Celman to the Argentine Congress appears to show that the republic is now mistress of the financial situation, certainly that she is now in a more assured position than ever before in her history as an independent Government. For the first time on record the revenue for 1886 had more than covered the outlay, and the President reports that the surplus for 1887 is still larger. At the same time, the public debt has been reduced by more than eight millions of dollars, and the credit of the country so much strengthened that the 5 per cent. bonds issued a year ago at 85½, are now quoted at 97, while the 6 per cent. loan of 1882 now commands from two to five above par. The abolition of export duties, together with the allowance of drawbacks on imported bags, boxes, etc., for the shipment abroad of national products, has greatly stimulated the export trade, which showed an increase in 1887 of \$14,600,000, principally in grain, hides, and frozen meats. The returns for the first three months of the current year show a further gain of \$4,000,000 in foreign commerce, even over the unprecedented figures of 1887.

Since the date of her independence the Argentine Republic has negotiated twenty different foreign loans, of a total capitalization of \$221,438,077. In interest she has paid \$55,904,613, and for redemption of maturing bonds \$86,212,653. The total amount of the foreign debt on the 31st of March of this year was, according to the message of President Celman, \$92,427,000. The domestic debt, at the same date, amounted to \$47,000,000. The provinces have besides a foreign debt of \$88,219,611, and a domestic debt of about \$25,000,000.

The national revenues are derived from import duties, which are fixed, with a few exceptions, at 25 per cent. ad valorem, from stamps, the Post-office, railways, telegraphs, the tax on real estate, and other minor taxes. The per-capita taxation under national laws amounted, in 1886, to \$12.42.

The banking and currency of the Argentine Republic have been in an extremely unsettled condition for several years. A resolute attempt to put them upon a better basis was made in the law of November 3, 1887. This was nothing less than the creation of a system of national banks expressly modelled on our own. It made banking practically free, and provided a national currency guaranteed by national bonds bearing 4½ per cent. interest in gold. These bonds are delivered to any banking institution submitting to the required governmental inspection, for 85 per cent. of their par value, and may then be deposited as security for an emission of bills up to the face value of the bonds. President Celman reports the entire success of the new scheme, saying that the circulation of the new national banks already amounts to \$88,500,000, and that they bid fair to supply the monetary needs of the country.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA AFTER EIGHT CENTURIES.

BOLOGNA, June 16, 1888.

In reviewing the festivities which accompanied the celebration of the eighth centennial of the University of Bologna, there are certain moments on which the memory loves to linger; and there are one or two points which suggest less agreeable reflections. To begin with the latter: Although the foreign delegates were theoretically the guests of the University, they were never formally presented to the Academic Senate; nor, except by mere chance, did they have an opportunity of making the personal acquaintance of any of the professors. Many who came to Bologna with a sincere desire of learning something of the workings of an Italian university, and of getting to know some of the many learned men who fill chairs at Bologna and in other Italian universities, went away no wiser than when they came. This omission, which might at first seem disrespect, was due solely to mismanagement and imperfect organization; but as the Rector Capellini, who was mainly responsible for what was as disagreeable to the Italians as to the strangers, has since resigned in consequence of the criticisms on him, nothing more need be said on this subject.

A great contrast to the official management was afforded by the uniform success which attended everything that was either undertaken or carried out by the students, whether their reception of the foreign students, with the white ox, the great cheese, and the big cask of Barbera wine, presented by their comrades of Padua, Pavia, and Turin, or their torchlight and humorous mediæval processions, their burlesque festival, or their celebration in honor of the memory of Galvani. In kindness, in amiability, and in courtesy they were constant, in season and out of season. Their hospitality was unbounded, and many of them will doubtless find it hard work to get through the next year on their scanty means. The poet Guerrini told me that he knew a poor medical student who had given up his only room to two Germans, and had taken meanwhile a bed at the hospital in which he was studying. They were, of course, this being Italy, not unassisted by the richer citizens; and several noble ladies lent their horses and carriages, with coachman and footman in full livery, to help them do honor to their guests. Their tact was such that no disagreeable incident occurred between the

French and German deputations, who, indeed, fraternized at first to such an extent as to excite the wrath of certain Parisian newspapers. Their courtesy to all was so great that many a foreign professor found his way smoothed for him by the good offices of the first student he chanced to address.

In a city with the secular musical reputation of Bologna—and, if report speaks truly, it is to a mediæval Bolognese student that we owe the song "*Gaudeamus igitur*"—music would naturally form part of the programme of any feast. Twice during the official celebration we listened to a cantata written by the poet Panzacchi, and composed and directed by the ambitious young *maestro*, Baron Franchetti. Twice Wagner's opera, Italianized into "*Tristano ed Isotta*," was given as a gala spectacle. Best of all was a concert of classical and modern music by the celebrated orchestra led by Martucci. Selections from Weber, Beethoven, Rossini, Rubinstein, Tchaikofsky, Brahms, Berlioz, and Wagner were executed with a delicacy and precision which enchanted the severest German and American critics present. Unfortunately, the course of historical concerts and the performances of Mendelssohn's "*Elijah*" had not yet begun; they are to come later.

A fantastic torchlight procession in honor of royalty made us lament the organized horrors which render so hideous the last nights before a Presidential election. No mazy dance of fireflies along the Arno could be more beautiful. Rows of lights, groups of lights, combined into odd figures and shapes—the Queen's favorite marguerite, the star of Italy, the cross of Savoy, fans, wreaths, and palm-leaves—followed each other for an hour, yet all in order, in rhythm, and with due sequence of color and effect. Yet the materials were simple—light frames of lath or wire on the end of a staff, small glass tumblers filled with some tallow-like composition, and provided with a wick, and bits of white and colored paper pasted round them to protect the lights from the wind. Any clever Italian can, at a slight expense and with a day's labor, illuminate the front of his house more effectively than with any number of flaring gas-jets.

The evening at court differed from other soirées of this kind only in being held in the long galleries of a mediæval building, unused to such gayety since the times of the Cardinal Legates, and in the relaxation of etiquette. Presentations were made without difficulty, and the King, who usually avoids occasions of ceremony, talked as freely and pleasantly with the delegates as did the Queen. The Prince of Naples did his part well, but his youth made him shy and more constrained. The presence of the Queen lent a charm to the place which President de Brogues could never have felt, agreeable as Cardinal Lambertini was, and excellent a Pope as he afterwards became. A surprise was reserved for the end of the evening. Looking out of the windows, we saw the square densely packed with thousands of people; and in the strong electric light every upturned face was visible and distinct. All Bologna was listening to a military serenade, the music of which we had scarcely noticed; and the appearance of the royal party on the balcony, under the outstretched blessing hands of the bronze statue of Pope Gregory XIII., was the signal for an outburst of enthusiastic applause.

So far I have spoken only of the hospitality of the city, of the Government—for there was an excellent dinner offered by the Prefect—and of the Crown. It is time to return to *Bononia Alma Mater Studiorum*. Seldom has there been seen such a picturesque gathering of learn-