

"history of religion, and some miracle-mongering, have no doubt about the continued existence of several sorts of souls, some of them bogies. This draws them close to that intelligent body, the Psychological Research Society. For the patrons of psychical research Esoteric Buddhism has this charm—that it offers the greatest quantity of prodigies with the slightest possible basis of evidence." It seems that the whole thing has been exposed by Mr. Arthur Lillie, in a pamphlet called "Koot Hoomi Unveiled" (E. W. Allen). "Asmodeus" should read it, when he may possibly understand why the people he calls "fools" and "blind," "malignant and stoney-hearted," are not prepared to follow his lead. They know the country too well. The rank growth of the weeds of superstition indicate the proximity of the old theological bogs. It will take time to drain them, but the work will be done at last.

The vitality of erroneous opinions, when associated with self-interest, is well illustrated by the manner in which "protection" is growing into public favour. 'Hansard' supplies evidence that too many members of both Houses are profoundly ignorant of the very elements of economic science, which is perhaps not to be wondered at when it is remembered how small a portion of the public has as yet grasped the idea that political action has any connection with scientific knowledge at all. Implicitly, no doubt, the fact is recognised that, to secure good results, sound knowledge is required, but few people seem to realise that any knowledge bearing on the political life of a people, is, or may be, organised into a body of reasoned truth. In politics almost any fallacy will impose upon even intelligent men if it appears to jump with their wishes, and the more illogical an argument is the more it "tells" in an election or in a division.

As Mr. Herbert Spencer has pointed out, even our language has been moulded in accordance with economic ideas which are palpably fallacious. He says:—"It is, indeed, marvellous how readily we let ourselves be deceived by words and phrases which suggest one aspect of the facts while leaving the opposite aspect unsuggested. A good illustration of this, and one germane to the immediate question, is seen in the use of the words 'protection' and 'protectionist' by the antagonists of free-trade, and in the tacit admission of its propriety by free-traders. While the one party has habitually ignored, the other party has habitually failed to emphasise the truth, that this so-called protection always involves aggression; and that the name aggressionist ought to be substituted for the name protectionist. For nothing can be more certain than that if, to maintain A's profit, B is forbidden to buy of C, or is fined to the extent of the duty if he buys of C, B is aggressed upon that A may be 'protected.' Nay, 'aggressionist' is a title doubly more applicable to the anti-free-traders than is the euphemistic title 'protectionist,' since, that one producer may gain, ten consumers are fleeced."

An attentive consideration of this passage might have prevented Admiral Scott, who recently gave a lecture in the Colonial Museum on "The Development of the Industrial Resources of New Zealand," from

recommending that they should be bolstered up by the adoption of a protective policy, of which there is already a great deal too much in our tariff. How compelling the consumer to pay the producer more than he would have to pay the importer under a free-trade system could "maintain the quality of the goods and keep down prices," as he asserted, does not appear, and the proposition reduced to its elements is really a contradiction in terms.

Admiral Scott, who was introduced by His Excellency the Governor (who presided at the meeting above referred to), "as an old friend of his," is probably a clever and well-informed man. On many subjects he is perhaps an excellent authority, but it is a pity no member of the New Zealand Institute who was present at the meeting had the courage to point out that his assertion that "the gloomy state of England's trade was a consequence of her free-trade policy," was entirely erroneous. A gentleman who quoted from Mill ought to have known that, *cum hoc, ergo propter hoc* is the most vulgar form of the fallacy of generalisation, where causation is inferred from casual conjunction. Similarly in the case of the United States and Canada, whose prosperity he attributed to protection, entirely ignoring all those causes, such as vast unoccupied territories, a constant stream of immigration, great internal industrial freedom, &c., &c., which ensure progress in wealth in spite of the "aggression" of sections of the community upon the rest. It might as well be said that the cause of the wealth of London is the number of thieves it contains. With regard to the States, Mr. Mongredien has put the subject in a concrete form in his "Western Farmer of America," where he estimates that the American farmers are taxed 400 million dollars every year in order to make the fortunes of the Eastern States manufacturers! In his "Free-Trade and English Commerce" he proves conclusively that while England has benefitted enormously by free-trade in good times, countries where an "aggressive policy" has been in vogue have suffered even more than England in bad times. This is what might be expected, for any infringement of natural liberty is sure to produce evil in varied forms.

The Rev. Mr. Fancourt (Anglican) preached recently in Wangamui on the growth of the Freethought movement, and strongly urged his hearers to carry out the doctrine of Christianity in both letter and spirit. For the benefit of some of our Christian friends who do not know their Bible as well as they should, we will give them one text to start with:—James V., 14th and part of 15th verse: "Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Now this is clear,—no sending for the doctor. True, you might incur a criminal prosecution for neglect, as recently happened in England, where, in a Christian land, a Christian magistrate fined a Christian man for carrying out in the letter and spirit this text of the Christian Bible, and thereby losing his child. Furthermore, you would give to Freethinkers a second edition of one of the grimest of jokes they have had for some time; and if it should cause them to laugh, you have your reward in contemplating their punishment, for has not the gentle