

**FREE TRADE AND ITS SO-CALLED
SOPHISMS: A REPLY TO
'SOPHISMS OF FREE TRADE, ECT.,
EXAMINED BY A BARRISTER'**

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Free Trade and Its So-Called Sophisms: A Reply to 'Sophisms of Free Trade, Ect., Examined by A Barrister' by Edgar Alfred Bowring

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EDGAR ALFRED BOWRING

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P R E F A C E.

It was scarcely to be expected that the Great Fallacy, which not long since received its death-blow so far as the British Empire is concerned, should be allowed to rest quietly in its grave. Attempts have from time to time been made to revivify the illustrious defunct; and (if report says true) some slight sign of returning consciousness—some faint convulsive movement of the inanimate frame—has been the result of the treatment applied to it by the Author of *Sophisms of Free Trade and Popular Political Economy Examined*.

It is not intended to follow the Barrister into those devious paths—those collateral disquisitions, wherein he so liberally luxu-

riates. The writer of the following pages desires to confine his attention entirely to those chapters of the work which bear directly upon the main question at issue between Protectionists and Free Traders—the question, whether the productions of a country should be secured by legislative enactment against competition with similar productions of other countries. For it must be observed, that the Barrister is no mere advocate of protection to agriculture. He fearlessly proclaims his belief in mutual impediments to commerce as conducive to the prosperity of nations—in the possibility that the necessaries of life may be too easily attainable—in the doctrine that a nation may be a gainer by an increase in the price which it pays for its purchases. And he proceeds to prove these certainly not self-evident propositions with a contemptuous brevity, which, had they been positive truisms,

might, perhaps, have been applicable, but is scarcely so when it is considered that their unsoundness has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of a large portion of society by such men as Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo M'Culloch, and John Stuart Mill.

Any attempt to refute errors which have been so fully exposed by those great authorities would have been as unnecessary as presumptuous, were it not that the Barrister has presented to us those errors clad, for the most part, in new habiliments. Thus attired, they appear to have imposed upon a considerable number of her Majesty's subjects; and it has, therefore, been thought advisable to produce these pages, which were written some months ago, for the writer's own amusement, on the publication of the Barrister's first edition.