competitor; and tariffs so maintained are in complete con­formity with the principle of free trade.

*Great Britain.—*Between the close of the Napoleonic wars of 1815 and the year 1860, the tariff system of Great Britain was changed from elaborate protection to practically complete free trade. An attempt had indeed been made in 1786 to modify the rigidly protective legislation of the 18th century. In that year Pitt concluded a commercial treaty with France, providing for large reductions of duties in both countries. But the treaty was swept away with the outbreak of the wars with France, and accordingly the old system was still in force in 1815. The first important step, and in some respects the decisive step, towards modifying it was taken in 1824, under the policy of Huskisson. In that year, and again in 1825, great reductions were made in the duties on raw materials, especially on wool, raw silk, flax and iron, while considerable reductions were also made in the. duties on manufactured goods. The most sharply contested of the changes was in regard to silks, which had been completely prohibited, and were now admitted at a duty of 30 per cent. A considerable breach was thus made in the protective system; and some further changes in the same direction were made in the next decade, especially under Lord Althorp in 1833. But in the decade from 1830 to 1840 the Corn Laws were the chief subject of contention. The great increase in population since the middle of the 18th century had made England a corn­importing country, especially with the rapid growth of manu­factures in the early years of the 19th century. The first syste­matic Com Laws imposing duties on grain had been passed in 1773. From 186r onwards a series of measures were passed, all designed to maintain the high price of grain. The Act of 1816 prohibited the importation of wheat when the price was less than 80s. a quarter ( = $2.50 a bushel). In 1822 the prohibitive point was lowered to 70s. In 1828 the sliding scale was intro­duced, under which the duty went up and down as the price of grain went down and up; and it was against this form of the Corn Law that the great agitation led by Cobden and Bright was directed after 1830. For a long time the anti-Corn Law agitation seemed to have no effect, although conducted with extraordi­nary skill and enthusiasm.\* In 1842, however, Sir Robert Peel made the first important concession, by modifying the sliding scale, his opponent, Lord John Russell, having proposed in the previous year a fixed duty of 8s. a quarter. In view of the bad harvest of 1845-46, and the famine in Ireland in 1846, Peel sur­rendered, and proposed in 1846 the admission of grain with only a fixed duty of 1s. a quarter as a registration fee. This change was carried, but Peel, being able to carry only a fraction of his party with him, was compelled shortly afterwards to resign. The Corn Laws had great political strength, serving as they did the interests of the landowners, whose hold on parliament was still very strong; but the general economic situation in Great Britain, from the rapid growth of the manufacturing population and the imperative need of more food, made the abolition inevi­table. After having been maintained till the middle of the century, apparently with irresistible support, they suddenly collapsed under the strain of a season of exceptionally short crops. Both their continued maintenance and their final sudden abolition are in some respects divergent from the general course of British tariff history.

The remodelling of the tariff system in the direction of free trade went on, little retarded by the maintenance of the Corn Laws and not much accelerated by their abolition. In 1842 great reductions of duty were made on a large number of articles; in 1846 still further reductions of duty were made; another series of changes came in 1853; and finally, in i860, the last remnant of protective duties disappeared. The four acts of 1842, 1846, 1853, i860—the first two under Peel’s leadership, the second two under Glad­stone’s guidance—thus carried out gradually the policy of free trade in regard to other articles than grain. The first of them, in 1842, was signalized by the introduc­tion of the Income Tax as a means of raising revenue to replace that lost by the diminished import duties. The last of them, in 1860, was largely influenced by the great commercial treaty with France. In that treaty the concessions made to France were the reduction by Great Britain of duties on wines and spirits, and the admission, free of duty, of some important French products, notably silk manufactures, gloves, and other products in which the French had superiority. Great Britain, instead of limiting the concessions to France, in i860 made them applicable to all the world. The silk manufacture, as to which the first great changes had been made in 1824, and on whose products the duties had been kept higher in previous acts than on other manufactures, was thus compelled, notwithstanding violent opposition, to face unfettered foreign competition.

Two general features should be noted in regard to the tariff history of Great Britain. In the first place, most of the reduc­tions of duty on manufactured articles were of little practical significance. The great mass of manufactured commodities were produced in the United Kingdom more cheaply than in foreign countries, and would not have been imported, with duty or without, except in sporadic amounts for some special qualities. The changes hence involved little real readjustment of industry. There is thus some ground for the assertion that the policy of free trade was not adopted by the United Kingdom until its industries had reached the stage of being independent of pro­tection. But this does not hold good of some manufactures; especially not of the silk industry, and some parts of the woollen and linen trades. Still less docs it hold good of raw materials, many of which had been really affected by the duties, and were largely imported after their abolition. Such was the case not only with some metals, such as lead, zinc, copper, but still more strikingly with textile materials such as wool, flax, and the like, and most of all with agricultural products such as grain, meat and meat products, timber. In regard to all these, the abolition of protection meant a real sacrifice to domestic industries. The second feature to be noted is the simplification which resulted in the administrative features of the English tariff. A great number of articles had been enumerated in the earlier tariff acts, each of which was imported in very small quantity and yielded an insignificant revenue. The nature of the changes made between 1842 and i860 is indicated by the following tabular statement :—

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Duties reduced. | Duties abolished. |
| 1842-46 | 503 | 390 |
| 1846 .... | 112 | 54 |
| 1853 .... |  | 123 |
| i860 .... |  | 371 |

After i860 only forty-eight articles remained subject to duty, a number which has been still further reduced, the most notable change having been free admission of sugar in 1872. Since that date the English customs tariff has been simplicity itself. A very few articles (spirits, beer, wine, tobacco, tea, coffee, cocoa) yield practically all of the customs revenue, and, so far as these articles are produced within the country, they arc subject to an excise duty, an internal tax precisely equal to the import duty. In 1901, to aid in meeting the expenses of the South African war, a moderate revenue duty was again imposed on sugar; and in 1902 the shilling duty on corn and flour (abolished in 1869) was restored, but again taken off in 1903. In this year began the “ Tariff Reform ” movement initiated by Mr Joseph Chamberlain *(q.v.),* but Free Trade retained a strong hold on the British electorate, and the return of the overwhelming Radical majority to parliament in 1906 involved its retention under the fiscal policy of that party. In January 1910 the Liberal government was again returned to power; but the Unionist party was now committed to Tariff Reform, which had made great strides in obtaining popular support.

*France.—*The tariff history of France in the 19th century divides itself into three periods: one of complete prohibition,