National System of Political Economy

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Friedrich List

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Purchase of this book includes free trial access to www.million-books.com where you can read more than a million books for free. This is an OCR edition with typos. Excerpt from book: INTRODUCTION. Et la patrie et 1'humanitS No branch of political economy presents a greater diversity of views between men of theory and men of practice, than that which treats of international commerce and commercial policy. There is, however, in the domain of this science no topic, which, in regard to the well-being and civilization of nations, as well as to their independence, power and duration, presents the same degree of importance. Poor, weak, and uncivilized countries have not unfrequently attained power and wealth by a judicious commercial system, whilst others have sunk from a high rank for want of such a system; nations have even lost their independence, and their political existence, because their commercial policy had not aided the development and the consolidation of their nationality. In our day, more than at any former period, among all the questions which belong to political economy, that of international commerce has acquired a preponderant interest; for the more rapidly the genius of discovery and of industrial improvement, as well as that of social and political progress advances, the more rapidly is the distance between stationary nations and those which are progressive increased, and the greater is the peril of remaining behind. If in time past it required centuries to monopolize that important branch of industry, the manufacture of wool, some ten years have sufficed in our time to obtain ascendency in the much more considerable manufacture of cotton; and now the start of a few years may enable England to absorb all the flax industry of the continent of Europe. At no other epoch has the world seen a manufacturing and commercial power possessing resources so immense as those in the control of the power which now holds sway, pursuing designedly a sy...

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