

PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TARIFF
QUESTION, WITH ESPECIAL REGARD
TO THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

BY
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CONCLUSION.

With the abolition of our custom-houses and the opening of our ports to the free entry of all good things, the trade between the British Islands and the United States would become so immense, the intercourse so intimate, that we should become one people, and would inevitably so conform currency and postal system and general laws that Englishman and American would feel themselves as much citizens of a common country as do New Yorker and Californian. Three thousand miles of water are no more of an impediment to this than are three thousand miles of land. And with relations so close, ties of blood and language would assert their power, and mutual interest, general convenience and fraternal feeling might soon lead to a pact, which, in the words of our own, would unite all the English-speaking peoples in a league "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty."

Thus would free trade unite what a century ago protectionism severed, and in a federation of the nations of English speech—the world-tongue of the future—take the first step to a federation of mankind.

And upon our relations with all other nations our repudiation of protection would have a similar tendency. The sending of delegations to ask the trade of our sister republics of Spanish America avails nothing so long as we maintain a tariff which repels their trade. We have but to open our ports to draw their trade to us and avail

ourselves of all their natural advantages. And more potent than anything else would be the moral influence of our action. The spectacle of a continental republic such as ours really putting her faith in the principle of freedom, would revolutionize the civilized world.

For, as I have shown, that violation of natural rights which imposes tariff duties is inseparably linked with that violation of natural rights which compels the masses to pay tribute for the privilege of living. The one cannot be abolished without the other. And a republic wherein the free-trade principle was thus carried to its conclusion, wherein the equal and unalienable rights of men were thus acknowledged, would indeed be as a city set on a hill.

The dangers to the Republic come not from without but from within. What menaces her safety is no armada launched from European shores, but the gathering cloud of tramps in her own highways. That Krupp is casting monstrous cannon, and that in Cherbourg and Woolwich projectiles of unheard-of destructiveness are being stored, need not alarm her, but there is black omen in the fact that Pennsylvania miners are working for 65 cents a day. No triumphant invader can tread our soil till the blight of "great estates" has brought "failure of the crop of men;" if there be danger that our cities blaze, it is from torches lit in faction fight, not from foreign shells.

Against such dangers forts will not guard us, iron-clads protect us, or standing armies prove of any avail. They are not to be avoided by any aping of European protectionism; they come from our failure to be true to that spirit of liberty which was invoked at the formation of the Republic. They are only to be avoided by conforming our institutions to the principle of freedom.

For it is true, as was declared by the first National Assembly of France, that "*ignorance, neglect, or contempt of human rights are the sole causes of public misfortunes and corruptions of government.*"

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter: That we should do unto others as we would have them do to us—that we should respect the rights of others as scrupulously as we would have our own rights respected, is not a mere counsel of perfection to individuals, but it is the law to which we must conform social institutions and national policy if we would secure the blessings of abundance and peace.