

The avowed purpose of the thieving system that is called "protection to American labor," is to prevent foreigners from doing work that might be done by Americans. How well it accomplishes its purpose is seen clearly in the present condition of our foreign commerce. Thirty years ago the American flag was to be met on every sea. To-day the thousands of Americans who sail out of New York every year for a pleasure trip to Europe never see the American flag from the time it is hauled down from the fore truck of the foreign steamer in which they sailed, as she passes Sandy hook, until it is raised again at Sandy Hook, at the fore of the foreign steamer in which they come back. The immense volume of American travel and trade is forced by our protective laws to pay for the building and running of foreign ships and to add to the profits of foreign ship owners. And now the same protective laws are forcing American capital into the building of ships which must sail under the English flag and in time of war constitute the most effective kind of cruisers in her Britannic majesty's navy. Of the four great ocean racers, which during the coming year will reduce, possibly by a whole day, the time of the transatlantic passage, two of them, the City of New York and the City of Paris, are owned by Pennsylvania capitalists, and two of them, the Majestic and her consort, are partially owned by American capitalists. Thus the direct effect of protection is to "take work out of the country" - to compel Pennsylvania capitalists to build ships on the Clyde that under free trade they would have built on the Delaware, and to swell the naval power of Great Britain with ships built by American capital and maintained by American trade.

One of these ships would be more than a match for the whole fleet of steel cruisers on which we are wasting millions, raised by taxation that is crushing our industry. Her greater speed will enable her to walk away from any of them, and thus select her own distance.

The movement of the American actors, with Lawrence Barrett and Edwin Booth at their head, in demanding the same protection against pauper foreign actors as has been accorded to American laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, and to American manufacturers of bibles, is in perfect accord with the principles that the American people indorsed by the election of General Harrison, and must, if he be consistent, receive the hearty support of that gentleman. It is certainly time that the hotel bell-boys, restaurant waiters, summer boarding house keepers and domestic livery stable men should join in demanding their share of protection. On protectionist principles it is a gross outrage on these and similar classes of American laborers and capitalists that a great body of rich Americans should be permitted to go to Europe every year and spend on foreigners the money they ought by law be compelled to spend at home. What millions on millions might be retained at home by adding to our protective system a law which should forbid any American to leave the country unless he could conclusively prove that he was a pauper, and had nothing whatever to spend. And then - then the next step might be to adopt the Chinese pigtail and the Chinese language and substitute Confucius for Christ.

Signed: Henry George,
December 29, 1888.