

THOMAS G. SHEARMAN

THE ABLE WRITER PUNCTURES M'KINLEY'S SENSELESS CLAIMS.

Mr. Shearman Applies the "Reductio ad Absurdum," and Shows How It Would Be Impossible for Trade to Continue Under Present Alleged Conditions.

A great many people assert that every tariff is a tax, and a great many more assert that no tariff is a tax. When you ask the first set of people how much of a tax is the tariff on common earth, which no one wants to import, whether taxed or free, they are puzzled. When you ask the second set why the McKinley bill made raw sugar free, if the tariff upon it was not a tax, they are angry, and say that we know that a revenue tariff is a tax. But why did they not say so in the first place?

However, we make some progress. It is not merely conceded—it is insisted—by those who have been declaring for years that "the tariff is not a tax," that after all a revenue tariff is a tax. And now Mr. McKinley goes a little further, and boasts that every tariff is a tax; only he asserts that a tariff for protection is a tax upon foreigners, while a tariff for revenue only is a tax upon Americans. He says that the Republican party proposes to collect the tariff taxes from foreigners, while the Democratic party proposes to collect them from Americans. It is only a very short time since the chosen representatives of the American Protective Tariff League denounced as a downright lie the assertion that the tariff was a tax at all, and here is the foremost champion of their cause asserting that every tariff is a tax, either upon Americans or upon foreigners.

So at last we can agree upon a few points. Let us make these clear.

Every tariff is a tax law. It lays taxes and does nothing else. In some cases nobody pays the tax, because nobody wants to bring in the article taxed. But a tax is a tax, whether it is ever paid or not. Every tariff is a tax, although not every tax imposed by the tariff is collected.

All the money received by the government under a tariff (amounting to an average of about \$211,000,000 a year for the last ten years) is a tax.

All the money thus collected upon articles which are not produced in our own country in sufficient quantities to reduce the price below that at which foreigners would sell to us is a tax upon our own people. Thus the duty on sugar was a tax upon ourselves, although a large amount of sugar is produced here, but not enough to supply the wants of our people, so that we were compelled to buy more from abroad.

All the rest of the money collected under a tariff is a tax upon our people, except so much as can be shown to be collected from foreigners only.

Only a small part of the taxes thus collected are laid upon luxuries such as are used only by the rich. The rich people are not numerous enough to enable the government to collect a large revenue from taxes upon their luxuries. And as the necessities and decent comforts of life are sold to the comparative poor in far greater amounts than to the rich, the tariff taxes so far as they are paid by our own people are paid mostly by the poor.

All these statements are agreed to by Mr. Harrison, Mr. Cleveland, Mr. McKinley, Senator Sherman, Senator Mills and every intelligent protectionist, tariff reformer or free trader.

We have now some common ground of agreement, from which we can proceed to talk together about matters upon which we do not all agree, with some chance of understanding each other. A revenue tariff is a tax, and every tariff to the extent to which it produces any revenue is a tax. And these taxes are mainly paid by the poor. The rich pay but a small part of them.

Now we come to points upon which we all do not agree. Mr. McKinley says that the taxes imposed by a protective tariff are paid by foreigners, and that the great difference between his tariff and a revenue tariff is that he makes foreigners pay the taxes, while the Democratic party proposes to make the Americans pay their own taxes. He and his party also assert that when no revenue is collected by the government under a tariff in consequence of it, the opponents of protection maintain that Americans cannot make foreigners pay any share of American taxes worth talking about, and that they ought not to try. They also maintain that an enormous tax is collected by a few American capitalists and landowners for their own benefit in consequence of tariff taxes, which are purposely made high as to prevent the government from collecting anything.

Let us first consider whether foreigners do pay or can be made to pay any large share of our tariff taxes. Mr. McKinley himself has furnished us a test by which we can decide this question. He abolished the taxes on raw sugar, especially because they were revenue taxes and paid by our own people, and he points with pride to the fact that since these taxes were repealed the price of raw sugar has fallen in our markets to the full amount of the tax. But a large amount of sugar was grown in our own country. It was not enough to supply our wants, nor anything like it. We may therefore take it as conceded that whenever we are compelled to import from abroad the larger part of our necessary supply of any article, our own people pay the tariff tax upon that article. All the tariff taxes upon tin plates, earthenware, sugar, linen, most fruits, most furs, carpet, wools and many other articles, chiefly or entirely made abroad, amounting in 1891 to over \$90,000,000, were therefore certainly paid by our own people.

It will be said that foreigners pay by giving the American importers goods of sufficient value to repay the duties. Let us see if this can be so. Woolen goods were imported which sold in Europe for \$49,935,409, upon which a tariff tax was

paid here of 80 per cent. That means a tax of eight yards of cloth upon every ten imported. Does any man outside of a lunatic asylum believe that European manufacturers would go on year after year making a present to American importers of eight yards of cloth for every ten yards purchased? How long could any man do business who gave away for nothing four-fifths, not of his profits, but of his entire sales?

Taking high and low rates together, there were imported dutiable goods which would sell in Europe for \$966,453,172, upon which the average tariff tax exceeded 46 per cent. Does any man really believe that the producers of these goods did or could give to Americans for absolutely nothing one-half of the whole value of their goods? Bear in mind that the values reported to the custom houses are the prices at which the foreigners are able to sell their goods in foreign markets, and that protectionists are forever insisting that these values are falsely reported at too low a rate—that is, that the goods could really be sold in Europe for much more than these prices. If there is a word of truth in anything which is said on the protectionist side, European manufacturers could readily sell at home all the goods which they send here at the full prices at which they are invoiced to us and more. It follows that if they pay the tariff taxes, or any part of them, they pay our people millions of dollars for the privilege of selling here at less than they could get for their goods if they kept them at home. Will any man of sense believe that European manufacturers are such fools?

But there are even clearer proofs of the absurdity of this doctrine. Glass was imported to the value in Europe of \$1,060,000, upon which tariff taxes were paid to the amount of \$1,146,000. These are among the precise "protective duties" to which Mr. McKinley referred when he declared that foreigners paid the taxes. Does he or does any one else for a moment believe that Europeans not only gave us \$1,000,000 in glass for nothing, but in addition made us a present of \$86,000 in cash as a thank offering for our generosity in taking it? A hundred examples equally conclusive might be given.

It is easy to show in another way the practical impossibility of collecting our taxes from foreigners to any extent worth considering. The present tariff taxes upon articles which are taxed at all average nearly 50 per cent. If foreign manufacturers pay any such tax as this—that is, half the home market price of their goods—it would prove conclusively that their average profit was more than 100 per cent., or a dollar profit on each dollar's worth of goods. Every one who knows anything about manufactures knows that no such profit can be made for any length of time upon anything except patented or otherwise monopolized articles. A profit of even 10 per cent. upon the ordinary metal and textile manufactures, which constitute the bulk of our taxed imports, would draw unlimited capital into such manufactures and quickly bring down the rate of profit. An average profit of 100 per cent. in general manufactures not hedged around by monopoly continued year after year is an utter impossibility. Yet such an absurdity as this must be realized if Mr. McKinley's doctrine has any foundation in fact.

See what would follow. If European manufacturers really pay our protective taxes they have been making this 100 per cent. profit on all their productions for the last thirty years, except on such goods as they have sent to America. As less than one-tenth part of their productions have been sent here, the net profits of English manufacturers alone would amount to more than all the wealth of England and Germany together.

What, then, is the truth of the matter? Do foreigners never pay any part of our tariff taxes? Never directly. Sometimes they send their goods here, expecting them to sell for enough to cover the European price and the tax besides, and sometimes their expectations are disappointed and the result is a loss. Occasionally they send a few things here to sell for what they will bring, just as American manufacturers sometimes send their goods to auction to sell at any price. But on neither side of the Atlantic do they continue regularly in such business. Two or three mistakes of this kind shut up a mill very quickly, and the business passes into the hands of men who calculate better. Foreign manufacturers make losses just as Americans do. When an American makes a loss everybody calls it a loss, but when a foreigner makes a loss on an American transaction Mr. McKinley calls it "paying American taxes." There is not the slightest difference between the two cases.

Another proof of the chillsomeness of this idea that foreign nations can be made to pay our taxes may be found in the fact that Great Britain is the only important nation which has absolutely no protective taxes, and which, therefore, upon the McKinley theory, does not collect a cent of its taxes from foreign nations, while it also exports more than any other two nations of goods which are heavily taxed by "protective" duties in the countries to which these goods are sent. Therefore, on the McKinley theory, Great Britain pays more taxes to other nations than any other two nations in the world, while it collects no taxes at all from them. It has pursued this disastrous policy for nearly fifty years, and ought to be ruined by this time, for what nation can support its own government and also the governments of a dozen other countries at the same time? Yet what has been the result? The wealth of Great Britain has steadily increased during all this period, and is now greater, in proportion to its population, than that of any other great nation in the world.—Thomas G. Shearman.

Dying at the Top. "The time has been," said Macbeth, "that when the brains were out the man would die." The brains and intellect of the Republican party are leaving it. It is time for it to die, and it is dying at the top.—Boston Globe.

HE SUITS HIS PARTY.

A NEW VIEW OF HARRISON'S CHARACTER AND DISPOSITION.

"He Does Not Look Upon the Campaign as His Own Personal Affair, and Does Not Try to Dominate His Party"—These Statements Disproved.

The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph says that President Harrison is "perfectly confident of success for the Republicans party; that he does not look upon the campaign as his own personal affair, and does not try to dominate the party, and finally that one thing he insists upon is that, come what may, the campaign shall be so conducted on his side that they cannot be truthfully accused of resorting to dishonest or improper methods, and that it shall be a clean, straight up and down fight."

This is an entirely new view of the president's character and disposition. He "does not look upon the campaign as his own personal affair," indeed, when he employed his whole influence as president to force his nomination at Minneapolis; when he degraded his high position by engaging in the most disgraceful scramble for the standard of the party; when he packed the national Republican convention with his army of officeholders and used the whole power of the administration in his own behalf; when he bitterly antagonized every element of the party that for any reason was arrayed against him. He does not try to "dominate the party" when it was by his efforts and the efforts of his personal friends and beneficiaries that all the prominent Republican leaders were snubbed and the management of the party's campaign was placed in the hands of those who were indebted to him for political favors. So obvious, in fact, was his personal domination of the party that it was only after weeks of the most earnest conference and solicitation that the national leaders of the party could be persuaded to assist in the work of promoting his political fortunes.

The statement of The Telegraph's correspondent that Mr. Harrison insists that "the campaign shall be so conducted on his side that they cannot be truthfully accused of resorting to dishonest or improper methods," etc., shows the utter hypocrisy of the Harrison plan of campaign. Mr. Harrison knows better than anybody else that he is president today because of the dishonest and improper methods employed by the managers of his campaign four years ago. He knows that Indiana was carried by the Republicans in 1888 by Dudley's "blocks of five"; that the electoral vote of New York was procured for him four years ago by the open purchase of votes at the polls; that he gave John Wanamaker a place in his cabinet because he had raised a corruption fund of \$400,000 to debauch the ballot box; that since he took the oath of office as president he has degraded the whole public service to the payment of his political debts, and he knows that his only hope of success in the present contest is by the adoption of the same dishonest and improper methods that characterized his campaign four years ago.

The Telegraph correspondent says that "there is no question about his being one of the best politicians in the country." From the Harrison-Quay-Carter-Dave Martin point of view this is true, but in the use of honest and proper methods for the attainment of worthy political ends Mr. Harrison is a novice. The best that can be said of him and for him is that he is a fit representative of the Republican party as it is.—Charleston News and Courier.

The South Will Remain Solid.

Of course the south is solid. And so will the south remain politics while a political party exists to threaten the substitution of negro domination for the supremacy of the white race. The Democratic party is the white man's party, and its followers comprise a large majority of the white men in all sections of the Union, not only in the south, but also in the north. Today but for the colored vote the Republican party could not carry ten states, and that vote is gradually abandoning the organization, after the manner of rats deserting a sinking ship.—Little Rock Gazette.

The Fat Friars' Harvest.

The fat friars are reaping a golden harvest from the wealthy Republicans of Pennsylvania, and most of the \$2,000,000 which it is expected to raise will be used as a corruption fund in New York. The people of Pennsylvania should come down handsomely, for in no other state of the Union have plutocrats and monopolies been more munificently benefited because of the McKinley inquiry. They come down with from \$10,000 to \$150,000 apiece, and of course it is all done for "the poor workman."—Detroit Free Press.

A Magnificent Exponent.

Mr. Cleveland is a great man, towering head and shoulders above any man the Republicans can possibly pit against him. Still neither he nor any one else can be greater, or as great, as the Democratic party, for that would be the perfection of greatness, and a point to which no mortal can attain. But he is as fine an exponent of the principles of Democracy as any living man can be.—Richmond Times.

Those Chilling Breezes.

The breezes from the Harrison ice wagon have evidently chilled the Republicans of Vermont, Maine, Kansas, Florida and Georgia. These are the only elections that have been held up to date, but the indications are that Republicans from Maine to California and from the lakes to the gulf have the chills very bad.—Wheeler Register.

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