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## AT THE OFFICE OF THE Jeffersonian Republican.

Speech of Hon. Andrew Stewart, OF PENNSYLVANIA, In defence of the Protective Policy.

Delivered in the House of Representatives of the U. S., May 27, 1846.

Mr. Stewart rose, in reply to Mr. Payne, and said that reluctant as he was to say another word upon the Tariff, he could not permit the remarks of the gentleman from Alabama to pass unnoticed. After the violent assault made by that gentleman on the Tariff and the "National Fair," the patience of which the gentleman attributed to him he could not resist the appeals of his friends to say something in their defence and vindication. He thanked the gentleman, however, for one thing; that, whilst he denounced the "National Fair" as a humbug, he had not included the fair ladies who graced it by their presence, or the beautiful factory girls, whose modesty and intelligence, he was sure, could not have failed to extort a smile of approbation, and a word of commendation, too, even from the gentleman from Alabama himself. In the remarks it was now his purpose to make, he would confine himself strictly to a reply to the arguments and observations made by the gentleman from Alabama, (Mr. Payne). And he availed of his opportunity to reply to more readily, because it had been given out by gentlemen here, who were authorized to speak on that subject, that, as soon as the House should have gone through with the appropriation bills, the bill for the repeal of the tariff would be taken up and passed without debate, under the previous question, and by the force of appeals to party. Mr. S. did not say that such would be the case; but, anticipating the possibility of a course so unfair and discreditable, from what had occurred on other occasions, he should embrace the present opportunity to reply to the arguments (if arguments they might be called) which had been employed by the gentleman from Alabama. That gentleman had repeated the Southern stereotyped freetrade doctrines urged upon all occasions against the protective policy by gentleman from that quarter.

The gentleman had opened his speech by the usual appeals to party. He had treated this as a party question; in proof of which he had quoted the Baltimore Convention, and, reminding those of his own party that a reduction of the tariff had there been resolved upon, he called upon them to redeem their pledges by carrying out this party resolution.

[My Payne here interposed to explain, and the floor having been yielded him for that purpose, went on to say, that he disclaimed totally having appealed to the Baltimore Convention, or to the resolutions there adopted, as controlling the action of this House. What he had said was this: "How far a convention, called for one purpose, and acting upon another, ought to control the action of a deliberative body, was a question he would not discuss; but that, when a convention did approve certain doctrines, and those doctrines were afterwards taken before the people, and the elections of the country made to turn upon them, the Representatives who had been elected under such circumstances were bound to carry out the pledges thus given."] Mr. Stewart. Very well; the gentleman now said, in substance, that the Democratic party had pledged themselves to repeal the tariff of 1842, and that nine-tenths of the Democratic members of this House would stand to their pledge. We shall see. Let the gentleman ask my Democratic colleagues how this is. They will tell him that the only dispute in Pennsylvania at the last Presidential election, was whether the Democrats or Whigs were the strongest tariff party. And they will tell the gentleman another thing, that, if he were to fling this "free-trade" banner to the breeze, and march through that good and glorious old Commonwealth, with his drum-major, Father Ruchie, of the Union, and the whole tribe of little free-trade fiddlers and fiers at his heels, he could not get a corporal's guard to follow him.

Mr. S. regretted that gentlemen should make these appeals to party. This was no party question; it was a great American question, whose intrinsic importance soared far above

and beyond the reach of all mere party interests and party considerations. Why should gentlemen indulge in these party appeals on a great national question like this? Were they afraid to discuss it on its own intrinsic independent merits? Could that be the reason that they made these appeals to the poor, pitiful, paltry, and grovelling interests of party politics? Was this a time of an occasion for such appeals? No. Let the policy of protecting our national industry be discussed on great and broad American principles. It ought to be and would be so treated by every man who had a true American heart in his bosom.

[Here an attempt was made to interrupt Mr. S. by questions, but he refused to yield the floor.]

Gentlemen would, he hoped, have a full opportunity to answer all in good time. Let them take notes of the arguments he gave them, and when they had heard him through, answer him, and show that he was in error, if they could. Ample time for the investigation would be afforded before the coming up of the tariff bill, and he invited gentlemen to the task. But the gentleman's appeal had been made not to reason, not to facts, but to party feeling and party pledges. Such appeals had been repeatedly made, both in this House and in the Government organ. In the latter, these appeals were almost daily made to the Democratic party in that House, as such, to come up to the rescue and save themselves from the deep disgrace that would follow a failure to repeal the tariff. Mr. S. admitted that, in one important aspect, this was a party question; but who were the parties? Americans on the one side and the British on the other—American labor against the pauper labor of Europe. These were the real and only parties in this great contest for the American market—Americans against foreigners; and the true and practical question for every gentleman to decide, each for himself, was, which side he would take—the American side or the British side. That was the question. He trusted gentlemen would decide in favor of their own country—in favor of their own farmers, mechanics, and laboring men—that they would protect their own labor employed in the conversion of our own agricultural produce into articles for use, instead of importing them from abroad; for it was demonstrable that more than one-half of the one hundred millions of dollars annually sent abroad to purchase foreign goods was sent to pay for foreign agricultural produce worked up into goods by labor employed and fed in foreign countries, instead of our own. This was the anti-American policy now advocated by the gentleman and his friends upon this floor. This he affirmed fearlessly, and challenged gentlemen to controvert it if they could.

The gentleman from Alabama next spoke in a very disparaging manner of the "National Fair," which was now being held in this city for the display of the ingenuity and talent, industry, enterprise, and skill of the people of our own country. The gentleman, in the face of an American House of Representatives, spoke with contempt of such a display. Had the gentleman been to see it? He spoke as if from information only. Had he seen this splendid fair for himself? If he had, and would but give fair play to his own good sense and good feelings, Mr. S. was very sure that such a spectacle must have filled his American heart, if he had one—and he did not doubt it—with exultation and delight. Such a collection was well fitted to be the boast and glory of the country. Who that had a heart within him to feel for the honor, the independence, the strength, and the prosperity of his country, could look on such a spectacle and not feel all his national pride called forth by the display?

The gentleman talked about the "lords of the spindle;" but was it they alone who were represented in that fair? Far from it. It was the mechanics of the country who had reason to congratulate themselves on this great assemblage of their works. Let the gentleman go to the mechanics of this country, and let him, if he thought proper, tell that great interest that the fruits of their industry, invention, and enterprise were all a humbug. If he did, Mr. S. feared greatly that they might consider the gentleman a humbug himself. Was that the gentleman's doctrine, that the interest of the mechanic arts and the interests of American agriculture were a humbug? Would the gentleman tell our farmers that that was democratic doctrine? Mr. S. fancied not.

There was a gentleman from England with specimens of British goods, now occupying the committee room over which you, Mr. Chairman, (Mr. Hopkins, of Va. occupying the chair) have the honor of presiding, almost in the hearing of my voice, and he has been there for months displaying his foreign goods, to influence the votes of members to favor the British; and this is all fair and beautiful in the eyes of gentlemen who look with abhorrence upon this American fair, got up to counteract this bold and barefaced British attempt, made in this House, to influence our legislation, to destroy our tariff, and again inundate our country with British goods. The gentleman from Alabama had visited this British fair, and had he complained of that? Had he denounced the put-

ting of one of the committee rooms of this House to such a use as a bold and profligate attempt to bias and control the legislation of this House? Far from it. The British agent had been here for months. He had conducted member after member to his display of British fabrics, and gentlemen of this House, and the gentleman from Alabama himself, had gone there and contemplated, he supposed with infinite satisfaction, these products of foreign industry. For what had they been brought there? For what purpose, to what end, had a foreign agent been accommodated with an apartment in a house appropriated to American legislation, in the very Capitol itself? For what, but expressly for the purpose of swaying and biasing and controlling the legislation of that House on the tariff? This the gentleman had denounced in terms of the highest indignation, when the products were the works of American hands, and the fruits of American capital and skill, and when they were exhibited, not in a committee room of that House, but in a building erected by the manufacturers themselves, at their own cost, and whither they had invited their fellow-citizens to assemble from every part of the land. It was all wrong that this should be done by Americans, but all perfectly right when it was done by an agent of the British manufacturers. The gentleman could gaze with infinite gratification on a committee room filled with foreign fabrics, but turned with disgust from a building put up by American hands, and filled with the splendid and varied fruits of American ingenuity and skill. This was a humbug, compared by the official paper to a "menagerie," a "bagatelle," and all those glorious and beautiful proofs of the inventive powers of our countrymen were contemptible humbugs, the fruits of sordid interest, the devices of avarice and cupidity. He envied no man such feelings—they were not American—they had no place in an American heart. But this was a matter of taste; he went to the American, other gentlemen to the British fair; a mere difference in taste. But (Mr. S. said) he had seen, in the last hour, with emotions which he could not describe, a collection of a thousand [a voice "three thousand"] American children brought to look upon this sight, and learn, in their tender years, to love their own country better than any foreign land. Among these were doubtless many of the future mechanics and manufacturers, and not a few of the future legislators of our country. He rejoiced that they had learned a better lesson than to prefer the prosperity of foreigners to that of their own parents, brothers, and countrymen. If the gentleman would step to the window behind him, he could behold these beautiful children on their march to the Capitol. Was this American sight offensive to the gentleman? Would he destroy these American products also, and import them from abroad? [Great merriment.] He hoped not. But he had done with the fair, and he now turned to consider some of the arguments which had been adduced by the gentleman from Alabama, for whom he cherished a high personal respect, who was doubtless actuated by patriotic feelings, and whom he should be happy to hear in reply to what he was now going to say.

The first argument of the gentleman had been the position, that the effect of a protective tariff was oppressive, especially on the poor, and on the interests of agriculture and labor. How was it oppressive upon these? No other interest in the country was half as much benefited by the tariff as the farmers, and mechanics, and workmen. The gentleman said that it injured them by increasing the price of manufactured commodities; for the gentleman's assertion was, that protection did invariably increase the price of the articles protected. Now, in reply, Mr. S. would distinctly put forth this assertion, to which he challenged contradiction, viz: that there never was a protective duty levied in this country, on any article which we could and did manufacture extensively, which had not resulted in bringing down the price of that article, and he challenged gentlemen to point him to a single instance in reference to which this was not true. The price of commodities, instead of being raised by protection, had been reduced to one-third, one-fourth, and even to one-tenth and one-twelfth part of what had been paid for them when imported from abroad. The gentleman, if he had walked up to the Fair, might there have seen American cotton, such as had cost, when the enormous minimums were first imposed for its protection by Mr. Lowndes and Mr. Calhoun, eighty-five cents a yard, now ready to be delivered in any quantity, and of better quality, at seven cents; and woollen jeans, sold in 1840 at sixty-five cents, now selling, of much better quality, for thirty-five; and these articles were subject to the very highest duties in the whole catalogue—proving, beyond all contestation, the truth of the proposition denounced as an absurdity by the gentleman, that the highest duties often produce the lowest prices, when levied on articles which we can supply to the extent of our own wants. Here was the result of American industry, skill, and improvement, when left free to act out their own energies, and occupy, fully and freely, their own appropriate markets, without the disturbing and destructive competition of the pauper labor of Europe. Mr. S. had

mentioned the article of cotton, because it afforded a striking illustration of the general doctrine, showing that the minimums, the highest protective duties, had produced the greatest reduction of prices. But the same thing was true, to a greater or less extent, with respect to every protected article in the entire list. Mr. S. stated incontrovertible matters of fact. He challenged contradiction—he courted investigation—he defied gentlemen to disprove an atom of what he had asserted. And, to put this truth in the strongest light, he repeated that the highest and most obnoxious duties, those abhorred minimums, against which gentlemen had wasted such furious denunciations, presented precisely the very cases where the reduction of price had been the greatest. Those duties, it is said, now amounted to two and three hundred per cent. *ad valorem*. And why?—Because they were fixed specific duties. They remained stationary, however prices might change; and, of course, as the price went down, the duty bore a larger and still larger proportion to it. At first, the duty was, say, half the price of the article; as the price declined, the duty became equal to the price; then it became greater than the price; then double the price; and, at length, treble; and then gentlemen exclaimed in horror, "What an abominable duty! It is three hundred per cent. on the total value of the article! What horrible profits! How the duty must raise the price!" when, all the while, the duty remained the same, and its effect had been, not to increase, but to bring down the price just three hundred per cent.—from thirty cents down to seven and a half cents per yard, and this was robbery and plunder! And still the gentleman said it was an absurdity, which no man could swallow, to say that the higher the protective duty the lower the price. Now, Mr. S. would venture to say, that if the duty on iron and its manufactures were increased to-morrow five hundred per cent., the rapid rush of capital into that business, and the vast increase of supply would be such, and the consequent reduction of price so great, that the United States would soon supply the world with iron, its capacity for its production being unlimited. He had stated facts, showing that high duties had produced low prices. Can the gentleman deny them? There they stand on unprejudicable foundations, firm as the hills! Let the gentleman and his friends disprove them as they can. That such is the practical operation of the system is fully established by the fact, that whilst manufactures of various kinds had declined to one-fourth of their former price, agricultural produce and the wages of labor had underwent little or no reduction, owing to the constantly increasing home demand for both, resulting from the protective policy.

But he wished to be understood correctly. Mr. S. did not say that the effect of all duties was to diminish prices; on the contrary, he did not deny that it was the effect of some duties to increase prices. But what he said was this: that duties levied on articles we could make, to the extent of our own wants, and with a view to protect our own manufacturers, did in all cases operate, in the end, to lower prices, by increasing capital, competition, and supply. Duties imposed on foreign articles which we could not make for ourselves, would generally increase the prices, because they did not increase the supply by increasing home competition. His position was this: *duties levied for revenue on articles we cannot produce increased prices; whilst protective duties, levied on articles we can and do produce, diminished price.* The truth of both these propositions was proved by undeniable facts, and by all experience. And the reason was just as obvious as the fact.—When the supply of an article was not equal to the demand, he admitted the immediate effect of a high duty might for the moment increase the price and profits of its manufacture, but this very increase induced capital to rush into it, and the competition and increased supply resulting, soon brought down the price and profits to the lowest rates, proving the truth of the proposition, that the "higher the duty, the lower the price." The imposition of a duty on an article produced here, gave an impulse to American enterprise; the machinery employed in its production was studied and improved; an increased supply was the natural consequence; and increased supply, while the demand remained the same, must always diminish prices.—Would the gentleman undertake to deny that the proportion between demand and supply regulated price? Mr. S. hardly thought that he would go so far as that. But, as the gentleman had asserted that duties raised prices, he was bound to prove the truth of his position by quoting facts. The man who asserted a thing to be a fact was bound to prove it, in court or out of court. As a lawyer the gentleman knew this to be so. Now, Mr. S. challenged the gentleman to put his finger on one solitary case where his assertion was true. What one protected article, the product of American skill and industry, had been permanently increased in price, after the duties, however high, had been first imposed for its protection? Mr. S. challenged the gentleman and all his friends to point to one. Name the article—a pin or a needle. The gentleman had not—he could not do it. And yet he stood up in the face of the

country and the world, and advanced the position that protective duties always increased prices. Mr. S. made his appeal to facts. Let the gentlemen meet him with facts. He could not; he dealt altogether in assertions against facts. Now if, as Mr. S. had proved, protective duties had not increased, but reduced prices, what became of all this clamor about high prices, robbery, oppression, and plunder? It vanished into thin air; it had no foundation to stand on, and the gentleman and his followers were bound by their own principles to go for the protective policy, which reduced the price of manufactured goods by increasing the supply; whilst, on the other hand, it increased the price by increasing the demand for agricultural produce, and enhanced the wages of labor by increasing its employments.

But the gentleman had also said, that while the tariff was oppressive on the interests of agriculture and of labor, it was highly beneficial to invested capital to the rich monopolists, the lords of the loom. Now, Mr. S. said that just the reverse of this was true. While protection benefited both agriculture and labor, it was but a small advantage, if any, to *vested capital*. The gentleman and his friends, without knowing it, were in fact doing more for the benefit of *vested capital*, by keeping up this agitation and opposition to the tariff, and thereby establishing a monopoly by checking competition, than all the tariff men in that House put together. In the case of *vested capital* the tariff had done its work; it had built the manufactures up, it had introduced improved machinery and increased skill; it had done all that fixed capital required. *Vested capital* was now on its feet—it could get along without help. They had exported during the last year between four and five millions of dollars worth of cotton cloth; they had beaten the British out of their own markets. The great manufacturers of these goods feared no foreign competition; they had overcome that. All that they now feared was American competition at home. The protective tariff raised them that very competition.—While advocating, therefore, the continuance of our existing tariff, and resisting its reduction, Mr. S. was working in the most direct and efficient manner for the interests of American labor—he was resisting foreign; he was going for the interests of American farmers and the American laborers, and not for the interests of large *vested capital*; he went to destroy existing monopoly, by increasing investments and competition—the only thing that could destroy it. It was the gentleman, and those who acted with him, by keeping up this tariff agitation—it was they who were aiding capital. This agitation operated to check new investments, and of course to promote and secure monopoly.—Those who were contemplating the investment of new capital would defer it. One would say to another, "Don't build a new mill or furnace now, the tariff is going to be reduced." Mr. S. knew this to be true. He had heard of twelve large companies who had intended to build furnaces in Pennsylvania this spring, but had suspended their purpose till they should see what Congress would do with the tariff at the present session. Did this hurt those who already owned manufacturing establishments? Certainly not; it was the very thing to aid them. This gave New England a monopoly; it secured in her hands that which the people of Pennsylvania and the people of the South most wanted. They wanted protection—New England could do without it, Virginia wanted it, North Carolina wanted it, so did South Carolina and Georgia, and all the West. They wanted protection to build them up; in New England the tariff had done its work—it had fulfilled its office. New England might now say to this Government, "Father, I am now of age; I am on my feet; I can make my way through the world; I have met John Bull and beat him; I thank you very much for what you have done for me, and I will be a burden on you no longer; now take care of the younger branches of the family."

The rest of the country was comparatively young in manufactures. They still needed the helping hand of Government; they wanted protection in their infancy. New England was magnanimous and patriotic; she wished to see other portions of the country prosper by following her example; when the South and West supplied, as they could, the coarser goods, she would go to work on the finer fabrics. Did not the gentleman see that by reducing the tariff he was checking investments in his own country and in mine, in the South and West, and thereby securing a monopoly to *vested capital*, wherever it existed, and preventing high prices, which could only be reduced by enlarged competition at home? Was not this true? Was it not common sense? He put it to every man's understanding. It was not only common sense, but, what was more, it was proved by universal experience.

To show the practical operation of the protective policy, he would take, by way of illustration, the neighboring iron works at Mount Savage, near Cumberland. That establishment has been built up within a few years. Some time before it was commenced land could be bought there for two and three dollars an acre, which could not now be purchased under fifteen