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NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.

Many of the political problems which are now up for consideration are as "old as the hills." But for all that they are often treated as if they were the latest revelations to mankind. The tariff ground has been gone over again and again. All parties have tramped along it backwards and forwards. One of them, at least, cannot very clearly tell the route it pursued. There was incidental protection under the first tariff. But it was not the result of mere accident by any means. In 1824, what is known as the American system, of which Henry Clay was the putative father, had its birth. In the first tariff the object was revenue, and protection the presumable incident. In the year stated, on a proposed revision of the tariff, it was sought to make protection the object and revenue the incident, or, in other words, to candidly lay down the proposition.

The bill was carried mainly by the votes of the states directly benefited. Illinois and Missouri obtained greater protection for lead, Kentucky for hemp, Pennsylvania for iron and New York and Ohio for wool. The bill, therefore, received their support. General Jackson favored the measure for the reason that it would be the means of giving us a home supply of war material. The New England states were inclined at that period to free trade. The reason was, that their foreign commerce had grown to be the dominant interest. But at the start they were very much in favor of protection. In the first tariff they managed to keep the duty on rum at high figures, while molasses was taxed very low. These old statesmen held that molasses was necessary food for the poor man. But that did not prevent at the same time the manufacture of an excellent article of New England rum, which has since held the market against the Jamaica distillation. There is a great deal of humanity in tariffs. The appeal to supposed immutable principles is usually nothing more than a pretense. No community is going to throw itself away on an abstraction. It was not a love for Adam Smith that induced England to repeal the corn laws. It was not in a burst of scientific enthusiasm that it reduced the price of bread, but to escape a revolution. Similarly, we are upholding a protective tariff, because we find that it is good for us. In this matter, if we have not a great many imitators, we have at least a great many nations which are following the same policy.

It is an old and profound remark that, though the Whig party has died, its doctrines survive. On the other hand the Democratic party holds its own, but its doctrines have been mostly found to be wrong. This must be regarded as one of the strangest anomalies of politics. The Whigs always championed what is known as the American system in connection with the tariff. The system is now in full operation, but there are no more Whigs. The Whigs early took ground in favor of internal improvements. The Democrats upon that proposition made issue with them. The Whigs have disappeared, and the Democrats are now most active around the national "grab bag," known officially as the River and Harbor Appropriation bill. Several other instances tending to establish the persistence of Whig ideas can also be produced. It would seem, therefore, that the opposition to Democracy, by whatever name it is known, dies in giving birth to the great ideas which the Democratic party first antagonizes and then adopts. Of course when a party dies, nothing, in fact, dies but the name. The same men are found operating, but on new lines. They do not for that reason, abandon their cherished ideas on other subjects, and when they find themselves in power they give effect to them. Some issues do die or are destroyed. One of them is

the secession notion of the Democracy, which grew up naturally, in the form of States' rights, from the opposition to the centralizing and monarchical tendencies of the Federalists. The notion finally attained a rank growth, and produced one of the most stupendous civil wars of this or any other age.

But reverting to the original subject it must be said that the problems of protection, incidental protection, and a revenue tariff, were much more ably handled in the old time than they are now, though the fathers had not the experimental knowledge which has fallen to the lot of the present generation. Of a like character with the discussion on the tariff is the supposed new Pennsylvania "idea," which has found expression in the platform of the Republican party of that state, viz., the distribution of the surplus revenue of the general government among the states. The notion is now being treated as a new contribution to our stock of knowledge. But that is the way we have always been dealing with surpluses. In 1838 the surplus in the treasury was distributed among the states. But the conditions were very different then. The debt of the United States had been liquidated and there was no use for the money. If any surplus is now found in the treasury it ought to be applied to that purpose. In this way the general taxation can be reduced. If the question is raised that the people cannot stand the payment of so large a portion of the debt, relief can be found in the abolition of the Internal Revenue, which is not altogether suited to our system, and is in some respects a relic of the war. But it survives because of its great efficiency in politics. The periods of surpluses in the treasury, however, have always been unlucky ones with us. There was a surplus before the war which our statesmen did not know what to do with, and there was a general smash up in 1838.

The Roman Catholic bishop of Para and Amazonas, whose diocese includes the valley of the Amazon, has devised a plan for evangelizing the wild tribes along the mighty river. He proposes to construct a large ship. It will be superbly decorated, and so contrived as to serve as a church. The most precious woods with which the Amazon region abounds will wainscot the interior. This floating cathedral will possess its pulpit and confessional, its organ and baptismal font, and all the church furniture requisite for a splendid exercise of Catholic rites. The bishop hopes to make it, by reason of its elegance and splendor, "an object of just pride and glory to the Amazonas and of edification to the whole Christian world." Propelled by steam, and drawing but little water, it will carry the zealous missionaries along the natural highway to the most distant parts of the country, as far as Bolivia and Peru, Ecuador and Colombia and Venezuela, and even to the most distant European colonies of Guiana.

The foreign immigration into the United States in the last fiscal year shows a gratifying decrease in volume as compared with 1882. Gratifying because the addition in a single year of over three-quarters of a million of people who are strangers to our laws and customs is a severe task on the digestive and assimilating power of our body politic. In any other country than the United States such a large addition to the labor population in so short a time would have produced great confusion and distress. The United States was able to dispose of this multitude with little disturbance, but no one will regard it as a misfortune that this flood-tide of immigration shows some abatement for the year just closed. A still further diminution next year would not be cause for lamentation.—Press.

The President's Mules.

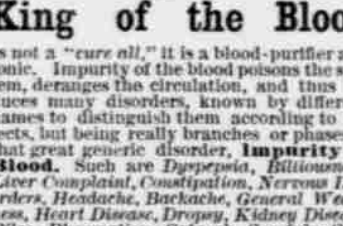
When the announcement was made that 185 horses had been provided for the use of the Presidential party in the Yellowstone Park, the country was naturally astonished. It will be delighted to learn that the statement was a blunder of the official who communicated it or of the telegraph instrument that transmitted it. It should have been 185 "mules," not "horses." This makes all the difference in the world. The mule is an obliging animal and may be depended upon to carry the President, the Lieutenant-General and their friends safely through all the perils of the park. The substitution of the mule for the fiery steed of the War Department cannot fail to gratify the millions who believe in Republican simplicity and who are apprehensive that the introduction of foreign manners will overthrow our Democratic liberties. Despotism in the United States need not be dreaded as long as the President rides a very tough mule and wears a blue flannel shirt.

The Assistant Secretary of the Treasury has received telegrams from the collector of customs at Tacoma, W. T., stating that officers with the assistance of the revenue steamer *Walcott* had captured a sloop engaged in running Chinese across the line from British Columbia. Two smugglers were arrested, but nine Chinese passengers escaped. The collector also stated that nearly 100 Chinamen had landed at various points along the northern frontier in boats and Indian canoes within the last few days and that he is powerless to prevent this unless his force is largely increased. It was explained by the custom officers that the law provides that no Chinese laborers will be permitted to enter the United States by land without producing to the officials the custom certificate required by Chinese laborers.



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