

PROTECTION OR FREE TRADE ?

By HENRY GEORGE.

CHAPTER VI. (CONTINUED.)

TRADE.

And as trade becomes free and extensive—as roads are made and navigation improved; as pirates and robbers are extirpated and treaties of peace put an end to chronic warfare—so does wealth augment and civilization grow. All our great labor-saving inventions, from that of money to that of the steam engine, spring from trade and promote its extension. Trade has ever been the extinguisher of war, the eradicator of prejudice, the diffuser of knowledge. It is by trade that useful seeds and animals, useful arts and inventions, have been carried over the world, and that men in one place have been enabled not only to obtain the products, but to profit by the observations, discoveries and inventions of men in other places.

In a world created on protective principles, all habitable parts would have the same soil and climate, and be fitted for the same productions, so that the inhabitants of each locality would be able to produce at home all they require. Its seas and rivers would not lend themselves to navigation, and every little section intended for the habitation of every of a separate community would be guarded by a protective mountain chain. If we found ourselves in such a world, we might infer it to be the intent of nature that each people should develop its own industries independently of all others. But the world in which we do find our selves is not merely adapted to intercommunication, but it yields to man is so distributed as to compel the people of different localities to trade with each other to fully satisfy their desires. The diversities of soil and climate, the distribution of water, wood and mineral deposits, the currents of sea and air, produce infinite differences in the adaptation of different parts to different productions. It is not merely that one zone yields sugar and coffee, the banana and the pineapple, and another wheat and barley, the apple and the potato; that one supplies furs and another cotton; that here are hillsides adapted to pasture and there valleys fitted for the plow; here granite and there clay; in one place iron and coal and in another copper and lead; but that there are differences so delicate that, though experience tells us they exist, we cannot say to what they are due. Win- of a certain quality is produced in one place which cuttings from the same vines will not yield in another place, though soil and climate seem alike. Some localities, without assignable reasons, become renowned for productions of one kind and some for productions of another kind; and experience often shows that plants thrive differently in different parts of the same field. These endless diversities, in the adaptation of different parts of the earth's surface to the production of the different things required by man, show that nature has not intended man to depend for the supply of his wants upon his own production but to exchange with his fellows, just as the placing of the meat before one guest at the table, the vegetables before another, and the bread before another, shows

the intent of the host that they should help one another

Other natural facts have similar bearing. It has long been known that to obtain the best crops the farmer should not sow with seed grown in his own fields, but with seed brought from afar. The strain of domestic animals seems always improve by imported stock, even poultry dealers finding it best to sell the male birds they raise and supply their places with cocks brought from a distance. Whether or not the same law holds true with regard to the physical part of man, it is certain that the admixture of peoples produces stimulating mental effects. Prejudices are worn down, wits are sharpened, language enriched, habits and customs brought to the test of comparison and new ideas enkindled. The most progressive people, if not always of mixed blood, have always been the people who came most in contact with and learned most from others. "Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits" is true of nations.

And, further than this, it is characteristic of all the inventions and discoveries that are so rapidly increasing our power over nature that they require the greater division of labor, and extended trade. Thus every step in advance destroys the independence and increases the interdependence of men. The appointed condition of human progress is evidently that men shall come into closer relations and become more and more dependent upon each other.

Thus the restriction which protection urges us to impose upon ourselves are about as well calculated to promote national prosperity as ligatures, that would impede the circulation of the blood, would be to promote bodily health and comfort. Protection calls upon us to pay officials, to encourage spies and informers, and to provoke fraud and perjury for what? Why, to preserve ourselves and protect ourselves against something which offends no moral law; something to which we are instinctively impelled; something without which we could never have emerged from barbarism, and something which physical nature and social laws alike prove to be in conformity with the creative intent.

It is true that protectionists do not condemn all trade, and though some of them have wished for an ocean of fire to bar out foreign products others, more reasonable if less logical, would permit a country to import things it cannot produce. The international trade which they concede to be harmless amounts not to a tenth and perhaps not to a twentieth of the international trade of the world, and, so far as our country is concerned, the things we could not obtain at home amount to a little more than a few productions of the torrid zone and even these, if properly protected, might be grown at home by artificial heat, to the incidental encouragement of the glass and coal industries. But, so far as the correctness of the theory goes, it does not matter whether the trade which "protection" would prevent, as compared with that it would prevent, be more or less. What "protection" calls on us to prevent ourselves from, guard ourselves against, is trade. And whether trade be between citizens of the same nation or citizens of different nations, and whether we get by it things that we could

produce for ourselves or things that we could not produce for ourselves, the object of trade is all the same. If I trade with a Canadian, a Mexican, or an Englishman it is for the same reason that I trade with an American—that I would rather have the thing he gives me than the thing I give him. Why should I refuse to trade with a foreigner any more than with a fellow-citizen when my object in trading is my advantage, not his? And is it not in the one case, quite as much as in the other, an injury to me that my trade should be prevented? What difference does it make whether it would be possible or impossible for me to make for myself the thing for which I trade? If I did not want the thing I am to get more than the thing I am to give, I would not wish to make the trade. Here is a farmer who proposes to exchange with his neighbor a horse he does not want for a couple of cows he does want. Would it benefit these farmers to prevent this trade on the ground that one might breed his own horses and the other raise his own cows? Yet if one farmer lived on the American and the other on the Canadian side of the line this is just what both the American and Canadian government would do. And this is called "protection."

It is only one of the many benefits of trade that it enables people to obtain what the natural conditions of their own localities would not enable them to produce. This is, however, so obvious a benefit that protectionists cannot altogether ignore it, and a favorite doctrine with American protectionists, is that trade ought to follow meridians of longitude instead of parallels of latitude, because the great differences of climate and consequently of natural productions are between north and south.

The most desirable reconstruction of the world on this theory would be its division into "countries" consisting of narrow strips running from the equator to the poles, with high tariffs on either side and at the equatorial end, for the polar ice would serve the purpose at the other.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Advertisement for a hair treatment product. It features a circular logo with a crown and the text 'FOR A LIMITED TIME FREE'. The text describes the product as a 'WONDERFUL DISCOVERY' and lists various ailments it treats, such as 'Dandruff', 'Itch', and 'Scalp'. It also mentions '2,000 References' and 'Name this paper when you write'.

2,000 References. Name this paper when you write

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Advertisement for Dr. Sanden's Electric Belt. The headline reads 'MEN! WHY ARE YOU WEAK?' and 'DR. SANDEN'S ELECTRIC BELT AND SUSPENSORY FOR WEAK MEN'. The text describes the belt as 'A NEVER FAILING CURE FOR ALL WEAKNESS OF MEN' and lists various ailments it treats, such as 'Nervous Debility', 'Seminous Losses', 'Drains', 'Impotency', 'Lost Manhood', 'Rheumatism', 'Back', 'Kidney Troubles', 'Nervous Sleeplessness', 'Poor Memory' & 'General Illness'. It also mentions 'PATENTED 1891' and 'THE DR. SANDEN ELECTRIC BELT'.