

that in nine cases out of ten their goods are crooked and they are unsafe for them to handle. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

THE DUTY ON JEWELRY.

Every one of our readers will remember the stand that we have always taken in regard to the duty on jewelry, viz., that while the trade is perfectly satisfied to pay the rate levied by the present tariff, if it can be collected alike from all, they consider that the Government should either find means of properly enforcing its collection, or else give the trade fair play by reducing the duty one half and protecting them in that way against smuggling.

It is perfectly absurd for any Government to attempt to collect any such rate of duty as twenty and twenty-five per cent. on goods so expensive and small in bulk as jewelry. It can't be done in any country, let alone such a one as Canada, with only an imaginary border line of nearly two thousand miles separating them from the market from whence the greater part of their supply comes. In plain English, as things at present stand, the Government collect duty from the honest importers, who, by their very honesty in making these payments, are unable to compete against the unscrupulous rivals who are willing to risk an occasional seizure of their goods in preference to paying the duty on the whole.

The Government either do not see this, or are wilfully blind regarding it, for it is a thing that is being brought painfully to the regular importer's notice every day.

Scarcely a day passes but he is confronted with quotations from small one-horse houses (who can't possibly buy as well let alone any better than he does), that are simply his cost, or so near it that there is no fun in it. Do those men sell goods at cost and make a living out of it? Hardly! they know better than that. How is this done then? Any one in the trade will tell you simply by their smuggling the goods into this country, and thus having the duty for their profit.

We have always expressed surprise that the Government should so long have held out a protecting hand to these scalliwags, for it is only by the help of the high duty that they could thrive at all. Take away or even reduce the duty one-half, and their occupation, like Othello's,

would be gone, and they would have to take a very humble back seat in the commercial world.

As things are at present they are the "cocks of the walk," and their "very low" prices are flung in the faces of honest importers by retail dealers, who know as well as those from whom they bought that the goods quoted are dishonest goods, and it is only on this account that they are lower in price.

A most glaring instance of the folly of the present tariff, is the duty on precious stones. Strange to say they have some faint glimmering of reason, for following the the old anti-N. P. tariff, Diamonds unset are placed on the free list; all other unset stones, including rubies, emeralds, sapphires, which mineralogists tell us are really only diamonds of a different color, are rated at twenty per cent. These stones cannot be out in this country to pay. The only lapidary we have imports them himself, because he can do so and pay even the duty now levied, for less than one-quarter of what he could out them for himself. They are raw material to our manufacturing trade, who are thus compelled to pay a profit of twenty per cent. on them to the Government, and which is really placing them at a disadvantage against their foreign competitors by just so much, while the duty levied on the goods into which these stones are wrought, even if it could be collected, is only twenty per cent., but as enough of them are smuggled into this country to break the price, it is equal to no protection at all.

We notice that the Tariff Commission appointed by the United States Congress to revise the tariff, recommended amongst other things an advance of duty on precious stones unset from ten to twenty-five per cent. ad valorem. It appears that the Committee recommended this change without consulting the trade, and the result was that as soon as the latter got wind of it they got up a memorial and laid it before the Committee, which so enlightened them that they at once struck out the change and brought the duty back to the former figure of ten per cent.

We, therefore, find that even the United States, protectionist as it is to the core, and the pattern that we have taken for our tariff, admit unset stones at ten per cent., while we charge our manufacturers exactly double that duty. The same arguments exactly that apply to precious

stones unset will apply to them set in gold, or to any other jewelry, and all the sophistry in the world won't change it.

For the benefit of our readers we reprint the memorial sent by the leading jewelers of the United States to the Committee of Ways and Means above referred to, simply remarking that the true state of the case is fairly and honestly put, and that if the word "jewelry" was substituted for the words precious stones all through the document, the logic would be equally true and unanswerable.

The petition runs as follows:

NEW YORK, Jan. 5, 1888.

To the Committee of Ways and Means of the U. S. House of Representatives:

The undersigned are all engaged in business as importers of diamonds and other precious stones.

Your petitioners have learned that it is proposed to amend the tariff and to advance the duty on precious stones from ten per cent. ad valorem to twenty-five per cent. ad valorem. We beg to represent to you that such an advance in the customs duty would be a fatal blow dealt to a large and growing business in this country, wherein are employed large amounts of capital and many people. Our objections to the proposed increase of duties may be briefly stated as follows:

1st. Owing to the valuable character of precious stones, their small bulk, and the readiness with which they can be concealed, they offer a great temptation to smugglers. To increase the rewards to be obtained from an illicit traffic, is to increase the volume of that traffic.

2d. Under the present tariff frequent cases of smuggling are reported; but under an increased tariff smuggling would be the rule to such an extent that honest importers could not compete in the markets of the country against goods so smuggled with goods upon which the tariff had been paid. As a consequence, reputable merchants would be driven out of the business of importing precious stones, and unscrupulous and law-defying men would obtain control of the traffic.

3rd. Under the ten per cent. duty, a greater portion of the taxes due the Government on importations of precious stones is collected with little trouble or expense, because the business is mainly in the hands of reputable merchants. Under an advanced tariff the Government would be subjected to greater expense in watching smugglers, and would obtain less revenue than it does now. Rogues would be substituted for honorable merchants in the business of bringing precious stones to this country.

4th. The facilities for intercommunication between the United States and Europe are now so great that many tourists pass to and from every year.