

yield a handsome return was subjected to a "specific" duty more or less heavy.

As civilization advanced, these imposts fell under the charge and supervision of the general Government, which collected the taxes and supported the hitherto favored parties from the revenue of the country. Originating in a barbarous age and in a different state of society, Customs' duties are still in force in all commercial nations. In England twenty-three millions of pounds per annum, or one-third of the whole revenue is raised from this source. In the United States the sum raised from Customs during the last seventy years has been equal to four-fifths of the gross revenue of the country, while in Canada the estimated revenue from the same source in 1859 is \$5,200,000, or two-thirds of the total estimated revenue of the Province.

The propriety of abolishing all customs' duties has long been urged in England, and when we reflect that the property tax in that country is collected at a cost of *two* per cent., while the customs' duties cost *ten* per cent. in bringing them into the treasury, there is certainly a strong case made out against them. It cannot be doubted, however, that while entire freedom of trade would doubtless be most advantageous, the action of other countries with which we hold intercourse may compel us to adopt a tariff in many respects similar to theirs. If our products are taxed by others, similar products entering our ports, must, in many cases, be met with equal restrictions, or the industrial interests of the country will suffer.

Our present object, however, is not to discuss the abstract question of import duties, but to examine that branch of the subject which refers to the method of levying those duties. The levying of import and export duties was at first entirely arbitrary or specific. A pound of salt and a pound of sugar were taxed with less regard to their intrinsic value than to the wants of the Government. One was charged five hundred and another fifty per cent; one so much by measure, another so much by weight. The fine and coarse salt were put in the same measure so far as the tax-gatherer was concerned, and the poor man paid the same duty on his cheap article as the rich man on his dear. This was clearly an injustice which the introduction of the *ad valorem* system was intended to remedy. In England the duties are mixed, but the *ad valorem* principle is largely introduced in levying even the specific duties. In the United States the system is purely *ad valorem*. In Canada, mixed duties have hitherto prevailed, but the new Tariff lately introduced by the Hon. Mr. Galt, and which is now the law of the land, has entirely abolished the specific duties with the one single exception, of whiskey.

The general adoption of *ad valorem* duties has, from local circumstances,