

Mr. Blaine assumes that the tariff of 1816 was not distinctly a protective tariff, he does so in total disregard not only of every authority, but of every fact in connection with it. Between 1804 and 1811, inclusive, duties on imported goods averaged 18.49 per cent. Between 1817 and 1824, inclusive, they averaged 27.67 per cent. These figures show that the Tariff Act of 1816 was an increase of duties of about 50 per cent. over those that had obtained from the organization of the Government. And we have the positive testimony of Col. Benton, Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster that the increase was made, not to secure an increase of revenue, but for the sake of protection.

Another mistake that Mr. Blaine makes in the extract quoted is that the country was prosperous under the war duties, despite the exhausting effect of the struggle with Great Britain. The country was not prosperous. Its business was almost paralyzed. Our exports were reduced from \$45,000,000 in 1811 to less than \$7,000,000 in 1814. Our shipping was almost driven from the ocean. There was scarcely any market for our surplus produce at any price. Prices of manufactured goods ran to enormous figures. The great interest of the country was agriculture, and its condition was deplorable. But we did have a high tariff for about two years and a half, and Mr. Blaine's theory requires him to find that under it, in despite of the war, the country was prosperous. The facts are all against him, tremendously against him; but he does not falter or hesitate in asserting that the false is true.

After assuming that duties were reduced by the tariff of 1816. Mr. Blaine goes on to say: "The people were soon reduced to great distress, to as great distress as in that melancholy period between the close of the Revolutionary war and the organization of the national Government—1783 to 1789. Col. Benton's vivid description of the period of depression following the reduction of duties comprises in a few lines a whole chapter of the history of free trade in the United States: 'No price for property; no sales except those of the sheriff and marshal; no purchasers at execution sales, except the creditor or some hoarder of money; no employment for industry; no demand for labor; no sale of the products of the farm; no sound of the hammer except that of the auctioneer knocking down property. Distress was the universal cry of the people; relief, the universal demand.'" This was the terrible condition of the country in 1819-1820 as described, no doubt truly, by Col. Benton; and which Mr. Blaine assures us comprises "a whole chapter of the history of free trade in the United States." This is a grave accusation, and should be carefully examined.

If the condition of the country, as Col. Benton describes it, was actually brought about, as Mr. Blaine seeks to make us believe, by a tariff reduction in 1816, and, further, if no other cause can be found, it must be conceded that Mr. Blaine has made a strong point in favor of a high tariff seventy-four years ago. But even if that were true, there might still remain a question (under Mr. Blaine's theory that the suitability of a high or low tariff depends wholly on the condition of the country in which it is applied), whether in consideration of the enormous change that has taken place in this country since 1816, the illustration would be of any value. It would be difficult for Mr. Blaine to show that there is a greater difference between the business conditions of this country and Great Britain now than is found between this country in 1816 and now. That is, Mr. Blaine would be compelled to confess that, by his own logic (not Mr. Gladstone's), the illustration he has so ostentatiously produced to show that a high tariff is desirable for this country in the year 1890 is utterly worthless.

But let us examine this chapter of history a little more carefully, to ascertain whether at any time, or in any country, or under any condition of things, it bears the significance that Mr. Blaine attributes to it.

In the first place, Mr. Blaine's assumption that the distressing condition of things in 1819 and 1820 was caused by a free trade reduction of the tariff is wholly overthrown by the simple fact that the tariff was not reduced, but largely increased for the avowed purpose of protection as testified by Col. Benton, Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay. It might be argued that the increase of tariff duties in 1816 produced the disastrous consequences found four years later. Whether that argument would be sound or not, it would at least not be totally absurd.

But in order to give a clear idea of the real cause of the deplorable state of affairs existing in 1819-1820, I will quote the whole passage from Col. Benton from which Mr. Blaine has extracted a few lines, that, in his opinion, contain "a whole chapter of the history of free trade in the United States." "The Bank of the United States," says Col. Benton, "was chartered in 1816, and before 1820 had performed one of its cycles of delusive and bubble prosperity, followed by actual and widespread calamity. The whole paper system, of which it was the head and citadel after a vast expansion, had suddenly collapsed, spreading desolation over the land, and carrying ruin to debtors. The years 1819-1820 were a period of gloom and agony. No money, either gold or silver; no paper convertible into specie; no measure or standard of value remaining. The local banks (all but those of New England) after a brief resumption of specie payments, again sank into a state of suspension. The Bank of the United States, created as a remedy for all those evils, now at the head of the evil, prostrate and helpless, with