

Nor does it matter that those now active in the free trade movement have no sympathy with our aims; nor that they denounce and misrepresent us. It is our policy to support them, and strengthen them and urge them on. No matter how soon they may propose to stop, the direction they wish to take is the direction in which we must go if we would reach our goal. In joining our forces to theirs, we shall not be putting ourselves to their use, we shall be making use of them.

But these men themselves, when fairly started and borne on by the impulse of controversy, will go further than they now dream. It is the law of all such movements that they must become more and more radical. And while we are especially fortunate in the United States in a class of protectionist leaders who will not yield an inch until forced to, our political conditions differ from those of Great Britain in 1846, when, the laboring class being debarred from political power, a timely surrender on the part of the defenders of protection checked for awhile the natural course of the movement, and thus prevented the demand for the abolition of protection from becoming at once a demand for the abolition of landlordism. The class that in Great Britain is only coming into political power has, with us, political power already.

Yet even in Great Britain the inevitable tendencies of the free-trade movement may clearly be seen. Not only has the abolition of protection cleared the ground for the far greater questions now beginning to enter British politics; not only has the impulse of the free-trade agitation led to reforms which are placing political power in the hands of the many; but the work done by men who, having begun by opposing protection, were not content to stop with its abolition, has been one of the most telling factors in hastening the revolution now in its incipient stages—a revolution that cannot stop short of the restoration to the British people of their natural rights to their native land.

Richard Cobden saw that the agitation of the tariff question must ultimately pass into the agitation of the land question, and from what I have heard of him I am inclined to think that were he in life and vigor to-day, he would be leading in the movement for the restoration to the British people of their natural rights in their native land. But, however this may be, the British free-trade movement left a "remnant" who, like Thomas Briggs,* have constantly advocated the carrying of free trade to final conclusions. And one of the most effective of the revolutionary agencies now at work in Great Britain is the Liverpool Financial Reform Association, whose *Financial Reform Almanac* and other publications are doing so much to make the British people acquainted with the process of usurpation and spoliation by which the land of Great Britain has been made the private property of a class, and British labor saddled with the support of a horde of aristocratic paupers. Yet the Liverpool Financial Reform

much less objectionable than taxes on imports. The excise tax on spirituous liquors ought to be abolished, as it fosters corruption, injuriously affects many branches of manufacture and puts a premium on adulteration; but either by a government monopoly, or by license taxes on retail sales, a large revenue might be derived from the liquor traffic with much greater advantage to public health and morals than by the present system. There are also some stamp taxes which are comparatively uninjurious and can be collected easily and cheaply.

But of all methods of raising an independent Federal revenue, that which would yield the largest return with the greatest ease and least injury is a tax upon legacies and successions. In a large population the proportion of deaths is as regular as that of births, and with proper exemptions in favor of widows, minor children and dependent relatives, such a tax would bear harshly on no one, and from the publicity which must attach to the transfer of property by death or in view of death it is easily collected and little liable to evasion. The appropriation of land values would of itself strike at the heart of overgrown fortunes, but until that is accomplished, a tax of this kind would have the incidental advantage of interfering with their transmission.

Of all excuses for the continuance of any tariff at all, the most groundless is that it is necessary to secure Federal revenues. Even the income tax, bad as it is, is in all respects better than a tariff.

* Author of *Property and Taxation*, etc., and a warm supporter of the movement for the restoration of their land to the British people. Mr. Briggs was one of the Manchester manufacturers active in the Anti-Corn Law movement, and, regarding that victory as a mere beginning, has always insisted that Great Britain was yet under the blight of protectionism, and that the struggle for true free trade was yet to come.

Association is composed of men who, for the most part, would shrink from any deliberate attack upon property in land. They are simply free traders of the Manchester school, logical enough to see that free trade means the abolition of revenue tariffs as well as of protective tariffs. But in striking at indirect taxation they are of necessity dealing tremendous blows at private property in land, and sapping the very foundations of aristocracy, since, in showing the history of indirect taxation, they are showing how the tenants of the nation's land made themselves virtual owners; and in proposing the restoration of the direct tax upon land values they are making an issue which will involve the complete restoration of British land to the British people.

Thus it is that when men take up the principle of freedom they are led on and on, and that the hearty advocacy of freedom to trade becomes at length the advocacy of freedom to labor. And so must it be in the United States. Once the tariff question becomes a national issue, and in the struggle against protection, free traders will be forced to attack indirect taxation. Protection is so well entrenched that before a revenue tariff can be secured the active spirits of the free-trade party will have far passed the point when that would satisfy them; while before the abolition of indirect taxation is reached, the incidence of taxation and the nature and effect of private property in land will have been so well discussed that the rest will be but a matter of time.

Property in land is as indefensible as property in man. It is so absurdly impolitic, so outrageously unjust, so flagrantly subversive of the true right of property, that it can only be instituted by force and maintained by confounding in the popular mind the distinction between property in land and property in things that are the result of labor. Once that distinction is made clear—and a thorough discussion of the tariff question must now make it clear—and private property in land is doomed.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

A wealthy citizen, whom I once supported, and called on others to support, for the Presidential chair, under the impression that he was a Democrat of the school of Jefferson, has recently published a letter advising us to steel-plate our coasts, lest foreign navies come over and bombard us. This counsel of timidity has for its hardly disguised object the inducing of such an enormous expenditure of public money as will prevent any demand for the reduction of taxation, and thus secure to the tariff rings a longer lease of plunder. It well illustrates the essential meanness of the protectionist spirit—a spirit that no more comprehends the true dignity of the American Republic and the grandeur of her possibilities than it cares for the material interests of the great masses of her citizens—"the poor people who have to work."

That which is good harmonizes with all things good; and that which is evil tends to other evil things. Properly does Buckle, in his *History of Civilization*, apply the term "protective" not merely to the system of robbery by tariffs, but to the spirit that teaches that the many are born to serve and the few to rule; that props thrones with bayonets, substitutes small vanities and petty jealousies for high-minded patriotism, and converts the flower of European youth into uniformed slaves, trained to kill each other at the word of command. It is not accidental that Mr. Tilden, anxious to get rid of the surplus revenue in order to prevent a demand for the repeal of protective duties, should propose wasting it on steel-clad forts, rather than applying it to any purpose of general utility. Fortifications and navies and standing armies not merely suit the protectionist purpose in requiring a constant expenditure, and developing a class who look on warlike expenditures as conducive to their own profit and importance, but they are of a piece with a theory that teaches us that our interests are antagonistic to those of other nations.

Unembarrassed by hostile neighbors; unentangled in European quarrels; already, in her sixty millions of people, the most powerful nation on earth, and rapidly rising to a position that will dwarf the greatest empires, the American Republic can afford to laugh to scorn any suggestion that she should ape the armaments of Old World monarchies, as she should laugh to scorn the parallel suggestion that her industries could be ruined by throwing open her ports to the commerce of the world.

The giant of the nations does not depend for her safety