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SPECIFIC AND AD VALOREM.

A "Constant Reader" writes to the editor:

Will you kindly inform many interested readers of your excellent paper the difference between specific and ad valorem duties as applied to the McKinley law and the Wilson bill now before Congress?

The difference between the terms specific and ad valorem as applied to customs duties may be explained we think quite as clearly and certainly much more briefly without particular reference to either of the measures named. Our correspondent hardly means that we should take the space, even if it were possible at this incomplete stage of one of the measures named, to compare the two in detail—that is, enumerate the articles on the dutiable list in both, which in the one may be required to pay a specific, and in the other an ad valorem tax. The meaning of the respective terms is not affected by the application of the terms themselves in this or that enactment; "specific duties" mean the same thing whether used by McKinley or Wilson; and "ad valorem duties" likewise. This much, however, may not inappropriately be added: The McKinley law uses both ad valorem and specific duties, with a strong preference for the latter; the Wilson bill declares emphatically for ad valorem duties wherever possible, the frames having substituted these for the specific duties "whenever it seemed practical, because the ad valorem system has worked well in practice and because it is a tax upon actual values."

The latter clause gives a fairly complete definition of the term "ad valorem"—according to value. A tariff based on that system, therefore, varies with the price and value of the import—the duty is levied upon the real value of the article taxed; and this value is determined by the invoices sworn to by importers or agents and subject to correction by the appraiser's valuation. The term "specific," as applied to a customs duty, implies a fixed tax upon articles imported—as for example, 10 cents a yard on carpets, whether the carpets are worth $1 or $5 per yard. This is a naked definition of the two systems. There is still another, the compound duty system, formed of a union of both the others, by which each grade of the commodity in question is made to carry its share, and—this is a virtual concession to the ad valorem plan—the adoption of a sliding scale which varies the duty according to the texture or cost of the article.

As to which of the two is the better for general use, there always has been, there still is, and there always will be, divergent views. So strong and masterful a protectionist as Henry Clay placed himself on record as against the specific and in favor of the ad valorem system, making the argument that:

> I believe if we adopt a fixed rate of valorem the revenue will be subjected to fewer vacillations the importer and trader finding no specific duties. One of the most precious purposes of the revenue or revenue laws has been, as everybody knows, the effort to put goods of a finer quality and higher value subjected only to the same rate of duty required for those of a lower value.

On the other hand James Buchanan and other prominent Democrats of a previous generation, and Daniel Manning, the strong man of President Cleveland's former cabinet, were uncompromisingly opposed to ad valorem duties as against specific, holding that the former system gave a premium on perjury, permits the grossest frauds on the revenue by undervaluations, and increases expense by multiplying the number of persons required to examine it.

It must be said that the tariffs of other countries cited some months ago the argument of the expediency and justice of ad valorem duties. One authority points out that England imposes duties on 38 articles, France on 653, Austria on 227, Russia on 181, Sweden on more than 100, and Denmark on 81, in all of which cases the duties are specific. Germany's tariff makes 321 articles dutiable and imposes specific duties on 231 of them. Italy's tariff enters 151 products, and on 141 of them the duties are specific; Norway collects customs on more than 100 articles, and the duties are specific except in six instances; Spain, with 200 articles on its tariff, imposes on 14 ad valorem duty as between Analyze, on the other side of the question, it can hardly be wondered at that under the system of specific duties there would be a tremendous effort going on among importers to get goods generally belonging in one class subject to a higher specific duty, brought in as of a lower grade bearing a lower duty. This is the immediate feature of the matter, and in addition to it there is the subject and marginal phase, that the consumers of different qualities of a commodity are forced to submit to an equal fee as to its quantity, and that such fee inevitably falls heaviest on the cheaper grades, whose consumers are most numerous and least able to pay.

It is not fancy that either system exclusively can be used with success and satisfaction. Both have accidental features—meaning of course that there is to be a tariff at all—and neither is without objection and imperfection. The question as to accepting Mr. Wilson's idea of accepting the duty by the quality of the import, or Mr. McKinley's idea of regarding it according to the quantity, with incidental component of "sliding duties," is one of much interest with politicians and calculators. But after all it is quite secondary to and wholly overshadowed by the great query, whether it is better for the United States to have a tariff at all save for revenue, or a tariff levied partisanly for the protection of American industries.

RAILROADS IN FALL-TIME.

The readers of the NEWS are aware that efforts are being made to connect the principal cities of Palestine and Syria by railroads, and that the line between Jaffa and Jerusalem has already been opened. This distance is about forty-five miles which is made by the railroad in a little less than four hours, except when the trains are all the way from two to five hours late, which, we are told, is the general rule. The mode of travelling on the locomotive or by stage, occupied twelve hours, including the ordinary stops. It was an easy excursion and could not fail to stir the emotions, especially when enjoyed for the first time—when it was pleasant experience never to be forgotten. What the transit in a close car will be, crowded, perhaps, with pilgrims from various countries, dusky infidels, grasping as they changers, haughty Turks, etc., must be left to the imagination.

The road which is to a mountain gorge to the plain of Esdraelon, south of Jezreel, and terminates close by the Jaffa gate. Engines and cars were brought from America, while the rails are of Belgian manufacture. The company's purpose is to extend this line to Lydda, if concession can be obtained to pass through Turkish territory. The Turkish authorities have consented to the building of branch lines from Jaffa to Nicodemia, the ancient Gadara, in the north, and to Gaza, via Ascalon, in the south. This line will then undoubtedly be extended and connected with the Egyptian railroad system.

The line that is being laid from Haifa to Damascus runs along the Carmel range. Leaving Acre it goes by Baneh and Gideon's spring to the valley of Jezreel, which it traverses in its entire length. It touches Nazareth and crosses the Jordan at the south end of lake Tiberias on a newly-built bridge. Thence it is to run by the Roman plains to Damascus. This line is being constructed, it seems, by a Chicago firm.

Another project contemplates the building of a railroad line between Beyrouth, Damascus and Aleppo, to be extended to Bagdad.

When all these roads are completed, Palestine will again be in a fair way to resume the position it once held as a central and connecting link between the orient and occident. Much of the immense trade that is now carried on from Persia and India, either by means of caravans to the south, traversing Russia through her Caspian ports, or by steamships to western and southern Europe, will naturally find its way to Jaffa, where already Russian, French, American and English steamboat companies regularly send their well-loaded vessels and carry on a lively traffic in consideration, but will be built for the better safety of the ships and the whole country will be lifted up to a position of great importance among the nations of the old world. Not even all this is going to be a distant future. With the enthusiasm with which modern civilization accomplishes its plans and designs, the conception of Palestine may be realized comparatively soon. The attention of the world is directed toward the country so much in anticipation of its liberation from the curse of slovenly, slow-time and sloth.

MAKING IT A SOCIETY.

We all know how difficult it is for one the clock of society is determined to swing, but we are in a fair way to have much that is extraordinary in the shape of those clocks. Two or three weeks ago the NEWS printed an item in the Chinese apparatus of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, which is to be established in the city of Pekin. It is stated that there have been a set of other societies, perhaps not existing (the spring law, but equally prompt in the spirit of advancing and wise people. If a fact, the following is a partial list of society in Pekin to cause every sensibility and happiness and society: Society for the prevention of [illegible] and those who [illegible] upon a confiding public. One pays their debts and gives [illegible] to [illegible] under the claim and mantle of "sweet charity." Another stands for [illegible], and prides all [illegible] warm, either at [illegible] or personal profit, to pledge of profit to the poor [illegible]. Still another plays upon the community's sensibility to the extent of [illegible] and sobriety for his gill, [illegible] to the [illegible], is [illegible] for the destitute. Another Charlie McCarthy, a Bilkins [illegible] and [illegible] endeavors his determination to give a large sum to the American poor if he shall be successful in securing the appointment of an American dignitary of the element. We do not see that this latter [illegible] of generosity is wholly out of place in the same paragraph and coupling with some others that are then in the public mind. The [illegible] of it may at any rate cause a certain reflection among those who have hitherto yielded to and been carried away by the rapid wave of sensational generosity—a hollow, a void, hearing, unsympathetic and impudent myth.

We believe firmly in that charity which is real, and valued, and unostentatious, and enduring, and we know the natural place in our souls for that which there were many more specimens of, that unselfishly exhaust species of benefactors who "do good by stealth and blush to find it fame."

ERIN PASHA.

The fact that Emin Pasha's fellow-citizens, the inhabitants of the little German town where he first saw the light, are preparing to erect a monument to his memory, would indicate that there is very little reason to doubt that the intrepid traveler has really met his death. It will be remembered that on many previous occasions he has been reported as lost, and each time there has seemed sufficient basis for the grief and the complimentary obituary notices that the news called forth. But his surprising family of rebuting to be prematurely disposed of is verified here while still alive and fighting to the malice of both ends, has been so often asserted that the historian approaches with doubly the duty of again recording his final adieu to peace and the circumstances of his taking off. The latter, however, appears to have definitely happened at last; there is no reasonable ground to hope that he still lives, although there is still a lack of authenticity and corroboration for the last incidents of his earthly career.

It is now more than three years since the last reliable news from him was received. He was then alone, hard, harrassed by difficulties on every side and threatened with the complete destruction of his party by hostilities over stocking his stores and hovering on his flank. Hoping to save a remnant, at least, of his little army, he sent a companion and the most attenuated men with orders to return to German territory—an apparently hopeless attempt, and yet one that proved successful. This companion, Dr. Stuhlmann, was the last white man, so far as known, who saw the indomitable explorer, and this was during the concluding days of 1890. Emin had been almost insanely pressing forward into the wilderness of the heart of central Africa, westward from Lake Albert; but whether he hoped to reach the point where he had left some of his old comrades of a previous expedition, or whether he intended to fight his way through to the Congo, the sources has remained with him.

All the rest but is known of the fate comes from the dubious testimony of Arab traders and traveling mercenaries. Early in 1892 he is heard of pushing boldly southward toward the equator. He is supposed to have almost reached the Congo when the goal of his earthly life was attained—perhaps, as in its manner, not unexpected to him, for he is understood to have looked forward to probable assassination with unswerving stoicism. He had fought the slave-traders at every opportunity, and had reason to believe they would use no chance to take revenge. He was nearing a region where his bloodthirsty race were numerous and powerful—the war forces having meanwhile dwindled in courage, strength and discipline. Most of them were invalids, those who were not—a native tribe—were traitors. A slave-trading chief incited these vagabonds to mutiny, and their leader murdered the devoted German, presumably on the 20th of October of last year.

The press of the Fatherland without exception accept the story of his death as true, one of the leading journals adding that it may doubt of the truth has to be used it is now set at rest by information from an entirely different quarter. "Personally, the leaders of the Congo government, certain Nyangwe, the stronghold of the Arab slave-traders, by storm, and thus the passage of the most positive evidence that Emin had met his death in the way described. In certain Dutch the Congo Free State, which reached the period of October, and which was [illegible] to the country [illegible] of the unfortunate [illegible]

That Emin Pasha was a patriot [illegible] in the days of African [illegible] who will be another [illegible] Thus he gave great [illegible] and [illegible] a world of that [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] will [illegible] [illegible] will [illegible] [illegible] will