

CALAMITY IN OREGON.

Having kindly answered an inquiry—made of him on the street in his own Pennsylvania town, a question in which the Singletax was incidentally mentioned—the friendly citizen said:

"I'm no Singletaxer; I tell you that! We're fighting the Singletax in Oregon. We have timber investments there."

"You'll have to come to it," his friend replied.

"It's a terrible calamity. It will ruin the farmers and the owners of big city buildings," said he.

And then they parted.

He's a good-hearted fellow, and as he spoke his manner was charmingly free from resentment and ill-will. He's head bookkeeper for a rich Pennsylvania family, probably a partner in some small way in their predatory "investments." Neither he nor they may have any idea whatever that they have been helping to put the people of Oregon into the hell of poverty.

But what he said was better than a good dinner; it put a smile on his friend's face that wouldn't come off for an hour or two. There are chuckles back of that face yet.

Fighting the Singletax in Oregon! His word for it, they were.

Not fighting with their own brawn and brain—of course not. That would take time and strength that can with more pleasure be devoted to golf or the automobile. No, they themselves are not doing the fighting—it is their bank check that is doing it!

How easy it is either to fight or to philanthropize, when it can be done with a check—and when the amount of the deposit is well kept up by the victims of the fight or of the philanthropy. How much may not the people of Oregon have contributed to the big bank account against which that fighting check is drawn!

But—"It's a terrible calamity, this Singletax. It will ruin the farmers and the owners of big city buildings"! Sad, isn't it?

And what a mystery that this "terrible calamity" in Oregon should single out "the farmers and the owners of big city buildings" for its especial victims—its joint victims! Who can possibly explain it, unless it be the benevolent fellows who endorse the *fighting* checks?

They will doubtless make it "clear as mud" to the people of Oregon that State and municipal burdens have been lightened and the people blessed, by having their timber lands deeded to Pennsylvania land grabbers, and by being otherwise exploited by absentee landlords!

What a wonderful fight a good big bank check can make against a "terrible calamity"!

ASHER GEO. BEECHER.



HOW PROTECTION DROVE OUR FLAG FROM THE HIGH SEAS.

The American citizen who turns from the history of our merchant marine in the days when it equalled in carrying power that of Great Britain, to view the pitiable remnant of four steamships in the Atlantic trade and five in the Pacific, would be less than human if he did not feel a sense of humiliation. And when he realizes that this shameful condition has come to pass as the result of deliberate legislation, enacted for the carrying out of a fiscal policy, he can but wonder at the strange workings of the human mind.

One can understand why American shipbuilders, demoralized by the prevailing vicious spirit of Protection, and greedy for quick fortunes, should seek legislation to advantage themselves. But who shall explain the state of mind that prompted the mass of our citizens to yield to such unreasonable demands, and to continue for fifty years a fiscal policy that has strangled one of our chief industries. The motive of the parasite is apparent; but what, shall we say of the victim?



The American navigation laws furnish a perfect illustration of the true inwardness of the principle underlying Protection.

To throw a tariff wall around a country so rich in natural resources that no artificial restraints can interrupt its growth, may deceive the superficial thinker into attributing prosperity to the tariff; but in the case of our foreign shipping the competition of other nations has demonstrated what a pitiable farce Protection is.

Congress, wishing to protect American shipbuilders, passed laws denying American registry to foreign-built ships, and prohibiting any but American ships from engaging in the coasting trade, that is, from one port in the United States to another port in the United States, even though it be by way of Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope. An American ship, that is, a ship that may fly the American flag, must be built in the United States, and be owned by citizens of the United States. Our shipbuilders were not protected by a mere tariff on foreign built ships, but by absolute prohibition.

Here we should see the fruits of Protection in all their perfection.

What has been the result? After fifty years

of this policy our coastal trade, restricted entirely to American-built ships, is but a tithe of what it should be; and our overseas shipping is limited to a few small sailing vessels, and to nine steamships, two of which were built abroad and admitted to American registry on condition that two of equal capacity be built in the local yards.

Our sailors driven from the high seas, and the shipbuilders now clamoring for subsidies!



An American citizen may import a locomotive and cars, which he is free to use in hauling goods within the country, or between this country and Canada, or Mexico, and the law holds it to be an American train, subject to American control. But if he buy a ship built abroad he cannot carry goods within the country; it is not an American ship, it cannot fly the American flag, and it is subject to the laws of the country where registered. It may engage in any trade permitted by other nations, but it cannot trade here except as a foreign ship. It may engage in the coasting trade of Great Britain, but not in the coasting trade of its owner's country. So greedy are our shipbuilders that even should a foreign-built vessel be wrecked on our coast, and be bought by an American, it cannot become an American ship unless the repairs amount to three-fourths the value of the ship.



It may be said that many of these restrictions were in force during the halcyon days of American shipping.

True, but the conditions were different.

It is another case where the country enjoyed such natural advantages that even restrictive laws did little harm. In the days of wooden ships we had the best and the cheapest materials, and so built the best and the cheapest ships. The restrictions then had no more effect upon the price of ships than did the duty on wheat when we were exporting it by the hundred million bushels.

Even when the change from sail to steam vessels came we still led the world as long as ships were made of wood. But our iron, owing to our tariff, was dear; and when the iron ships displaced the wooden, the advantage lay with England.

But note the difference in the policies of the two countries.

Our wooden ships were crowding her to the wall. Her shipowners declared they could not pay the higher price for English-built ships and compete with the cheaper built Yankee ships. Parliament met the situation by repealing her

Protective laws, and permitting English ship masters to buy American ships.

This act saved her till iron was substituted for wood, as the best ship-building-material.

Then the complaint came from our shipmasters; but it met with a different reception.

The predicament of the English shipmasters came at the culmination of the Corn Law agitation. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846, and three years later the navigation laws—similar to our own—were repealed.

But the cries of *our* perishing shipmasters fell upon ears ringing with the clamor of a horde of get-rich-quick-adventurers, who took advantage of the Civil War to foist upon the people a high Protective tariff.



Not only did the Protectionists in Congress disregard the plea for free ships to save our overseas shipping, as England's had been saved in 1849, but they were so completely subservient to the shipbuilders that they passed a law prohibiting those American ships that had sought protection under other flags during the Civil War from re-admission to American registry.

As about one-third of the American shipping had taken out foreign registry, the shipbuilders saw an opportunity for quick fortunes in supplying this immense tonnage. But they overreached themselves; they killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

That tonnage never has been replaced by American ships.

And to such a pass have things come that at a recent Congressional investigation, in which shipmasters were asking for free ships, and shipbuilders were protesting that it would be the death of their business, the chairman of the committee asked how long it had been since they had built any ships for the foreign trade; and it developed that not a ship had been built for the overseas trade in the past nine years.

Not a ship built for foreign commerce in nine years, yet protesting that free ships would kill their business!

There are two things that the American citizen cannot bring into this country, obscene literature and foreign-built ships.



Was it necessary for the Congressional Committee to take three volumes of testimony in order to discover why the American flag had disappeared from the high seas?

STOUGHTON COOLEY.