

## RELATED THINGS

### CONTRIBUTIONS AND REPRINT

#### LOUIS R. EHRICH.

Died in London on Oct. 23, 1911. Interred at Salem Fields, Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn, N. Y., on Nov. 16.\*

A jubilant song for the Master  
Whose blaze marks the paths we tread;  
Sound not a note of disaster—  
The Master can never be dead.

What though we mingle his ashes  
With the soil of this hillside bleak;  
The faith in man still flashes,  
The love and the vision speak.

The hatred of all oppression—  
Blind greed, small aims, foul strife—  
Rise, from this dream of suppression,  
In everlasting life.

ARTHUR L. MAYER.

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#### EHRICH'S LAST MESSAGE.

Parts of the Address of the Late Louis R. Ehrich,  
as President of the American Free Trade  
League, Given at Boston, May 20, 1911.

The greatest blessings which we enjoy, as members of human society, have largely come to us as the bequest of men whose names are buried in oblivion. The noblest workers in the field of social service have cared nothing for recognition. Their reward has come from the joyous consciousness of helping to bring nearer a happier day for humanity. It was in this spirit that his work was done by the late President of our League—William Lloyd Garrison. Time may efface his memory from the minds of men. But we, of his generation, should keep his memory bright in the recognition of the devotion, the self-sacrifice, and the commanding ability which he brought to the cause for which we stand!

Protection throws the whole balance of production and consumption out of equilibrium. Under natural competitive conditions Capital must seek its reward by an ever-increasing production with coincident reduction in prices, thus creating an increasing demand for Labor, with a cheapening of what the laborer must buy. Under our present arbitrary interference with natural laws, Capital secures its disproportionate reward by restricting output with corresponding advance in prices. This means a decreased demand for labor with added burdens in the struggle for existence. It explains why, in this day of plenty and of miraculous invention, great armies of human beings are con-

\*See *The Public* of November 3, page 1121; and *The Public* of November 10, page 1148.

demned to live on or below the margin of subsistence. It also explains why at this time, when there is not a cloud in our national sky, and when we have but just extracted a value of nine billions from our soil, we should have a hundred and eighty-six thousand freight cars lying idle, with business halting and stagnant throughout the country.

Protection is a war-breeder! Externally it means commercial war between Nation and Nation; internally it means industrial war between Capital and Labor. At this very epoch, when the improvements in transportation have brought the Nations into closer and closer relations, the business of the world is still based on the spirit of isolation and of injustice; and injustice is always a pent-up volcano.

A dim perception of these facts led to a political overturn in our elections of last November. The Democratic Party, now in control of the House of Representatives, has pledged itself to reduce the Tariff so as to make it mainly a means towards raising the necessary revenues of Government. Is such a fiscal policy acceptable? It is surely less objectionable than extreme Protection; but, on the score of logical consistency, it is even less defensible. That a man, who, by some process of tortuous reasoning, has convinced himself that it is wise to reduce the natural labor demand which flows from imports, who favors a policy which tends to burden men with work rather than to make easier the satisfaction of their wants, whose mind is intent upon the production of wealth without regard to its equitable distribution, that such a man should champion Protectionism is logically conceivable. But that a man who favors the international exchange of commodities, who believes that the incidence of Taxation should not fall on the poorer classes, whose motto is "Special privileges for none," and who advocates economy in Governmental expenditures, that a man of such convictions should defend a revenue-tariff is logically incomprehensible.

A revenue-tariff is only diluted Protection. It acts equally as an unnatural barrier between Nations, it is equally productive of Governmental extravagance (and if well-devised may become more so) and it reduces the scale but does not destroy the essence of special privilege. Some Democrats frankly admit this. Three years ago the Democratic State Convention in California again declared in its Platform: "The difference between Parties is one of the degree of protection to be afforded."

But the worst feature of a revenue-tariff is that it is only a temporary adjustment. It keeps the tariff question alive. It maintains intact all the administrative machinery for high protection; it keeps in hungry suspense the appetite of the classes who have fattened on Protection favors; and, no matter how well justified by the results, it will be

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constantly attacked and, with the first coming of accidental adverse conditions, is sure to be overthrown. Thus the same battle for Tariff-reduction will have to be fought over and over again. The Walker revenue-tariff of 1846 gave us the most prosperous years ever enjoyed by our Nation. Its effects had been so satisfactory that none of the National political platforms of 1856 contained any allusion to the tariff. The optimists of the period persuaded themselves that the Tariff Question had been permanently settled. Yet to-day, after an interval exceeding half a century, we find ourselves suffering from the most Protective Tariff ever enacted. The policy of Protection will never cease from poisoning our political and industrial life until the Tariff is completely abolished. Free Trade, absolute, unlimited Free Trade, is the only practical, the only satisfactory, the only permanent solution.

The removal of all interference with the natural laws of exchange would bring world-wide beneficial results. Above all it would increase the share of the wage-earner in the wealth which he helps to produce. We find many thoughtful men who have been converted to Free Trade with the highly civilized Nations, but who fear unrestricted exchange with Asiatic low-paid labor. They do not appreciate the demonstrated facts that the highest-priced labor is the cheapest labor as measured by the product; and that low-wage labor is always employed on the low-priced commodities which are the least profitable to manufacture. On this issue we can turn from theory to experience. For the last sixty years England has opened wide her ports to free exchange with all the nations, wholly irrespective of their wage-scale. The convincing result is that, despite her limited area, her congested population, her iniquitous land-system, and her prodigal waste of treasure in colonial adventures, England pays her laborers higher wages than those prevailing in any of the protected Nations (the United States alone excepted), and she has amassed wealth in such superlative degree as to make her the creditor Nation of the globe.

We hear much these days of "Conservation," of "Scientific management," of "the doctrine of efficiency." There can be no real efficiency in our industrial life, no scientific management or conservation of the resources of this planet, until these resources are virtually conveyed to the race as a whole by the simple expedient of removing all trade barriers, and by conferring on every man the privilege of making what he can most advantageously produce, and the right to exchange it in absolute freedom with the rest of mankind.

Free Trade would reduce poverty, and poverty's issue—crime. Free Trade would introduce more normal and more stable conditions in our business life, preventing the present oscillations between hot-house prosperity and trade stagnation. Al-

though Free Trade, with the reasonable tax laws which it would bring as a sequence, would make it impossible for any man to acquire hundreds of millions in the period of a single life, it would none the less yield ample reward to the captains of industry, with the added consciousness that their possessions were made far safer against the inroads of society, and that they had not been obtained by the legalized plunder of their fellow-men. Free Trade would tend more to introduce peace and good-will in the world than a hundred Hague conferences or a thousand Peace temples.

To all this men are apt to reply: "Free Trade is ideal, but it is not practical." My friends, the ideal is always the practical. It is the ideal because it is the practical. Men shrink from the great forward movements through timidity, through the power of inertia, through a misnamed Conservatism. When in this very city men first contended that the only cure for slavery was its complete abolition, they were scoffed at as fanatical idealists; and yet our history and our experience abundantly prove that they alone were the practical men, and that they offered the only practical and permanent solution of the question.

We now collect about three hundred and forty millions from tariff taxes. Of this the forty millions which come from the "duties" on imported tobacco and alcoholics could be secured by Internal Revenue devices. How about the remaining three hundred millions? Let us premise by the general statement that we defy the wit of man to conceive any plan of raising national revenue which shall be as anti-social and as productive of evil as the present method of taxing the buying power represented by incoming merchandise. We might suggest that one way, and a very healthy way, in which to make a balance between income and expenses is to reduce expenses. It is well to remember that a New England Senator, after a very extended legislative experience, contended that improved methods of conducting our National administration would effect an annual saving of three hundred millions. But irrespective of this, it will be found that the expenses of State and Nation can be readily and abundantly met, without subtracting from the results of individual efforts, by the absorption of the wealth which Society as a whole produces through the increase and concentration of population.

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## HOUSEKEEPING BY PARCELS POST

Editorial in *The Outlook* of September 9.

"We stood in a little antique shop in Hereford, and the Extravagant Lady, who had cultivated the bad habit of buying everything that struck her fancy, looked thoughtful as she picked up the change left from a five-pound note.