

THE TARIFF NOT A TAX.

Some Fine Theories Knocked Out by Every-Day Facts.

A Level-headed Farmer Exposes the Percentage Trick - Cleveland's Shadow Philosophy - No Tariff Tax on Domestic Goods - Very Little on Imported - Tariff Tax Fake Riddled by a Clever Artist.

Deacon West was not much of a politician. He heard in silence the animated arguments between his neighbors at the village store and elsewhere and never put in a word. Yet every one knew that the cause of Protection could always count on his vote. The fact



Taxed 5 cts a yd. says the Free Trader. Retail Price 5 cts a yd. says the merchant.

of the matter was he had wrestled with tariff long years ago, and had reached the conclusion, after diligent study of the writings of the early statesmen, the debates in Congress on the various tariff measures from 1789 down, and our numerous industrial progress under such tariff, that Protection was deserving of the support of every true American. He had therefore gone on voting for Protection, satisfied that a system which had won the support of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Webster, Clay, Greeley, Grant and Lincoln was good enough for him.

One rainy day, not long ago, Reuben Davis, BLANKET.



an ardent Democrat, met Deacon West in the village store, and as there was nothing doing on account of the storm outside, proceeded to enlighten him on the robbery, extortions, oppressions and other iniquities of the McKinley tariff.

"Why, Deacon," exclaimed the excited Reuben, "that shirt of yours is tariff taxed 100 per cent.; the blanket you sleep under is tariff taxed 105 per cent.; the calico you buy for your wife's dress is taxed 133 per cent.; your boy's clothes is taxed 100 per cent., as is also your girl's dress. Your salt is taxed 120 per cent., your nails 121 per cent., your lead pencils 133 per cent." And so he went on naming article after article, till the Deacon's



Tariff Taxed 60 cts. or 133 per cent; but cost only 45 cts.

hair fairly stood on end at the thought of how he was being plundered.

Now, Reuben Davis had the reputation of being a truthful and fairly intelligent man, and Deacon West, who had not studied the details of the new tariff sufficiently to enable him to say whether what his neighbor said was so or not, did not feel warranted in contradicting him. But he carefully took down on a piece of paper the articles mentioned by his Democratic friend, together with the respective amounts he had said they were tariff taxed, and mentally resolved to investigate his statements to satisfy himself whether they were true or false; and if false, discover how it was



Taxed 31 cts. or 150 per cent. Cost 20 cts.

that so conscientious a man as he knew Reuben Davis to be could be misled into so positively asserting their truth.

That very night, after he reached home, he got out his copy of the new tariff, called his wife to his assistance, and proceeded with the investigation.

"Wife," said he, "I met Reuben Davis to-day and he told me that this shirt is taxed 100 per

cent. I want to know whether it is so or not. Here is the tariff law. Now what do you call the stuff this shirt is made of?"

"Shirting print goods, a kind of calico," replied Mrs. West.

"Well, here in the tariff I find that the rate on printed cotton goods of the ordinary kind



Taxed \$2.00 or 121 per cent. Regular Price \$1.65

is 5 cents a yard, but I don't see anything about 100 per cent. What did you pay for my shirt, wife?"

"Five cents a yard."

"Ah! That is probably where Reuben got his 100 per cent. Price 5 cents, tariff 5 cents, or 100 per cent. of the price. But I yet fail to see how I paid 5 cents a yard as tariff tax on my shirt when its entire cost to me was only 5 cents a yard. Now, if Reuben had told me in the first place that I was taxed 5 cents a yard on it, I should have known at once that it was not so. But his little trick of changing the duty to 100 per cent. rather floored me. Somebody must have deceived Reuben about



Tariff Taxed 15 cents or 150 per cent. Selling Price 48 cents.

that, for he is not dishonest enough to do it of his own accord. I'll ask him about it when I see him again.

"Reuben also said that our blankets are taxed 105 per cent. I find that the law does not say 105 per cent., but that the duty on blankets of the cheapest kind is 16 1/2 cents a pound and 30 per cent. ad valorem. Now, wife, what did you pay for that cheap blanket on the hired man's bed?"

"Ninety cents, and it weighs over four pounds," was the reply.

"Then the tariff on it would be 95 cents," exclaimed the deacon, as he finished a calculation he had been making on the margin of a newspaper. "Here again is where Reuben got his 105 per cent. He told me that was the ex-



Tariff Taxed \$3.00 or 200 per cent. Retail Price \$1.50

act amount of tariff levied on my blanket by the McKinley law, and that I paid every cent of it in tariff tax when I bought my blanket. But since I find by the law itself that the entire duty on blankets like mine is fully 95 cents, and I only paid 90 cents for the blanket, it is clear that I am not tariff-taxed, as he said. Reuben may have been thinking of an imported blanket, for I don't believe he would knowingly lie. But my blanket was made in this very State, and so escaped the tariff altogether. I'll have some fun with Reuben next time I see him."

"He said my lead pencils were tariff taxed 133 per cent. The tariff law says nothing about 133 per cent. Here it is: Lead pencils 50 cents



Taxed 50 cts. or 150 per cent. Cost 19 cents.

a gross, and 30 per cent. ad valorem. What did our boy pay for that gross of pencils he bought last week to use in copying his lessons at school?"

"Forty-five cents," said Mrs. West.

"That makes the 133 per cent. sure enough," responded the deacon. "Sixty cents, the tariff on a gross of pencils, is exactly 133 per cent. of 45 cents, the price. But I am as puzzled as ever to know how pencils at 45 cents are taxed 60 cents."

"Then my salt. That is taxed by the tariff 120 per cent., Reuben said. By the law here, I find the tariff on salt to be a little over 33 cents a barrel. Here again nothing is said about per cent. But I see by my book that I paid just 33 cents a barrel for that last lot of salt I bought, so it is evident that it was not taxed 120 cents a barrel."

"When I built my house I paid \$1.05 a keg

for wire nails. Reuben says I paid 121 per cent tariff tax. But the tariff, I find, is \$2 a keg. That makes Reuben's 'per cent.' all right; but I fail to see where my tariff tax came in."

"Saw files were another class of things Reuben mentioned. He said they were taxed 156 per cent. The tariff rate on small files is 75 cents a dozen, yet I see them advertised for sale in this paper here at 45 cents a dozen."

"Reuben complained of being taxed over 200 per cent. on his cigars. I saw him buy a box for \$1.50 before he left the store to-day. The tariff rate on cigars is laid by the pound, with a small additional per cent. added. On a box of average weight this tariff would come to \$3.00. By Reuben's rule it does indeed figure out over 200 per cent. of the price, FLANNEL SHIRT.



Tax 80 cts. or 160 per cent. Retail Price 49 cts

but it certainly was not included in the \$1.50 he paid for his box. I'll make him admit that, anyhow, when I meet him again."

"His game of euchre was taxed to the extent of 200 or 300 per cent., he said, by means of a high tariff on playing cards. The McKinley duty on cards is 50 cents a pack, with no per cent. mentioned at all; and I saw cards in the store window yesterday marked 19 cents a pack with a nice card case thrown in. It gives a hint as to where Reuben got his big per cent., but leaves us woefully in the dark as to how the merchant managed to include the 50 cents tariff in the 19 cents he asked for the cards."

"What did that flannel shirt of mine cost,"



Taxed \$1.24 or 103 per cent. Cost Complete \$1.20

continued the deacon, again consulting the tariff law.

"Sixty-nine cents, and a nice soft garment it is too," replied his wife.

"Well, I find that the tariff on such a shirt amounts to 80 cents, so I evidently did not pay it, for all of Reuben's '116 per cent.'"

"That little suit you bought for Willie cost how much?"

"One dollar and twenty cents," came the prompt reply.

"The tariff was not added to it, either, for it alone amounts to \$1.24."

"The dress we bought ready made for our girl cost \$1.50. The tariff on such a dress is \$1.70, or, as Reuben puts it, '200 per cent.' If



Tariff Taxed \$1.70 or 113 per cent. Price ready made \$1.50

the tariff is added to the cost, all you have to do is to abolish the tariff and get the suit for one cent!

"That nice morning gown of yours. What did that cost, wife?"

"Seven cents a yard, and there's some wool in it too," replied the now thoroughly interested Mrs. West, who never in her life before had given so much time to political questions.

"The tariff tax, according to Reuben, is 136 per cent. It really amounts to 9 1/4 cents a yard - 13 1/4 cents more than the entire cost per yard. No tariff tax there certainly."



Tariff Tax 92 cts. a yard. or 136 per cent. Price 71 cts a yd.

"What did you pay for that winter cloak of yours?"

"Only \$3.00."

"The tariff on it would be \$5.12. I wonder how Reuben figures that in with the price?"

"Here is a calico apron I bought for 4 1/2 cents a yard. What is the tariff tax on that?" asked Mrs. West with great interest.

"Five cents a yard, according to the law; 111 per cent. according to Reuben; not a millionth part of a cent, in fact. Neither is that nice calico dress I bought for you the other day."



Taxed \$5.13 or 103 per cent. Price Complete \$2.98

day, at 5 1/2 cents a yard, taxed 5 cents a yard, or 133 per cent., as Reuben says."

"Now take that comfortable on our bed, price \$1.00; that is its entire cost to me. But Reuben says it is taxed 131 per cent., which he probably gets by computing the tariff, which is \$1.31, on the price, for that gives exactly 131 per cent., but it fails to reveal how I paid that or any other sum as a tax."

"Then there is that homespun dress which our hired girl bought, ready made, for \$3.98 cents. What is Reuben's tariff tax on that?" laughingly inquired the deacon's wife.

The dress was brought and weighed, and



Calico Taxed 5 cts a yd. or 133 per cent. Retail Price 4 1/2 cts a yd.

after a careful consultation of the wool and woolen's schedule of the tariff, the deacon announced that the tariff would be \$1.13, or, by Reuben's rule, 104 per cent.

"If he had told me that that dress was taxed 104 per cent., I should not know what to say," said Mrs. West, "and I might be made to believe that the tariff was robbing our hired girl. But when it is reduced to plain, every day dollars and cents, and I am asked to believe that what cost only \$3.98 is taxed \$1.13, why, I see the absurdity at once. No doubt that is why the free tariff always reduces his



Tariff Tax 5 cts a yard or 133 per cent. Sells at 3 1/2 cts a yard

'tariff taxes' to percentages. He can fool the people that way more easily."

"Quite right, wife; quite right," replied the deacon. "And now let us see about two other things Reuben mentioned. They are tissue paper and rugs. I bought a ream of tissue paper to wrap up those nice pears which I sent to market, and paid only 58 cents for it. The tariff on it is 65 cents. It is plain that I did not pay it."

"What did that little rug near that chair cost? Reuben says we paid 100 per cent. tax on it."



Tariff Tax \$1.00 or 151 per cent. Price \$1.00

"It is a moquette rug, and cost \$1," was the answer.

"Well, the tariff on such a rug is \$1.06. This explains again where Reuben got his 100 per cent., but also proves that he made a mistake when he said that it was added to the price."

"Well, I am satisfied now that Reuben was entirely wrong about those tariff taxes. Yet I am sure he thought he was right. I am per-

suaded to know how such queer ideas got into his head. And yet it seems to me that I have seen something that Grover Cleveland said about tariff taxes which may clear up the mystery."

While talking the deacon had risen and gone over to the bookcase, from which he took his scrap book. It was where he saved newspaper clippings, extracts from speeches and the like for future reference. Turning the leaves over carefully for a few minutes, he at length began to read intently, and at last exclaimed:

"I think I have found the source of Reuben's delusion, wife. It is right here in Cleveland's free trade message to Congress in 1887. Here is what he says:

"Those who buy imports pay the duty charged thereon into the public treasury, but



Taxed \$4.13 or 104 per cent. Cost ready made \$2.98

the great majority of our citizens, who buy domestic articles of the same class, pay a sum at least approximately equal to this duty to the home manufacturer."

"You see, wife," resumed the deacon as he replaced the scrapbook, "every good Democrat thinks that whatever this man Cleveland says is so, and Reuben is a good Democrat. He read that free trade message and blindly accepted it as law and gospel. Then some dishonest fellow figured out those enormous percentages, showed them to Reuben, and that is how he came to give them to me."

"The fact is that even on imported goods our people do not always pay the duty. The foreign manufacturer generally reduces his prices sufficiently to allow for our tariff. But only a very small part of the things the American people use are imported. The great



Tariff Taxed 10 cents or 133 per cent. Retail Price 8 cents

majority of our people, especially working people and farmers, never see any imported goods except in the shop windows. Those who buy them are the wealthy; and even if they did pay the tariff on them, they ought to, so long as they think American goods are not good enough for them. Beside, every cent of the tariff goes into the public treasury to pay the expenses of government, thus relieving other more patriotic citizens, who are content with the products of their fellow countrymen's labor, from taxation for the support of the Government."

"But when Grover Cleveland asserts that goods made in this country, right here in our own town, for instance, are tariff taxed by the amount of duty they would pay if imported, he betrays dense ignorance of every-day life."



Tariff Tax 65 cts or 113 per cent. Price 58 cents

facts, as we have seen in our investigation this evening."

"The tariff has nothing in the world to do with their price. It is fixed by the cost of production in this country, and it is a well known fact that ordinary goods of almost every description sell as cheaply here as in any other country in the world. This is another proof that the tariff is not added to the prices. The Free-Trader means the foreign price when he speaks of the tariff's being added to it. But if the price is as low in this country as in England, no tariff could have been added. If it were so, the price here would necessarily be above the foreign price by just the amount of the duty."



Tariff Tax \$1.05 or 105 per cent. Retail Price \$1.00

philosophy is all awry and Reuben was sadly deceived. And that reminds me of a time to go to bed, as I promised Reuben to do all the talking in the store to-day, and tomorrow I'll have a little sermon of my own to preach about this tariff tax business."