

### THE SHAM OF RECIPROCITY.

By Norman F. Hesseltine, of the Boston Bar.

The national republican platform of 1896 declared as follows regarding reciprocity:

"Protection and reciprocity are twin measures of republican policy, and go hand in hand. Democratic rule has recklessly struck down both, and both must be re-established. Protection for what we produce, free admission for the necessaries of life which we do not produce; reciprocal agreements of mutual interest which gain open markets for us in return for our open market to others. Protection builds up domestic industry and trade, and secures our own market for ourselves. Reciprocity builds up foreign trade, and finds an outlet for our surplus."

In pursuance of this plank in the platform, section 4 of the Dingley Act of 1897, partly as an antidote to its high protective features and partly as an effort to keep the party true to its pledges, gave to the president of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, within a period of two years after the passage of the act, authority to enter into commercial treaties with foreign countries by which our duties might be reduced as much as 20 per cent., and certain natural products, not of this country, might be put upon the free list in return for compensating reductions allowed to this country.

Under this section, President McKinley appointed Hon. John A. Kasson, who, previously on the Ways and Means Committee, had acquired considerable experience with tariff schedules. He at once set about his task, and in a short time had succeeded in formulating treaties with France, the Argentine Republic, Danish West Indies, and British West Indies. The two first named were the most important. France agreed to make an average reduction of about 30 per cent on about 600 articles; we agreed to make an average reduction of 6.8 per cent on about 200 articles. France, although a protective country, had a tariff far lower than ours; yet she allowed us substantial advantages, while we, having an exaggerated protective tariff, only made slight reductions on a few schedules. The most important concession was on cotton knit goods, which were reduced from 64 to 51½ per cent; cheap imitation jewelry was reduced 5 or 10 per cent; French silk was admitted at 55 instead of 60 per cent; and there were slight reductions in the paper schedules.

To the Argentine Republic, in return for very advantageous terms, we granted 20 per cent reduction on wool.

To the West Indies, who favored

among other articles American canned goods, we lowered the bars on tropical fruits.

It was a glorious effort to increase our commerce and to gain an outlet for our surplus product.

When these matters became public, there was a frightened cry from dependent protectionists. Manufacturers asserted that the reduction on cotton knit goods meant irreparable injury. A paper factory in Lee, Mass., was in an agony of despair at the prospect of a reduction in the paper schedule. The gentle shepherds from Ohio, pasturing sheep on \$100 an acre land and of the Rocky Mountains, where government ranges can be had for nothing, raised a mighty shout at the enormity of 20 per cent reduction on wool. Under the Dingley Act the finer Andean fleeces were practically prohibited, and the reduction would be welcome to manufacturers. California protested because West Indian fruits were to compete with her own.

The most amusing objection came from novelty factories in Providence and Attleboro, which are supported by kindly disposed customers who charitably tax themselves some 65 per cent. They addressed the New England congressmen as follows:

"Should the French treaty be ratified, the home market will again be crowded with foreign-made goods; and to compete with the same labor, which enters largely into the production, must necessarily be the sufferer.

"In 1897 we petitioned for a tariff of 75 per cent. The enactment of the Dingley bill, fixed the rate at 65 per cent, which does not fully reach the point of equalization.

"To now infringe on that percentage even 1 per cent would be a blow at labor and the persons dependent on the jewelry industry. We earnestly appeal to you to use your utmost endeavor to have the treaty rejected."

The Home Market Club, our industrial Mentor, not believing that President McKinley was guilty of such heresy, until his last message to congress, began to pass resolutions. It thought that the wool reduction was an outrage, for the wool schedule was arranged after a long conference "between the growers and the manufacturers." It is not apparent from this statement that the question of revenue or of consumer's interest was of any consequence in this matter. The organization further declared that the treaties "are not based upon the true principle of reciprocity, which is the exchange on favorable terms of dissimilar and non-competing products, and that, on the contrary, they are based on the principle of free trade, and will introduce a damaging, if not ruinous, competition.

In addition to this, they disturb the harmony of adjustment between industries, which is an important characteristic of the tariff law, and will therefore introduce such inequalities as to unfavorably affect all business."

Senator Elkins, of West Virginia, declared: "I shall fight these treaties to the bitter end. They are wrong in principle and ruinous in practice. The republican party made a mistake in suggesting reciprocity in its platform and in enacting a reciprocity law."

After a favorable report by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Aldrich, of Rhode Island (anxious for his novelty constituents), moved that the matter be referred to the finance committee; and, although Mr. Kasson secured an extension of time for ratification to save some of the treaties from defeat, they were never allowed to come to a vote, and perished before they were born. The senate adjourned, and Mr. Kasson resigned in disgust. Reciprocity is defined in the Standard Dictionary as "mutual equality of rights and benefits." In modern journalism it is frequently styled "a sickly republican twin."

The foregoing facts constitute the best evidence of the insincerity of the republican declarations regarding so-called reciprocity. The arguments against the treaties were fallacious excuses. The only "dissimilar and non-competing products"—to use the expression of the Home Market Club—in which we can trade are raw materials from the tropics, as coffee, chocolate, tea, and spices. The tropics include the West Indies, Mexico, Central America, and South America as far south as Rio Janeiro, Malaysia, Southern India, and Central Africa. These countries are and always will be industrially and commercially the poorest. The people from whom we derive our origin, the nations which furnish us the finest examples of art and science, the lands which give us the greatest incentive to industry and inventive achievements, and where our merchants turn to seek in friendly commercial intercourse the accumulation of honest wealth, are still by republican tariffs to be closed to traders sailing under the stars and stripes. How many of our machines can the tropics take? How many shiploads of breadstuffs, the imports of an active metropolis, can we send to the indolent natives basking in the meridian heat of perpetual summer? Yet the fruit-growers of California beg to be saved from competition with even them.

Mr. Kasson, in a letter to the Boston Merchants' Association, said: "Instead of contenting ourselves with the barbarian position of supplying raw ma-