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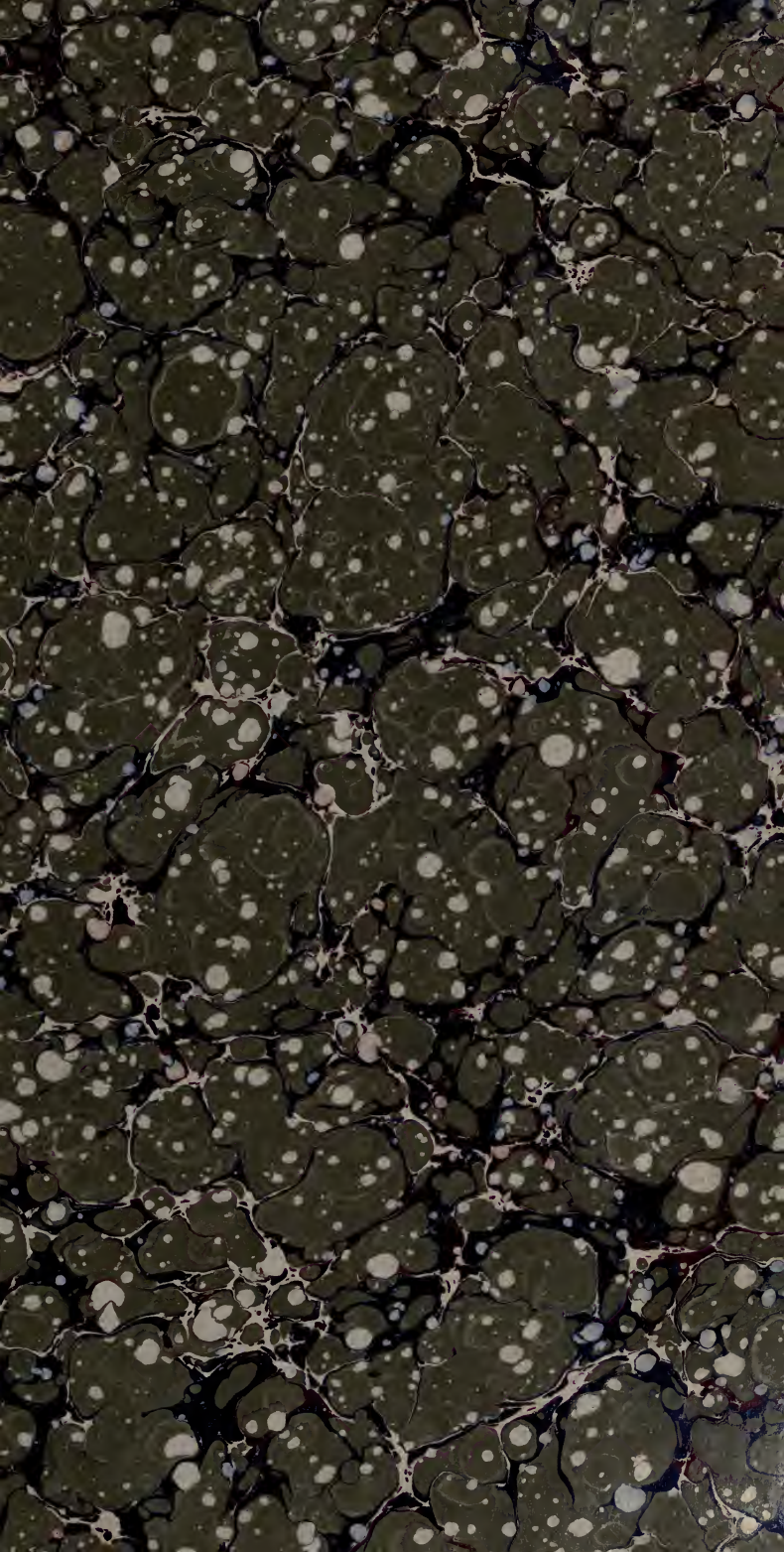


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[PAMPHLET No. 4.]

# Young Men's Democratic League.

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## THE FARMER'S INTEREST IN THE TARIFF.

—BY—

**F. I. VASSAULT.**

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There is no point concerning the tariff that is the subject of more dispute than the effect of import duties upon the financial condition of the farmer. On the one hand, the protectionist asserts that the tariff is a benefit to the farmer, inasmuch as it creates a home market for his produce, and that in reality it does not raise the price of commodities that he buys. On the other hand, the free trader declares that the price of commodities is raised, and that whatever home market is created is at an expense to the farmer which outweighs any benefits he may receive. So far as the increased price of protected articles is concerned, it must be admitted that the price is increased or there is no protection. If a protective tariff has any purpose, it is to enable manufacturers to produce articles in this country which can only be produced here at a price in excess of what it would cost to bring them here from foreign countries. If they can be produced more cheaply here, there is clearly no use in laying an import tax on goods imported from foreign countries.

But, while this is true, it is quite possible that the increase in cost of goods purchased by the farmer may be less than the benefits received from the home market so created. Let us then set aside the assertions and denunciations of politicians, and look at the question from a business point of view.

For the purpose of finding out first what the tariff costs the farmer, let us take a family of the average size, that is, a farmer with his wife and three children. We will suppose he buys a farm of 160

acres, unimproved. He fences the land with a plain board fence, builds a house and barn, furnishes the house, and buys a plant of farming implements. The following table shows what these things would cost without any tariff, and what they cost now :

ARTICLE.	Present Cost.	Added by Tariff.	Cost, Less Tariff.	Duty.
Fencing lumber, two miles....	\$600	\$100.00	\$500.00	20. %
Lumber, house and barn.....	720	148.75	571.25	26.
Hardware, nails, etc.....	75	24.80	50.20	44.83
Paint.....	60	12.00	48.00	25.
Furniture.....	275	71.30	203.70	35.
Carpet, two rooms.....	35	10.85	24.15	45.79
Crockery.....	20	7.00	13.00	55.
Kitchen furniture.....	6	2.20	3.80	58.10
Blankets.....	14	5.00	9.00	59.56
Sheets and towels.....	7	1.85	5.15	35.
Cutlery.....	5	1.70	3.30	50.
Gang plow.....	125	38.30	86.70	45.
Ten-inch plow.....	20	6.20	13.80	45.
Harrow.....	15	4.65	10.35	45.
Cultivator.....	15	4.65	10.35	45.
Mower.....	125	38.30	86.70	45.
Thresher.....	300	93.10	206.90	45.
Hay press.....	200	62.05	137.95	45.
Farm and spring wagons....	350	90.75	259.25	35.
Header.....	300	93.10	206.90	45.
Harness.....	60	13.85	46.15	30.
Hay rake.....	10	1.65	8.35	20.
Tools, axes, etc.....	25	7.75	17.25	45.
Totals.....	\$3,362	\$839.80	\$2522.20	

In this table the house is estimated to cost \$750.00, and the barn \$375.00.

From this we see that the actual value of the articles for which the farmer pays \$3,362.00, is \$2,522.20, and that \$839.80 is added by the tariff. This is the cost of the farmer's plant, however, and to determine how much the farmer pays each year for the home market we must take the interest on this amount. Figured at 8 per cent., the rate at which the money might be borrowed on mortgages, this amounts to \$67.18.

This is not the whole cost of the home market, however, for we still have to figure on the annual expenses of the farmer. According to the best average estimates, a family of five will use for clothing

each year 40 yards of woolen cloth, 90 yards of cottons and calicos, 10 yards of woolen dress goods, 40 yards of flannel, and a hat and two pairs of shoes apiece. These goods are for the most part purchased by the farmer in the form of made-up clothing, but, as there is no tariff on labor, the cost of the finished articles need not be used for the present purpose. Putting these purchases into tabular form, as before, we have :

ARTICLE.	Present Cost.	Added by Tariff.	Cost, Less Tariff.	Duty.
Woolen cloth, 40 yards.....	\$40.00	\$18.90	\$21.10	89.84%
Cottons and calicos, 90 yards..	13.50	4.40	9.10	48.40
Dress goods, 10 yards.....	10.00	4.05	5.95	67.89
Flannels, 40 yards.....	30.00	11.95	18.05	66.20
Five hats.....	5.00	2.00	3.00	73.04
Ten pairs shoes.....	20.00	4.55	15.45	30.
Totals.....	\$118.50	\$45.85	\$72.65	

We are now in a position to know just what each farmer pays for the home market. Adding together the \$67.18 interest on the increased price of plant, and \$45.85 for clothing, we have \$113.03 as the amount paid out each year by the farmer for protection.

On the other hand, the farmer receives no direct protection. Protection only helps those persons directly who produce articles of which a part of the supply may come from foreign countries. As has been already stated, to increase the cost of goods that might be imported from foreign countries cannot affect the price of goods of which we produce a sufficient supply more cheaply than they can be imported. And the farm products of this State are produced more cheaply than they can be imported from foreign countries.

How, then, does the expenditure of this \$113.03, annually paid out by each farmer, help him? It can only be by the creation of a home market ; by bringing people here to consume the grain and fruit produced by the farmer. In order to find out what this amounts to we must first discover how many people are brought here by the tariff, and then what amount of farm produce they consume.

Of course, the farmer helps only those from whom he buys. When he purchases a plow, the increased price that he pays on account of the tariff protects the agricultural implement maker, and not the butcher, or the baker. By looking over the list of his purchases we see that he has protected the following manufacturers :



Furniture makers, carpet makers, agricultural-implement makers, nail makers, iron workers, wagon makers, and woolen manufacturers. There are about 3,400 persons engaged in these employments in California, and 53,000 farmers, or 16 farmers to each protected worker. Each farmer, therefore, furnishes one-sixteenth part of the farm produce purchased by each protected worker.

These workers in factories each receive on an average \$520.00 a year. Of this amount, at least \$200.00 is paid for rent and clothing, leaving \$320.00 to buy provisions of all kinds. Admitting that all of these provisions are produced by the farmers, we have \$320.00 to be divided among 16 farmers, or just \$20.00 apiece. Is it any wonder that the farmers are ground down with mortgages when they pay \$113.03 each year for the sake of selling \$20.00 worth of farm produce?

But even this market for \$20.00 worth of produce does not entirely depend upon the tariff. Were all of these 3,400 laborers thrown out of employment—which would not be the case even if the tariff were entirely swept away—they would still live, still continue to eat the produce of the farmer. They would simply go into some other employment. Even supposing they went to some other place, the heaviest loss the farmer could sustain would be the cost of freight in sending the produce to be eaten by them in their new homes.

These facts are worthy the consideration of every farmer in the country. It is an undisputed fact that the farmers who were once prosperous are so no longer, and the cause of this is largely the unprofitable investment in the tariff. It is not a question of politics, but of business for him; he must be relieved of this burden if he is to live. And he can only get this relief by demanding it in no uncertain tone.





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