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The Age. Freedom of Inquiry and the Power of the People.

VOLUME V. WOODSTOCK, THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 1844. NUMBER 231.

POLITICAL.

REPLY OF CHARLES BROWN, OF PHILADELPHIA, TO JOHN M. CLAYTON, OF DELAWARE.

Exposing the misrepresentations of Mr Clayton of the whig party, on the subject of THE TARIFF—being the concluding portion of a Speech of Mr Brown, to a Mass Meeting of the Democrats of Delaware, held at Dover, Aug. 6, 1844.

Concluded. "I did not vote for the tariff of 1828, for which however, Mr Van Buren, Col. Benton, Col. Johnson, Mr Wright, and others of our present opponents did vote.

Nor would it be any way difficult to prove Mr Clay a friend to "free trade," and ready and willing to place "American labor" on the same footing as the "pauper labor of Europe."

Again he says in his letter to Mr Meriwether: "I never was in favor of what I regarded as a high tariff. And my present opinion is in perfect coincidence with that of the whole Whig party of the United States including Georgia, as I understand it."

Mr Warren called upon all "both whigs and locofocos of the South," to unite in opposition to "such a partial system of taxation."

In 1841, when Mr Clay and his friends came into power, it is well known that the duties under the compromise act had dwindled down too far below the protective or the revenue point.

"He could not understand how any gentleman could stand in the face of all the exemption which the bill contained of articles used by the manufacturer, and say

that there was any intention to abandon the principles of protection." Mr Clay says. "The fourth mode, in which protection could be afforded to domestic industry, was to admit free of duty every article which aided the operation of the manufacturers."

Among the free articles were two that Mr Clay seemed particularly anxious to tax, but failed, though supported by a large number of his whigs friends; these were tea and coffee, articles used as necessities of life, and coming into competition with none produced in the country.

On motion of Mr Woodbury, to insert in the list of free articles tea and coffee, Mr Clay and other whigs, September, 1841, voted no.

But we are told, not by Mr Clayton, but by others, that Mr Polk is opposed to the present tariff, and Mr Clay is in favor of it.

Mr Gamble said it was a "monstrous system, a system which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer," and that "it is high time for us to abandon this odious (and he might say exploded) doctrine in Great Britain."

This, strongly as it is in fact with free trade, does not to my mind cast the hundredth part of the doubts of the sincerity of Mr Clay's friendship for the protective policy, as do other speeches and votes of his.

"I should have preferred that the compromise in all its parts including the home valuation, could have been adhered to."

until very recently. He says in his speech at Wilmington, after explaining and praising the compromise act through ten columns of his speech: "In my humble judgment, had the tariff of 1842 been passed strictly in the spirit of the compromise itself, it would have been a better tariff for protection than the law now in force."

Without expressing any opinion of the comparative merits of the compromise act, and the act of 1842, I ask you if it is not very strange, or rather if it is not very much like playing coon in Mr Clayton and other friends of Mr Clay, to attempt to cast censure upon Mr Polk for preferring as the basis of a tariff the principles of the compromise act of 1842.

I have said and attempted to prove that Mr Clay is rather a late convert to the present tariff act, nor is the zeal of the whig party generally for it of long date—only a few months I believe.

Mr Merriek, another whig senator and friend of protection, said "it was a bill to tax the interests of the agriculturists, for the benefit of the manufacturers,"—that it was "unjust and unequal," and moved that it last but two years, and said—

"His object was to give to the next Congress an opportunity to deliberate nine long months on the subject, and to re-adjust and arrange it on proper principles."

The present bill was not such a one as they passed, nor was it passed by their votes—it never would have become a law had it depended upon the whig party—that is a fact that cannot be denied.

"The democrats who voted for it voted for it with all its faults, rather than leave the government without revenue, and the industrial pursuits of the country without any protection at all, while Mr Clay's particular whig friends chose rather to leave the government without revenue; and the country without a tariff, than that they should not be allowed to squander the proceeds of the sales of the public lands among the states, to aid them in their stock

and other speculations. That the whig party did not pass it, I submit the following facts from the record, which I have found prepared to my hand.

On the passage of the present tariff bill, in the House of Representatives, August 22d, 1844, the vote stood, For the bill, 101 Against the bill, 101

On the last vote, another of Mr Clay's Kentucky Whig friends, Mr Sprigg, voted against the bill, making out of eleven whig members from that state, eight who voted against the Bill.

The Bill after it had escaped from the House by the skin of its teeth, came up in the Senate for a final vote on the 27th August, 1842, and the vote stood, Yeas 24, Nays 23—one majority.

Mr Moorhead said, he congratulated the Senators from Pennsylvania and New York in having come forward to rescue the country and the government in their views.

This falsified all their assertions in 1840. If the country could prosper without a Whig administration, or without the consumption of Whig measures, what could they say in 1844 to induce the people again to entrust them with power?

Whether the present prosperity of the country is solely or mainly attributable to the present tariff act, is a question too new to be fully settled. If it is meant by the Whigs that the prosperity of the country arises from the tariff keeping foreign merchandise from coming into the country, and thus leaving the country to be supplied by our own productions, then facts are against them; for at no time for the last four years, not even in 1841-2, when the tariff was at its lowest, did there so much foreign merchandise come

into the country as is coming in now under the present tariff. Yet it is asserted the great object of a protective tariff is to increase home productions and diminish foreign importations.

It is not my intention, however, to discuss the merits of the present tariff question, but I may be allowed to say that it may well be questioned whether the apparent present prosperity of the country is not less attributable to the 'Tariff act of 1842, than to the small importations and large exportations of past years, and particularly to that of 1841-2, and to the fact that we have had no National Bank to inflate and devalue the currency and exchanges.

There are men associated with the democratic party opposed to this and all other protective tariffs is true; and so there are men and many of them too, associated with the whig party equally opposed to it.

This is the history of Mr Clay and his tariff policy. What has been that of Mr Polk? Let his whole life answer. It has been patriotic, calm, steady and consistent from beginning to end.

"I am in favor of a tariff for revenue, such a one as will yield a sufficient amount to the treasury to defray the expenses of the government economically administered."

How nobly does this consistency contrast with the ever-changing course of Henry Clay—trimming his sails to catch every popular breeze.

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