

**THE TARIFF AND THE FARMER; HOW IT
LESSENS THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF HIS
PRODUCTS, HOW IT SUBJECTS HIM TO
MOST UNFAIR TRADE CONDITIONS, THE
RESULT, FOUR DECADES OF DECLINING
AGRICULTURAL PROSPERITY**

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The tariff and the farmer; how it lessens the exchange value of his products, how it subjects him to most unfair trade conditions, the result, four decades of declining agricultural prosperity by S. Payson Perry

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S. PAYSON PERRY

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The Tariff and the Farmer

How it Lessens the Exchange Value of His Products

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The Result

Four Decades of Declining Agricultural
Prosperity

By S. Payson Perry



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INTRODUCTION.

HOW TO MAKE COUNTRY LIFE MORE ATTRACTIVE.

This is the question the committee recently appointed by President Roosevelt has to answer.

Hon. Emory Washburn, a former Governor of Massachusetts, said, "All men speak well of agriculture, but all who can shun it." Why? The two chief indictments brought are the isolation of the farmer's life and the unprofitableness of the occupation.

If those who bring the first charge were subjected to a strict examination, in most cases we think it would be made apparent that other objectionable features were in combination with it that would largely be obviated if crops brought in a plentiful supply of money. Money will not buy everything, but a sufficiency will buy a great variety of things and add immensely to the enjoyment of life. The isolation of the situation does not stop men from braving hardships and extreme peril, even risking life itself in the search for gold. Make it worth while in a financial way and plenty of families will gladly face the isolation of country life. Even were it not so, Congress is powerless to provide a remedy.

Is it in the power of Congress to make the pursuit of agriculture more profitable? To a certain extent, and in certain ways, it certainly is. The industry has greatly suffered from the fact that its interests have not had fair representa-

tion at Washington. There the farmer is conspicuous by his absence. Advantage has been taken of this, and laws passed most injurious to his interests. For this our agricultural leaders are responsible. They have always assumed that all that was necessary to make the industry prosperous was a scientific knowledge of production. President Roosevelt truly says, "Our attention has been concentrated almost exclusively on getting better farming." "We hope ultimately to double the average yield of wheat and corn per acre . . . but it is even more important to double the desirability, comfort and standing of the farmer's life."

The President sees what apparently our agricultural leaders have never perceived, that doubling the yield per acre, in other words "getting better farming," does not *necessarily* greatly benefit the farmer. The one surely benefited is the consumer of such products. For the result may be so large a surplus that the money return per acre will be less than before. To benefit the farmer the *crop grown on an acre must command a larger supply of what the farmer buys.*

Now the farmer is a large purchaser of manufactured products, and in the exchange that takes place between the individuals of the two industries, legislative enactments have a most important bearing. Chief of the laws having such a bearing is the tariff system. As most persons well informed concerning foreign trade know, the laws relating to the tariff are practically made by our manufacturers. It is the object of this little book to show that the effect of these laws is to greatly lessen the exchange value of farmers' products. A repeal of these laws, or, if that is asking too much, a large reduction in rates of duties on articles imported which are similar to

those purchased by our farmers would much increase the profits of agriculture.

Of all occupations, that of the farmer's is poorest paid. (For reasons why, see chapters VI and VII.) The United States census of 1900 indicates that, subtracting from gross income there given, business expenses and interest upon capital of four per cent., the net income received from the *labor* of the average farmer and his family is only about \$400. The Labor Bureaus of Statistics in Massachusetts and at Washington indicate that the wages of the average workman and his family engaged in manufacture are near twice this sum, or about \$800 per annum.

Since 1900 there is evidence going to show that farmers at the West are obtaining better prices for their products. But little, if any, improvement has taken place in the condition of the Eastern farmer. It is even very doubtful if he is as well off as before, since there has been a general rise in cost of business and family supplies.

This book is a part of a much larger work, to which the author has devoted many years of research and thought. It is believed to be the only publication in existence that gives a comprehensive view of the bearing of the tariff upon agricultural interests. The author is a life-long farmer—for many years a good Republican—made an independent by a study of the tariff question. In doing this work he has been actuated by as purely patriotic motives as when he shouldered a rifle in the dark days of 1862.

He is well aware that many persons consider the tariff question as settled, but "nothing is ever settled that is not settled right." To believe that the present system of wrong and gross oppression will always continue is to