

SPEECH OF THE
HON. HENRY BALDWIN,
Delivered at a Public Dinner given in honor
of his public services, by a large number of
the citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio, on the 31st of
May, 1828. The 9th regular toast—"The
health of our distinguished guest, HENRY
BALDWIN, of Pittsburgh,"—having been
drunk, Mr. Baldwin rose and addressed the
company as follows:

Gentlemen—Though accustomed to public speaking for almost the whole of my life, and that not a short one, there has never been an occasion on which I have found it so difficult to express my sentiments and feelings, as on this. There is none, when we feel the evidence of the confidence of our fellow citizens, that does not inspire us with gratitude and pride; but there is something in the time, place, and circumstances attending this meeting, which is calculated to excite mine in the highest degree. Accustomed in my political course to meet with more opposition than kindness, I am better prepared for the one than the other; having been for more than a twelve month denounced through the Union as an apostate from the great cause which we this day hail, I find here a refuge, a home, and a welcome,—here, among strangers. You do me more than justice. There is no place, in which such a mark of public confidence and approbation, as is evinced by such an assembly as this, could be more cheering than in this noble city, which is the offspring of your enterprise, and has grown up by your industry;—where, a year ago, the true principles of the American System were publicly announced by a meeting in resolutions emanating from my old townsmen, neighbor and friend,* who, while residing among us, was the uniform advocate of protection to national industry, and, in trying times, the defender of the Tariff and its supporters. To set myself thus received by such an assembly, around me all kindness and confidence, in such a place as this, fills me with emotions which I cannot express. It makes this day one of the happiest of my life; one to which I shall often cast back my thoughts with a pleasure never exceeded, & with gratified recollections, which cannot be expressed. I must leave you to imagine what my feelings are, by what they ought to be on such an occasion, and in such a scene as is now before me.

I am not vain enough to think that such an assembly would convene merely to express their personal respect to me, for my services as an humble instrument to promote a great cause;—it is the great cause itself which you have met to hail. This enhances my gratification; for while you award to me more than I could have deserved, you express your devotion to that system which is the foundation of all our prosperity; a system once opposed with all the bitterness of infuriate zeal, but on which the mass of the nation is now so happily united, that in the contest and throes of an election, the great struggle seems to be who shall be foremost in its favor. None, in this part of the country, express any opposition to the American system; and yet we differ radically as to the means by which it is to be best promoted. We must, then, inquire what is this system, and what are its great objects, and what interest it embraces?

According to my views of it, the great object of the American system is the *supply of national wants from national means*. It embraces not merely **AGRICULTURE**, which produces; **MANUFACTURES**, which fabricate; or **COMMERCE**, which distributes the articles of private consumption and public defence; but all alike.— Applying the principle of protection to every branch of national industry, not only by a system of duties on foreign imports, but by the construction of *roads* and *canals*, to diminish time, distance and expense in transporting the supply of our wants and surplus of our productions; and thus by its combined action in all the great interests of the country, to accomplish the desired, the only true object of sound legislation, **ECONOMY TO THE CONSUMER**—to you, to me, to every man in the nation, who consumes the varied products of every part of the Union.— This is the American system, a great and noble one. If I have not truly defined it, let any one do it better; and if such are not its leading features, pray tell me what they are.

The principle of protection is not new in the history of our government; it is coeval with its first organization; it was liberally extended to Navigation, to Commerce, Agriculture and the Fisheries;—objects worthy of all protection?

Much has been written on political economy, by men who affect to make it a science involved in great mystery; but the practical information to be derived from the book of nature and active life, dissipates all the speculations of theorists. They will tell you, that the duty on an imported article is so much addition to the price of the domestic. Let us test this by a little experience. Nails pay a duty of five cents a pound. They sell for six cents; then, according to the theory of political economists, take off the duty, and nails would sell for one cent per pound. The average duty on foreign spirits is forty-five cents

our industry. But in time another great interest presented its call on the government for protection. Manufactures sprang up through the country. Those interested in this pursuit, asked for the application of the same principle which had been adopted as to commerce; they advocated no new one, and asked for nothing in exclusion of others. But a violent opposition arose. The protected refused protection to the unprotected; the heaviest opposition was from the Eastern States. Their navigation and local and appropriate manufactures were already protected; they refused to extend to the products and manufactures of the middle and western states the same principle which had cherished theirs. They were governed by their interest. The middle and western states acted on the more national rule, to protect whatever the general welfare required to be protected, without regard to the place where produced or manufactured. The south opposed the whole system, and however erroneous their views were they were at any rate consistent.

In such a diversity of opinion, it was a task of extreme difficulty and delicacy in any committee, to settle the principle and recommend a system which would overcome inveterate prejudices, and reconcile the various interests of twenty-four states; I may say distinct and independent nations, occupying almost every habitable clime, and raising most of the productions of all foreign countries. Time was taken, and no pains omitted to ascertain what course was best calculated to bring about the desired result. We thought a general tariff, which would extend to every article comprehended within the great object of the system, to the raw material as well as the manufactured, was better than a partial one. Experience had taught us that if we confined ourselves to any particular article, or local interests, we should give them a premium for being selfish; for we found opposition come from protected merchants and protected manufacturers; and from none more bitter than those of Boston, who in 1816 had been protected by a duty of 80 per cent. on coarse cottons; and we found that unless we made it the interest of every section of the country, to support our measure, it must fail. Our great object was to build up and protect manufactures, not to enable their proprietors to exact or speculate on the community; not to give them, in the shape of protecting duties, a bounty, and thus impose a general tax on the people; but by counteracting foreign legislation, keeping down foreign competition, or to use a figure you will all understand, keep off the flies till the child can go alone, and then so to apportion the protection to the capacity of the country to produce the raw material, or manufacture the article, as to bring into active operation the domestic competition, which never yet failed to produce to the consumer an article improved in quality and diminished in price. Thirty years of experience had taught us this lesson; there was then, and there is now, no exception to the rule. Our opponents cannot point out one domestic item of consumption, which has superseded the imported article, which is not cheaper and better than the foreign; and we could not blindly disregard such evidence. We disregarded the clamor of merchants, who from 1816 on every proposal to amend the Tariff, have predicted the ruin of Agriculture, Commerce and Revenue;—for all history, all experience in other nations, and our own have falsified such predictions. No man can point out a spot in this Union where manufactures flourish, in which the farmer has not an improved market, the merchant increased custom, and the people greater means to pay taxes to government; while all the predictions of the bad effects of manufactures have proved idle dreams, and all the good effects which have been anticipated have been more than fully realized. The whole country has long felt these effects, but have not inquired into the cause. You buy coarse cottons, nails, window-glass, gun-powder, spirits, and most articles of common consumption cheaper than formerly. Our southern friends purchase window-glass at five dollars a box, which formerly cost fifteen; but neither you or they take any pains to know the cause. I will tell you. It is this: The foreign article is excluded by high duties; the country has the capacity to supply, and domestic competition produces the good effects which the whole country feels.

Much has been written on political economy, by men who affect to make it a science involved in great mystery; but the practical information to be derived from the book of nature and active life, dissipates all the speculations of theorists. They will tell you, that the duty on an imported article is so much addition to the price of the domestic. Let us test this by a little experience. Nails pay a duty of five cents a pound. They sell for six cents; then, according to the theory of political economists, take off the duty, and nails would sell for one cent per pound. The average duty on foreign spirits is forty-five cents

a gallon,—domestic spirits sell for twenty: take off the duty, and we come to the wonderful discovery, that whiskey would sell for twenty-five cents a gallon *less than nothing!* Need I take up your time in refuting such trash as this?

Look to the growth of the two great cities of the West, CINCINNATI and PITTSBURGH; trace their progress from mere military posts, to what they now are. You see them exemplifying the intimate connexion between the three great sources of national industry, Agriculture, Commerce, and Manufactures, each dependent on each other, supplying and supporting each other. Is there any man here, or there, or *any where*, farmer or merchant, who can say he has been injured by the prosperity of a mechanic or manufacturer? Call them by what name you please, the only difference is *"in the size of the shop."* They are the sources of wealth here, and elsewhere. They give value to your lots and houses; pay your rents and taxes; consume your raw material; afford a market to the farmer, and are the best customers to the merchant.

It is but a few years since this place was the second, perhaps the third or fourth in the state. Now you are proudly pre-eminent; you are growing, while Chillicothe is declining. What is the cause? The soil of its vicinity is not less fertile than yours; but the earth wants the salt, mechanical industry,—and they want the fine road and canal which Providence has furnished you to reach a market. Trace the effects of the same causes throughout the Union, you find them as simple and as convincing as the laws of nature herself. By looking around you, and confiding in the results of your own observations, you will see that this great system is divested of all mystery; it is founded on the development of facts, and the lessons of experience. Such was the "American System" in 1820 & '24; such were the principles on which it was based and defended. Then it met the unqualified approbation of the country. The representatives of every commercial city, from Norfolk to Boston, inclusive—from the seven middle and western states of New-York, New-Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, with one exception, I am sorry to say from Pennsylvania, (now a prominent friend of the present administration,) voted for the Tariff,—and without the benefit of the representation under the new census and while the revenue was less than our expenses, carried it in the popular branch of Congress by a majority greater than has since been obtained. It was a cheering, interesting sight, to see such a national movement—such a march towards the final completion of the great system. Would to God we had witnessed its renewal in late years. The principles of these days stood the test of talents arrayed against them; they have been sanctioned by public opinion, by time and experience. If they were not correct, let us be directed to sounder ones. Till that is done, they need no further examination. They certainly will not be questioned in Ohio, or the West.

You have no interest in Europe. It is certainly not wrong to ask Congress to secure you your own. Look to the items of your produce, and calculate how much of it finds a market in Europe. I am certain that its *aggregate amount* will not pay for the *pins and needles* you import. I can point out one at least, if not more, of your commercial houses in this place, which consumes more raw material, furnishes a market for more of the agricultural products of your state, and employs more of your labor, than all Europe. Why, then, consume her manufactures, and not protect your own? This liquor, which is the product of the same soil which gave us birth, is more congenial to our nature than any which is imported. Why not, then, protect the farmer who raises the grain from which it is made? The glass which contains it, and this fine specimen of the mechanic arts [showing a decanter] which does honor to your city, was made from American sand stone, and has a high value given to it by American labor. For these articles, not a cent has been sent out of the country: none of you are the poorer for it. This pitcher is made from British clay, baked by British fuel; every cent of its value is sent out of the country,—and surely none of you are the better for it. Thus we see in every family, foreign clay, baked and imported at a great price; and find men among us who would almost trample under foot the vessel, if made from our own soil.

I would be glad to know what the Western country, or your State, owes England. Her laws present a rigid system of restriction, prohibiting the consumption of your produce.—There can be no national reason why we should consume hers. This is what I call sound tariff doctrine, and this continued to be the ground-work of the American System, till the baleful effects of the election were found to enter into it, till the tariff became a political hobby and the American system the watchword of party.

That you may duly appreciate the ef-

fects of the election, let me call your attention to the votes of the great agricultural, commercial and manufacturing State of the east—Massachusetts. In 1820, that State voted for a general tariff, with only two exceptions. In 1824, her votes were all but one, against a general tariff, (that one a name which ought to be known and honored in the west, Mr. Dwight.) In 1827 she voted unanimously for the woollen bill, with only one exception; and in 1828 against the present tariff, with the exception of only two votes; while Virginia gave three votes for it.—The principles of the American system did not certainly change with the votes of Eastern statesmen, but politicians changed. In 1827 a bill was reported, called a tariff bill, confining protection to woollen manufactures. All propositions to amend the bill by the protection of wool, hemp and spirits, were ignominiously kicked out of the house, by calling the previous question.—The majority would not consider, much less discuss them; and thus the American system, which once embraced the whole industry of the nation, had dwindled down to a solitary item of one branch—woollens; the most important perhaps, in the whole system, but surely not the only one deserving the protection of the government.

When the general system had been abandoned, and a local partial measure had become dignified with the name of a tariff, it found a ready support in the *old enemies* of the system. They rallied to its support, and some pretended to be converts to the great cause, though they publicly pledged themselves not to touch any branch of manufactures but woollens, totally denying the policy of a general tariff, as boldly advocating the protection of one item, and basing that not upon economy to the consumer, but on the condition of the woollen manufacturer. While they contended for the application of the principle of protection to woollens, they as strenuously denied it to any other article, retained in full force all their anti-tariff doctrine, and asserted that a duty on iron, hemp, flax, wool and spirits, was a bounty to the producer, and a tax on the country. They made the woollen bill the rallying point of party, and in Congress and throughout the nation denounced every man who would not advocate it, and abandon a great system, as an apostate to the cause; as being sold to the south, and as preferring the success of the English manufacturer to our own.

The same spirit raged in 1828. No man in the nation were ever so much abused and vilified as the committee who reported the present tariff; and our whole party were included in the proscription. You know what was a tariff in 1816, '20 and '24; what were then the principles of the American System? I fearlessly appeal to you and the country to say, if there were apostates, in whose ranks were they to be found? I proudly assert they were not among the friends of Jackson.—These adhered to the old doctrines and landmarks of the cause, and advocated the tariff of 1823, as they had done that of 1820. Our opponents set up a thing they named a tariff and the American system, though it retained only one feature of resemblance. Before this image we were called on to bow down and worship. We were called on to renounce our old opinions, and look to old enemies and pretended converts, as the oracles of our faith; to follow men who, in 1820 not only denied the policy of a tariff, but the constitutional power of Congress to pass one;—who, in 1824 declared the American system a foreign system; that the protection of iron manufacturers was as useless an expense to the nation as the building of another Capitol; and who in 1828, proposed to pay out of the public treasury a bounty of twenty dollars per ton for domestic hemp, so that the burthen of protection should fall equally on the whole. We would not worship such gods as this.

We were called on to go in a new path—to support only an item. We supported a System. The candidate of our opponents was announced as the champion of the tariff; ours as its enemy. We were called on to support theirs—a man whose sentiments on the American System are enveloped in the mystery of *diplomacy*. He stands we know not where; he thinks we know not how. If another storm should prostrate our establishments, and another dark hour obscure the bright prospects of our prosperity, and we should invoke his aid, we know not where to find him. Perhaps he might be found amongst his eastern friends. His opinions may be known in his cabinet, or by his friends, but the nation has a right to have some *public pledge*; and that he has never given up to this moment, in 1824, he or his friends did not risk the loss of southern votes, by an avowal of Tariff principles; and if to this day any one has seen such an avowal, I would like to know it.—The Constitution makes it his duty to recommend to Congress the adoption of such measures as he may deem expedient and necessary to the general welfare. He has never recommended a Tariff. He has left his Secretary to give his own

opinions to Congress. That Secretary now asks the second office in our gift as the price of his report, leaving the President at liberty to avow or disavow it, as circumstances may render it expedient. We old tariff men will not by our votes, place such a man at the head of government, and give him a controlling influence over all its measures. We will not confide to a man whose opinions we know not, the most important interests of the country; forego the benefits of legislation; throw ourselves into his arms, and look alone to Providence for the protection of our manufactures.

We supported, as our candidate, the man who in every emergency, through good report and evil report, risked his life in defence of his country, and who, disregarding all considerations of local popularity, took his stand in the south, in favor of the American system; and with the same firmness with which he had often foiled our enemies, boldly announced his devotion to its principles. In him there was no mystery, no *diplomacy*; every one can understand his meaning. These are the sentiments of General Jackson:

"Heaven smiled upon, and gave us liberty and independence. That same Providence has blessed us with the means of *National Independence and National Defence*. If we omit, or refuse to use the gifts which He has extended to us, we deserve not the continuation of His blessings. He has filled our mountains and our plains with minerals—with lead, iron, and copper, and given us climate and soil for the growing of hemp and wool. These being the grand materials for our national defence, they ought to have extended to them adequate and fair protection, that our own manufacturers and laborers may be placed on a fair competition with those of Europe, and that we may have, *with our country, a supply of those leading and important articles, so essential in war*."

Can we be blamed for supporting the man who avowed such sentiments in 1824, and reiterates them in 1828. Tariff men can safely confide the interests of the country to such a man; yet they are denounced for not deserting him, and supporting his opponent. If we were capable of doing this, we could scarcely complain if God and our friends should desert us.

We did not oppose the protection of woollen manufactures; we only opposed their *exclusive protection*. The great question has been about extending it to western products and raw materials. We asked for the application of the same principle to sheep as to woollens. The staples of the middle and western states are wool, iron, hemp, flax and spirits. Will the people of these states will Ohio condemn any man for advocating their protection? You have risen to greatness by your own industry and resources, unaided by the government; nor is there in the West any establishment, which owes its prosperity to any act of legislation.

This great state owned not an acre of soil; her money is drawn to the public treasury, in payment of land; you pay one tenth of all the burthens of taxation for the expenses of government, building navies and erecting fortifications, while scarce a dollar of public money is expended among you. Providence has been kind to you, imparting every blessing you can enjoy; but government has not seconded its beneficence with the boundless capacity to produce. You want a market yet. There is hardly an item of your staples, which has received its fair protection; and when any attempt has been made to procure it, you have witnessed the power, the extent, the inveracity of the opposition.

I would think that it could gratify no national feeling to see a navy, built and supported at the expense of the nation, and employed in the protection of its commerce, while our merchant ships are built with foreign iron, and equipped with foreign cordage and sails. In contemplating our steam boats, every puff from which dissipates the proud pretensions of Europeans to superiority over us in the mechanical arts and sciences, and is a lofty monument of our own over theirs—I am sure that every American would feel degraded at the reflection, that the engine was made of foreign materials, and constructed by foreign workmen. I see in your streets coils of cordage, made in some eastern city, of hemp from the South Sea, and am certain that none of you can be pleased by the ideas which such a sight suggests. We make our cloth from foreign wool, send our flaxseed to Europe, and import flax, linen and sail duck for our own consumption. Such things are consonant neither with sound policy nor national feeling. I think it would not injure the farmers of the Ohio and Miami bottoms to see them covered with luxuriant crops of hemp and flax; that no farmer would be impoverished by extracting ore from the bowels, and pasturing sheep on the surface of his hills; or feeding his hogs and cattle from his distilleries; nor would it retard the prosperity of your towns, to have them filled with rope walks, work shops and factories, employing labour from the child to the man, machinery in all its variety, from the spinning wheel to the steam engine, covering your rivers and canals with craft from a canoe to a steam boat, and your whole population actively and profitably employed in producing, fabrica-

* Morgan Neville, esq.