

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 152.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

MADAME FREE TRADE.

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PROTECTION can not be spoken wholly free of the demagogic taint. With protection, however, the taint is no stronger than with monarchy, or any other oppressors' scheme. They all pose as benefactors, in some way. Otherwise with Free Trade. This devil's scheme, to perpetuate wage slavery and produce profits at the expense of other capitalists under the guise of defending Labor, makes a special business of demagogery. It poses as a revolutionist; it swaggers and clatters its sword as a perambulating lump of abnegation, whose sole purpose is to "remove tyranny." Nevertheless, of all capitalist revolutionists Madame Free Trade must be admitted to be the most considerate, deferential, and self-suppressive. Even the most intolerant and vicious protectionist, whose nerves are set twitching at anything that smacks of "alteration," and who, accordingly, loses patience with the free trader, must acknowledge that, of all capitalist disturbers of capitalist repose, none is so easy to quiet as Madame Free Trade.

Periodically, AFTER elections, Madame Free Trade steps forward with a large supply of revolutionary phrases — "special privileges," "plunderers of the people," "corrupters of legislatures," "insatiable cormorants," etc., etc. These phrases are hurled at protection, and proof is adduced, statistically and by yard-measure, that the country is going to the dogs, and will land there unless the tariff is lowered. The protectionists sneer, but feel uncomfortable. However absurd any capitalist reform plan be, whether of railroad rates or of the tariff, these reform propositions tell some truths that "do no good" to be aired. So with tariff reform. Differently, however, from all other capitalist reforms, which insist to be heard and aired and even to be voted on, Madame Free Trade reform is considerate. The moment these other reforms take the bit in their mouths, Madame Free Trade packs up her stage outfit, and declares that "the putting down of these doctrines so subversive to law

and order” must first be attended to; and she suppresses herself.

It thus happens that for the last ten years the public has been treated to Madame Free Trade’s tirades between acts, but the moment a campaign started, and some “disturber of law and order” had “first to be put down,” the old girl regularly took to the woods. She did so during the last campaign. The campaign being over, she is now poking her nose again into the open.

It is no wonder that Protectionists have silent but unmitigated contempt for Madame Free Trade. In point of “revolution” the Madame is a charlatan. Protection is the bold highway robber, Free Trade a would-be sneak-thief.

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Uploaded May 2009

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