

passed; and there has been no difficulty in administering the duties of the Treasury on that principle.

It was necessary first to ascertain the value of the goods, and then to impose the duty upon them; and from the commencement of the act to this day, the *ad valorem* principle has been substantially in operation. Compare the difference between specific and the *ad valorem* system of duties, and I maintain that the latter is justly entitled to the preference. The one principle declares the duty paid shall be upon the real value of the article taxed; the specific principle imposes an equal duty on articles greatly unequal in value. Coffee, for example, (and it is an article which always suggests itself to my thoughts,) is one of the articles on which a specific duty has been levied. Now it is perfectly well known that the Mocha coffee is worth at least twice as much as the coffee of St. Domingo or Cuba, yet both pay the same duty. The tax has no respect to the value, but is arbitrarily levied on all articles of a specific kind alike, however various and unequal may be their value. I say that, in theory, and according to every sound principle of justice, the *ad valorem* mode of taxation is entitled to the preference. There is, I admit, one objection to it: as the value of an article is a matter subject to opinion, and as opinions will ever vary, either honestly or fraudulently, there is some difficulty in preventing frauds. But with the home valuation proposed by my friend from Rhode Island, (Mr. Simmons,) the *ad valorem* system can be adopted with all practicable safety, and will be liable to those chances only of fraud which are inevitable under any and every system.

Again: What has been the fact from the origin of the government until now? The articles from which the greatest amount of revenue has been drawn, such as woolens, linens, silks, cottons, worsteds, and a few others have all been taxed on the *ad valorem* principle, and there has been no difficulty in the operation. I believe, upon the whole, that it is the best mode. I believe that if we adopt a fixed rate *ad valorem*, wherever it can be done, the revenue will be subjected to fewer frauds than the injustice and frauds incident to specific duties. One of the most prolific sources of the violation of our revenue laws has been, as every body knows, the effort to get in goods of a finer quality and higher value, admitted under the lower rate of duty required for those of a lower value. The honorable gen-