

those concerned in maintaining protective tariffs. But on the other hand it would bring to the standard of free trade, forces without which it cannot succeed. And what those who would arouse thought have to fear is not so much opposition as indifference. Without opposition that attention cannot be excited, that energy evoked, that are necessary to overcome the inertia that is the strongest bulwark of existing abuses. A party can no more be rallied on a question than no one disputes than steam can be raised to working pressure in an open vessel.

The working class of the United States, who have constituted the voting strength of protection, are now ready for a movement that will appeal to them on behalf of real free trade. For some years past educational agencies have been at work among them that have sapped their faith in protection. If they have not learned that protection *cannot* help them, they have at least become widely conscious that protection *does not* help them, they have been awakening to the fact that there is some deep wrong in the constitution of society, although they may not see clearly what that wrong is; they have been gradually coming to feel that to emancipate labor radical measures are needed, although they may not know what those measures are.

And scattered through the great body thus beginning to stir and grope are a rapidly increasing number of men who do know what this primary wrong is—men who see that in the recognition of the equal right of all to the element necessary to life and labor is the hope, and the only hope, of curing social injustice.

It is to men of this kind that I would particularly speak. They are the leaven which has in it power to leaven the whole lump.

To abolish private property in land is an undertaking so great that it may at first seem impracticable.

But this seeming impracticability consists merely in the fact that the public mind is not yet sufficiently awakened to the justice and necessity of this great change. To bring it about is simply a work of arousing thought. How men vote is something we need not much concern ourselves with. The important thing is how they think.

Now the chief agency in promoting thought is discussion. And to secure the most general and most effective discussion of a principle it must be embodied in concrete form and presented in practical politics, so that men, being called to vote on it, shall be forced to think and talk about it.

The advocates of a great principle should know no thought of compromise. They should proclaim it in its fullness, and point to its complete attainment as their goal. But the zeal of the propagandist needs to be supplemented by the skill of the politician. While the one need not fear to arouse opposition, the other should seek to minimize resistance. The political art, like the military art, consists in massing the greatest force against the point of least resistance; and, to bring a principle most quickly and effectively into practical politics, the measure which presents it should be so moderate as (while involving the principle) to secure the largest support and excite the least resistance. For whether the first step be long or short is of little consequence. When a start is once made in a right direction, progress is a mere matter of keeping on.

It is in this way that great questions always enter the phase of political action. Important political battles begin with affairs of outposts, in themselves of little moment, and are generally decided upon issue joined not on the main question, but on some minor or collateral question. Thus the slavery question in the United States came into practical politics upon the issue of the extension of slavery to new territory, and was decisively settled upon the issue of secession. Regarded as an end, the abolitionist might well have looked with contempt on the proposals of the Republicans, but these proposals were the means of bringing to realization what the abolitionists would in vain have sought to accomplish directly.

So with the tariff question. Whether we have a protective tariff or a revenue tariff is in itself of small importance, for, though the abolition of protection would increase production, the tendency to unequal distribution would be unaffected and would soon neutralize the gain. Yet, what is thus unimportant as an end, is all-important as a means. Protection is a little robber, it is true; but it is the sentinel and outpost of the great robber—the little robber who cannot be routed without carrying the struggle into the very stronghold of the great robber. The great robber is so well entrenched, and people have so long been used to his exactions, that it is hard to arouse them to assail him directly. But to help those engaged in a conflict with this little robber will be to open the easiest way to attack his master, and to arouse a spirit that must push on.

To secure to all the free use of the power to labor and

the full enjoyment of its products, equal rights to land must be secured.

To secure equal rights to land there is in this stage of civilization but one way. Such measures as peasant proprietary, or "land limitation," or the reservation to actual settlers of what is left of the public domain, do not tend toward it; they lead away from it. They can affect only a comparatively unimportant class, and that temporarily, while their outcome is not to weaken land-ownership but rather to strengthen it, by interesting a larger number in its maintenance. The only way to abolish private property in land is by the way of taxation. That way is clear and straightforward. It consists simply in abolishing, one after another, all imposts that are in their nature really taxes, and resorting for public revenues to economic rent, or ground value. To the full freeing of land, and the complete emancipation of labor, it is, of course, necessary that the whole of this value should be taken for the common benefit; but that will inevitably follow the decision to collect from this source the revenues now needed, or even any considerable part of them, just as the entrance of a victorious army into a city follows the rout of the army that defended it.

In the United States the most direct way of moving on property in land is through local taxation, since that is already to some extent levied upon land values. And that is doubtless the way in which the final and decisive advance will be made. But national politics dominate state politics, and a question can be brought into discussion much more quickly and thoroughly as a national than as a local question.

Now to bring an issue into politics it is not necessary to form a party. Parties are not to be manufactured; they grow out of existing parties by the bringing forward of issues upon which men will divide. We have, ready to our hand, in the tariff question a means of bringing the whole subject of taxation, and through it the whole social question, into the fullest discussion.

As we have seen in the inquiry through which we have passed, the tariff question necessarily opens the whole social question. Any discussion of it to-day must go further and deeper than the Anti-Corn Law agitation in Great Britain, or than the tariff controversies of Whigs and Democrats, for the progress of thought and the march of invention have made the distribution of wealth the burning question of our times. The making of the tariff question a national political issue must now mean the discussion in every newspaper, on every stump, and at every cross-roads where two men meet, of questions of work and wages, of capital and labor, of the incidence of taxation, of the nature and rights of property, and of the question to which all these questions lead—the question of the relation of men to the planet on which they live. In this way more can be accomplished for popular economic education in a year than could otherwise be accomplished in decades.

Therefore it is that I would urge earnest men who aim at the emancipation of labor and the establishment of social justice, to throw themselves into the free-trade movement with might and main, and to force the tariff question to the front. It is not merely that the free-trade side of the tariff controversy best comports with the interests of labor; it is not merely that until workingmen get over thinking of labor as a poor thing that needs to be "protected," and of work as a dole from gracious capitalists or paternal governments, they cannot rise to a sense of their rights; but it is that the movement for free trade is in reality the van of the struggle for the emancipation of labor. *This is the way the bull must go to untwist his rope.* It makes no difference how timorously the issue against protect<sup>n</sup> is now presented; it is still the thin end of the wedge. It makes no difference how little we can hope at once to do; social progress is by steps, and the step to which we should address ourselves is always the next step.\*

\*There is no reason why at least the bulk of the revenues needed for the national government under our system should not be collected from a percentage on land values, leaving the rest for the local governments, just as state, county, and municipal taxes are collected on one assessment, and by one set of officials. On the contrary there is, over and above the economy that would thus be secured, a strong reason for the collection of national revenues from land values in the fact that the ground values of great cities and mineral deposits are due to the general growth of population.

But the total abolition of the tariff need not await any such adjustment. The issuance of paper money, a function belonging properly to the General Government, would, properly used, yield a considerable income; while independent sources of any needed amount of revenue could be found in various taxes, which though not economically perfect, as is the tax on land values, are yet