

time, and such movements as that of the committee on congestion of population will help in the work.

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THE TARIFF HUMBUG.

From some points of view the interesting bunch of statesmen now in session at Washington furnish an amusing spectacle.

Some of these gentlemen call themselves Republicans; others call themselves Democrats.

But let it be understood that in order to be elected to the national legislature a man must affiliate with one of these groups. The majority of the people are tied to the superstition that there are two great political parties in the United States, of diametrically opposite principles. As a matter of observation, this is not the fact. There is only one great political party at the national capital, and this is the party of the Interests.

The deception lies in the label on the party bottle. These different professionals are working in the same interests. For illustration, the recent gas corporations of the city of Chicago,—the "Ogden" and the "People's,"—one under Republican and the other under Democratic control—are now united into one corporation. But the above remarks allude especially to the tariff discussion in Congress.

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The poet hath said that "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." The tariff makes criminals of us all by making that a crime which is not a crime.

The right to trade is a natural, inalienable right. It is as natural for a man to trade as it is to eat. Why then should it be made a crime for men to trade freely, whenever, wherever and with whom they please?

It is tacitly admitted, nay, it has always been generally accepted, that trade is the greatest promoter of civilization. Indeed trade is the origin and genesis of civilization. To quote an eminent authority: "To find an utterly uncivilized people we must find a people among whom there is no exchange of trade. Such a people does not exist and so far as our knowledge goes, never did. To find a fully civilized people we must find a people among whom exchange of trade is absolutely free and has reached the fullest development to which human desire can carry it. There is, unfortunately, no such people."

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Nobody really believes in a tariff. If the most rabid protectionist would honestly analyze his feel-

ings he would have to admit he desires absolute freedom to trade for himself and wants restrictions only for the other fellow—so strong is the notion that a successful trade can only be accomplished by forcing another to make a poor one, in other words, by injuring him.

The most persistent protectionist will not hesitate to smuggle provided he can do so without getting into trouble.

The "courtesy" of the Treasury office is a well known custom extended to influential officials and politicians returning from abroad.

The ordinary person is pleased if he may be made the recipient through the kindness of a friend traveling abroad of some article of value escaping the custom house tax. Such a person as a rule will be found accepting the protective idea.

The rich heiress is limited to only as many trunks full of costly wearing apparel as she may claim she has worn, perhaps once, before embarking from the foreign port. Such a person is more than likely a beneficiary of the tariff.

What a mean advantage this, to take of the forced-to-stay-at-home public.

On the other hand, let some simple-minded individual who instinctively feels he is committing no crime be caught with a few small valuables in his possession while crossing some imaginary political line, and lo, here is a criminal of deep dye. Compare him with those "eminently respectable" financiers, the sugar barons, whose greed so grows upon what it feeds on, that, not satisfied with the liberal protection secured to them, they are caught defrauding the revenue. Well might we exclaim, "Oh, Respectability! what crimes are committed in thy name!"

JOSIAH EDSON.

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THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF RISING PRICES.

Advance in price of iron is generally heralded as a sure sign of growing prosperity.

While it is true that a sustained advance, coincident with maintained or increasing output, signifies increased purchasing power on the part of the public, this is of minor importance compared to the economic significance of the price-advance in itself. For, is it not an axiom of political economy that increased productivity tends not toward higher but toward lower prices?

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Rising prices for iron may indicate increased general affluence, but we should not lose sight of the further fact, that it may also indicate a power