

### Tom L. Johnson.

The newspapers of the country have ever since the Cleveland mayoralty election kept their columns hot with Johnson matter. Most of these comments have been friendly, some silly, a great number untrue. But nothing in connection with the unique figure of the mayor of Cleveland has been thought too trivial to chronicle, even to the purchase of an automobile by the indulgent father for his youthful school girl daughter.

The quidnuncs have been busy, too. Everything that Johnson has done has been part of the great plan to land himself in the White House. Those who know Johnson best, however, know that he harbors no such deep-laid scheme. That he is in politics for a great principle, and that if his nomination for the presidency could advance that principle, he would welcome it, is certain; but it by no means follows that this second premise is true. Events alone can determine this. The United States Senatorship, so far as the Johnson programme is concerned, may also be dismissed. Mr. Johnson will not retire the single tax in that way. Cleveland for the next two years is his field, and his triumphant re-election by an increased majority would mean more to the great cause to which he has pledged his life than anything else possibly could. This, we believe, is Mr. Johnson's set purpose, and those who cannot understand such a move (by reason of moral and intellectual incapability) may continue taking his measure by their own narrow yard-sticks of principle and following his every act with plausible or disingenuous conjecture.

Some of the newspaper comments are amusing enough. Here is the *Philadelphia Bulletin*:

"Cleveland's city council refuses to give Mayor Tom Johnson the money he demands for municipal improvements. The taxpayers of that town are apparently not favorably impressed with the idea of paying for the promised civic millennium out of their own pockets."

Who is to pay for the civic millennium if not the citizens out of their own pockets?

The *Dallas (Ore.) Chronicle* calls Johnson "A single tax crank in an advanced state of lunacy;" the *New Britain (Conn.) Herald* says he has "peculiar opinions." The *Pittsburg Dispatch* says that he has been roundly abused as a hypocrite, "and this is weighing down his presidential boom." But let not the *Dispatch* worry; if that is all that is weighing him down he is not heavily handicapped.

Murat Halstead is reported by a Buffalo paper which interviewed him to have said of Tom Johnson:

"I do not think that a man who starts off with the proposition for a single tax upon the real estate in Ohio and a tax upon nothing else exhibits a very brilliant stroke of genius. I am inclined to describe that proposition with another word."

Poor Halstead! It is harder for a new idea to enter his head than it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle. The *Chicago Record* says that "Johnson is a free trader, and thinks customs tariffs are immoral as well as illogical, but nevertheless demands a heavy duty on iron and steel as long as he manufactures!" The *Record* ought to know that Johnson in Congress and out worked for the removal of the duties upon steel. The *Record* further says:

"He put a little community down on one of his street car lines on Long Island to carry out Henry George's notions. The population was composed entirely of Mr. George and his friends and disciples. Mr. Johnson footed the bills. The rest of them dreamed and talked, and believed that they had a Utopia, but it would have been something else without Mr. Johnson's money."

There are two explanations of this story—either the *Record* editor is willing to tell what is not true or somebody has been fooling him.

The *Plain Dealer* of Cleveland interviewed Johnson a few days ago, and the next day's issue contained the following:

"Mayor Johnson and his millions, according to a special dispatch to the *Plain Dealer* from Denver, are backing a big fight to introduce single tax in Colorado."

"I wouldn't put it that way," laughed the mayor yesterday, when asked what part he was playing in the tax battle in the western State. "But it's true," he continued, "that I have been taking a mighty active part in that affair. We have now got the proposition up to the people of Colorado, and a great campaign of argument and education will soon begin."

"I hope to be able to personally go out there and make a few speeches, but I am not sure that I will be able to do it. The single tax fight is on for keeps, and I look for a great victory."

The Grand Rapids (Mich.) *Democrat*, April 7th, says that Johnson's re-entry into politics means trouble for the Republican machine. Yes, and for the Democratic machine, too. The Bozeman (Mont.) *Chronicle*, having asserted that Tom L. Johnson is "a socialist of the Henry George school," the *Helena Independent* wants to know what kind of a socialist a Henry George socialist is. The *Independent* knows more than the "mixers" of the metropolitan press.

Following are other newspaper comments on Johnson:

The Troy (New York) *Press*: Tom Johnson is not a disciple of dirty politics. His ideas of government may be better ascertained by reading "Progress and Poverty," which is his political Bible.

The Detroit (Mich.) *Tribune*: "Mr. Johnson is a sort of cumulous or unexpended benevolence. That is why he has waxed fat of late. Presently the industrial and political world will hear a mighty rumbling and see flashes of forked lightning in the direction of Cleveland. The superincumbent cumulus will be discharging not cats and dogs, but three-cent fare street railway ordinances and single tax doctrines directly applied."

Tucson (Arizona) *Citizen*, April 18th: Tom Loftin Johnson would make a great President. He is a master of men. He is rich beyond the dreams of avarice. He is a practical reformer. He is an enlightened statesman. He is a man of great executive capacity. He is not a crank in anything. He is a radical reformer in many things. He is a constructive statesman as well fitted to build up as to pull down. He is practical in everything—politics included. He has never wavered in the support of Democratic principles, and his purse as well as his personal efforts, has ever been at the disposal of his party.

It would be a splendid popular triumph if Tom Johnson could be made the Democratic candidate for the presidency; it would be a momentous event in history if he could be made the President of the United States.

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It was in accordance with these views, that in a speech at the Jackson Day banquet in Cleveland last January, Mr. Johnson announced his withdrawal from all active business and the formal dedication of the remainder of his life to the cause of equal rights and the destruction of privilege—a spectacle so rare as to be misunderstood by many and to call forth sneers and the charge of sinister motives. Within his breast this faith burns as a living religion, but outwardly he gives small sign to such taunts. He goes straight on warring for his cause with every weapon in his arsenal.—Henry George, Jr., in *Puritan*.

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"It is a common saying that we have the services of a hundred thousand dollar mayor for \$6,000 a year."—Charles Orr, Cleveland correspondent *Boston Transcript*, April 27. Mr. Orr is librarian of the Case Library at Cleveland.