

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### Tom L. Johnson's Fortune.

To any other millionaire than Mayor Johnson of Cleveland, the loss of his fortune might be accounted a misfortune. To Johnson—and in mentioning him we include his ideals—it is not probably the most fortunate thing that could have happened. His wealth and his reputation for wealth have been obstacles rather than aids to the public work he set out to do. They have been a burden upon many things in the public interest that he has undertaken. He might have retired to a Scottish castle with his millions and doled out libraries to sycophantic American towns, and had his opinions applauded as interesting even if queer. He might have linked his name with some orthodox church and given liberally to colleges and missions, and got into the official list of celestial harp-bearers and crown-wearers. He might have made himself hail fellow in millionaires' clubs, and been joked about his curious notions but highly respected for his level head. But when he set out to attack the golden gods of the rich, set out in action and in earnest, set out in a way that made them recognize him as a destructive Samson in their holy temple—when they saw him doing this, the whole pack of parasites jumped upon him. Yet there was nothing about him they could attack, except the fact that he was a millionaire whose millions had been got as theirs were—through privileges created by law. But this was enough. Johnson's work depended for success

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upon the confidence of the people for whom he was working, of the people whose rights he was trying to recover for them,—and his enemies and theirs denounced him to them as insincere. Large numbers were deceived by these tactics. So long as he had his fortune, his real character was obscured. Many were incapable of conceiving of a millionaire as human-hearted and public spirited unless he scattered bakshesh broadcast with both hands. Only Tom L. Johnson's friends fully knew the man back of the millionaire. But now that circumstances have lifted him out of the millionaire class, he is destined to be known and respected and loved in the future years by masses of men who have doubted, as by his friends he has been in the years that are past. Insofar as this comes to be true, his effectiveness will be augmented as a leader. And such leaders as he are needed at their best in the irrepressible conflict of equal rights against special privilege, which is now more terrific, more widespread, and farther advanced in purpose than ever before.

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### The Unrepresented Consumer.

Protection has been maintained in this country for production interests, most of which it has centralized and fattened. The consumer has had no consideration. Not that he has been formally excluded from hearings, but for reasons vividly set forth in the following admirable letter to Congressman McCall from Charles Francis Adams of Boston:

I see in the Boston Herald of this morning that the President-elect is anxious that those who desire a revision of the tariff in the direction of reduced schedules should make themselves heard in Washington. It is claimed that those asking that the tariff schedules should remain as they are, or should be changed only in the way of increase, are much in evidence at the hearings now in progress, and that the tariff reformer, so-called, does not appear, or is silent.

You, my dear Mr. McCall, know perfectly well the reason of this. Those first referred to are directly and pecuniarily interested; and, as such, naturally divided into two classes. Speaking after the fashion of men, they are either Thieves or Hogs. I myself belong to the former class. I am a tariff Thief, and I have a license to steal! It bears the broad seal of the United States, and is what is known as the "Dingley Tariff." I stole under it yesterday; I am stealing under it today; I propose to steal under it tomorrow. The government has forced me into this position, and I both do and shall take full advantage of it. I am, therefore, a tariff Thief—with a license to steal! And—what are you going to do about it?

The other class come under the Hog category; that is, they rush squealing and struggling to the great Washington Protection Trough, and, with all

four feet in it, they proceed to gobble the swill. Well acquainted with those of this class, you know their attitude and their utterances. It is useless for me to dilate upon either. To this class I do not belong. I am simply a tariff Thief; but, as I have said, with a license to steal.

But, on the other hand, I am also a tariff reformer. I would like to see every protective schedule swept out of existence—my own included. Meanwhile, what inducement have I to go to Washington on a public mission of this sort? A mere citizen, I represent no one. If I went I would receive from the committee scarcely a respectful hearing, if any hearing at all; and I would have to go at a considerable expense both of my money and my time, the last of which I can least afford.

My position in these respects is exactly the position of myriads of others. And then they say we do not exist!

Meanwhile, I do know this. On every occasion when of late I have had occasion to address an audience, any reference to "Protection run mad," or to the tariff as "the Mother of Trusts" has invariably elicited a more spontaneous response than any other utterance I could make. This feeling is abroad, becoming stronger and will certainly, soon or late, be in evidence at the polls. Meanwhile, the tens of thousands of persons who feel in that way, like myself, cannot afford either the time, or more frequently, the money to go to Washington to ask to be heard before a committee which they know in advance is both prejudiced and packed against them.

I have in this letter set forth the situation so far as a revision of the tariff is concerned, as it exists within your personal knowledge and my personal knowledge. You are welcome to make such use of it before the committee, or elsewhere, as you see fit.

Meanwhile, have it well understood that my position is exactly the position of tens of thousands of others scattered throughout the country. To ask us to put aside our business affairs, and, at our own expense, go to Washington on a desperate mission, is asking a little too much, whether the demand comes from the committee or from a President-elect.

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### The "Outlook" and Standard Oil.

As was to be expected, The Outlook explains the connection with it of Mr. Stillman of the Standard Oil "crowd" (p. 795). From this explanation it appears that Mr. Stillman, a warm personal friend of Lyman Abbott's, aided Dr. Abbott originally in buying The Outlook and afterward in establishing it; but his financial interest in the paper is less than 10 per cent. The explanation is all that should be required, and The Outlook will be exonerated by fair men of all suspicion of being under the financial thumb of the Standard Oil "crowd." It should be remarked, however, that it probably would not be exonerated by its new editor, Mr. Roosevelt, if he hated it as bitterly as he did Gov. Haskell of Oklahoma. For the facts conceded by The Outlook are really