

TRUE DEMOCRACY.

[Extracts from the recent inaugural address of Judge Wm. G. Ewing, president of the Iroquois Club, Chicago.]

I believe in loyalty to the death to political principle; but I never have been, and never will be, a slave to convention dictation. No political organization has a right to dictate to you, or to me, what our convictions shall be upon any principle of government; and American independence and manhood will be sacrificed in exact ratio with our concession to any claim of such piratical power. I will sacrifice much for the unity and harmony of my party, but when it comes to a question of sustaining party at the cost of my conviction of what is right, I will, at whatever hazard of personal loss, hold on to my manhood, and keep company with my own self-respect, resting in the serene and abiding assurance that what is morally wrong cannot, by any human possibility, be politically right.

I have no new doctrines to suggest to this club, no new gods to enthrone. The principles of American democracy are as old as the government and as immutable as the inherent rights of man; we have but to comprehend them and apply them to the conditions that confront us today to find the path of wisdom and duty.

The fame of Thomas Jefferson, the father of American democracy, abides in the fact that he devoted his marvelous talents to the sacred rights of men and evolved and announced to the world great practical political principles applicable to every time and place where man struggles for man, or human liberty has a votary.

What is called the Jeffersonian doctrine is found in his first inaugural address and is couched in a few axiomatic declarations.

"Equal and exact justice to all men of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political creed."

"Commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none."

"Economy in the public expenses, that labor may be lightly burdened."

"The encouragement of agriculture and of commerce as its handmaid."

True democracy does not consist in simply professing belief in these political truisms as theories of government, but in day by day applying them to our constantly varying political environment. To this solemn duty I invoke your serious thought. New issues are not to be sought while old wrongs remain unrighted. If a protective tariff was false in theory, false in principle and vicious in practice four, eight, twelve, sixteen or forty years ago, it is a moral and political outcast yet. "The trail of the serpent is over it still," and the wage of battle should never be withdrawn until this bold and defiant legal license to the

rich, to rob the poor, is remorselessly blotted from the statute books of the nation.

In 1876, 1880, 1884, 1888 and 1892 the democratic party staked its all in an open, manly, heroic struggle against this protective abomination; because democrats believed that the doctrine of protection is a delusion and a snare; is "a promise to the ear to be broken to the hope;" is a false light upon a tempestuous sea, that lures to deceive, invites to betray, shines to destroy; believed that "equal and exact justice to all men" could never be attained under a system of government that imposes burdens upon one class of citizens for the benefit of another class; believed that a protective tariff renders impossible "commerce and friendship with all nations;" believed that a protective tariff fosters extravagance and oppresses labor; believed that a protective tariff discourages agriculture and makes commerce a crime.

Until some better way is provided, democrats do not object to such reasonable imposition of duties upon imports as is required to meet the necessary expenses of the government.

A tariff for revenue is a tax, but it is an equal tax, paid by every citizen according to the benefits received by him, for the support of the government, whose flag protects him in every land and on every sea; while a tariff for protection is an unequal and an unjust tax; is a burden laid upon the weak for the benefit of the strong; upon the poor for the benefit of the rich; upon the unfortunate for the benefit of the favored; upon labor for the benefit of wealth; a protective tariff is a stigma upon American justice, a reproach to our civilization; it is the devil's reward to the sir knights of public plunder.

Tell me who can, if "tariff reform" was in reason and justice the watchword of the democratic party in 1892, and worse tariff conditions confront the country now than ever before, why should not the democratic party, with as great confidence in the intelligence and justice of the people now as then, make "equal and exact justice to all men" the shibboleth of their march to a heroic combat in which they would at least deserve success? And if the democratic party is right upon the tariff question, what can be said of a proposition, under its sanction, to emphasize the McKinley tariff and out-ding Dingley, by giving to the silver mine owners, out of the pockets of the toiling masses, a clear gratuity of one hundred per cent upon the product of their mines?

The democratic party should, not as a question of policy—(I have no patience with the word policy, it is a dishonest word, a subterfuge, a hiding place, an apology for duplicity)—but as a matter of principle, of immutable right, maintain its hitherto unflinching position, as the friend and advocate of the rights of the toiling masses; should set its face as

flint against monopolies and trusts, the legitimate offspring of that other abomination, protective tariff; should hold fast to the conviction that honor and labor are the true badges of manhood; should remember that labor, and labor only, produces everything of intrinsic value in the world; should remember that labor is not a mendicant or a beggar, asking for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; that all that labor asks is an open field and a fair fight; give these to labor; give to it the protection the Almighty gave to it; an open market, a free sail, untaxed food to eat, untaxed clothing to wear, untaxed tools to work with and untaxed material to work upon, and these will shiver to atoms the cruel gigantic trusts, destroy monopoly and fill the whole land with peace and plenty as the love of God fills the world.

The recent annexation of Hawaii and the acquisition by conquest of the Philippine islands and Porto Rico, and the exodus by war's relentless decree of Spaniards from Cuba, present questions of solemn import to the American people. This serious condition demands the honest, patriotic thought and action of every true American who presumes to think and has the courage to express his thought.

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In my judgment, the only defensible course for the United States in this matter, is to say to the world and say quickly, "A war commenced for liberty and humanity shall not end in a mere change of masters or increased oppression;" is to say, with the simplicity of truth, to the Filipinos, the Porto Ricans and Cubans, "Organize governments of your own choice, and the United States, with its love and benediction, will promptly give you unclouded title to your territory and defend your jurisdiction."

This is the only line of conduct that honor points and justice approves; and in this way only will our boasted patriotism, love of country, be expanded into the sublimer virtue of *homoism*, the love of man.

The highest honor of a nation is but the reflex of the individual honor of its citizens; wherefore, the manhood of America should find voice before it is soiled with shame. The lips of the president and his official advisers seem to be sealed, and the purpose of the administration involved in profound mystery respecting the conquered Spanish territory; but there should be no uncertainty or room for doubt as to the position of the democratic party upon that subject; we must absolutely and wholly abandon all thought of the acquisition of remote foreign territory and right of sovereignty over it, or we must surrender the vitality of democracy, renounce the Monroe doctrine and proclaim as pernicious every shining splendor that distinguishes the American