

THE TARIFF ISSUE.

Editor The Conservative:

During a recent presidential campaign, when the subject of tariff, and incidentally the power of congress to tax for other purposes than revenue, was a vital and burning question, I received from a non-partisan friend the following communication on the subject.

The recent pronouncement of our murdered president has brought the subject again prominently to the front, and it may be that these suggestions of my friend would interest and entertain some of the readers of your unique and always instructive journal.

I have pleasure in placing same at your disposal. It is as follows:

Very truly,
J. G. LUMBARD.

Easy Lessons in Political Economy.

"Discussion touching matters pertaining to political economy, so far as the writer has observed, has been wont to take on a lofty and imposing style, and to lack the simplicity and directness which belongs to and should characterize rudimentary teaching. The resounding phrases usually employed have been to the common mind but as "sounding brass and tinkling cimbals," signifying nothing. Such words as "Protection" and "Free Trade" have a different significance to every different hearer, unless, perchance, he shall have given this subject some personal consideration and study. The intricacies of chemistry are not made intelligible by the dictionary definitions of that word, nor a man rendered competent to compound remedies by an introduction to a druggist or a doctor.

"It may be that the present is not the best time to talk plainly and simply of homely but palpable facts, and that this frenzied season of acute politics is obnoxious to tamer themes, but many questions now agitating the public mind and dividing the public opinion might, it would seem, find a ready and easy solution if recurrence were had to first and underlying principles of government and governmental power, and much vexatious and profitless wrangling thereby saved to both the people and the press.

Before deciding or inquiring what, in a given case, the government should, or should not do, it would seem convenient and wise to first inquire what government is. What its origin? For what objects instituted? And whether proposed measures be in furtherance of these objects? Or are they in the nature of excesses and usurpations?

As every one knows, man, at the first, lived alone, and was a law unto himself. Then came the patriarchal

government, when the father of the family was the head of the state. Later on came tribes, when the chief was the supreme power. But the second tribe, with a second supreme head was one too many, for two could not be supreme. And so came collision and war, and all the numerous and hideous ills that follow, until in the expensive and savage school of experience they learned the lesson of compromise and joined hands as one nation, and united for mutual protection and defense. In this coalition each gave up to society something of his individual liberty for the sake of, and in exchange for, that safety of person and security of property, which before he had not, and without which all liberty was valueless. *Safety and security* then, are the things, and the only things, due to us from society, and to compass these is the sole and only purpose of government.

As of course many things are justly, nay, necessarily incident to this final purpose such as armies, navies, coast defenses, asylums for the insane, and schools for the citizens, etc., etc. For all these are implied in, and necessary to the safety of the individual citizen and of the nation, which is a multiplication of the individual. For this purpose, and for the necessary expense of this object taxes are legiti-

mately levied and collected, and it makes little difference in what manner this fund be raised, provided it falls equally upon those who supply it. But as the purpose is a common purpose, so must the burden be made a common burden. And when all this is done, and provision made for the maintenance and support of the government in its office of protection of life and property, the utmost function of government is exhausted. Safety and security attained, the government has exhausted its power; and to go further and undertake other things, and the exercise of further functions, is usurpation and constitutes a menace to the very liberties it was ordained to preserve."

This is enough for the first lesson. Whether I continue the series depends upon how you receive this.

Yours,
"BALLOU."
Omaha, Neb., Oct. 23, 1901.

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