The Woman - The Tariff & the Home,

It is on the woman rearing a family of children on a small income that privilege lays the heaviest hand. She must take her husband's hard earned wages and make them "do". For her there are no rebates, no wholesale buying, no putting in supplies when prices are low. Heaped on the coal she must buy by the bushel, the potatoes she buys by the half-peck, the cotton cloth, of which she can afford only enough at a time to meet immediate needs, are the full weight of every device which men have invented to carry out the cruel ecomonic theory that prosperity means limited production and high prices. It is she who feels most the screws of tariffs and trusts, of privately owned natural resources, of war taxes and luxuries, of parasite men and women.

These burdens are all of the same piece - past and parcel of the same economic point of view. Every time one of them is attacked and weakened, ~~the whole group feels the effect.~~ Privilege in general is less shaken in its stronghold. Perhaps the greatest advantage from putting through the present tariff bill will be the blow it will give to Privilege. It will be like taking one of the strongest forts of a besieged enemy.

But the Underwood Bill aims to come more directly than this to the relief of the hard-pressed woman. It has undertaken to give her the advantages of a free world market in all those things which are necessary to life. So far as the tariff restricts this market its days are numbered if this bill passes.

Take her home, her house, ever since the Civil War she has been paying war taxes on that house - and on everything that went into it - on the lumber from which it was built.- and for years after the war lumber was so dear in the Western state that even well-to-do men and women lived in sod houses. They were helping pay for the war then and they have been doing so ever since. She has paid taxes on lumber, but not only that. She has paid them on the nails that held the lumber together; on the glass that went into the windows of the house;

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on the screens she used in summer;-on the locks and hinges of the door; on the paper on the walls; on the carpet on the floor. Everything, literally, that went into the house bore a tariff - even the lime that make the plaster. The Underwood Bill aims to free entirely or in part all of these things. It put lumber on the free list, lumber and all its products - clapboards, lath and shingles. It makes nails free. It cuts the tariff on lime nearly in half; it does the same for window glass; for wall paper; for carpets and for furniture.

Where the duty has been retained it has been carefully adjusted so that the woman will have all the advantage which comes from putting an article ~~into~~ under fair competition ~~with~~ in a world market. As it has been, the duties have been so high that they have made it impossible for her to get any advantage from world competition. The domestic manufacturer of window glass, for instance, could always afford to sell for less than the importers who had to pay a high duty. He could undersell the foreigner, but he could and did combine at home to keep up the prices of window glass above what they would have been, if there had been an open market. Under the lower duties of the Underwood Bill trust-makers will have no such protection. He will have to compete and the woman's home will have the advantage.

But another benefit will come to her from this bill. It will relieve her from a variety of tariff taxes which are not ordinarily counted, because not on the surface. Into the cost of everything must be counted the cost of iron ore, of coal, of tools and machines of all sorts. Now all of these things have for years born duties. It would be impossible to figure exactly what their effect on manufactured articles has been, but it has been something substantial. Read the prayers of manufacturers for protection and you will se what use they make of these duties on raw materials to get higher rates on their products. Here is a man who makes frying-pans. He has a protection of 50% we will say, and he wants 70%. It

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is doubtful if anybody ever imported a fry-pan, but he will grow eloquent over the danger of their doing so, and he will exhibit the long list of duties he has to pay - duties on coal - on iron ore - on iron plates - on machinery. By what logic can you put a duty on all the materials he uses and refuse one on what he makes? It is impossible to deny him; he gets his duty and out of sympathy, if for no other reason, the price of frying-pans soar. The Underwood Bill does a great deal to put an end to this sort of tariff making. It gives a man his raw materials free; it cuts down the protection on tools and machinery. This being done there is no logical reason why frying-pans and other things necessary in the woman's household should have anything like the protection which had been theirs.

It is probably that it will be by removing a multitude of unseen taxes, like these, that the Underwood Bill will help the woman most. The bill goes through American Industry like a man with ax in hand goes up and down a stream long obstructed by over-hanging trees, accumulations of drift, sand bars and rocks. He cuts away branches, pulls out piled up logs and rocks, frees the stream to do its natural work. So the Underwood Bill has sought to free industry by pulling out every useless obstruction it could handle. It is a long step towards undermining privilege and every man and woman who hates privielge should fight for its passage.

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