

## GAINING GROUND.

How true it is that our progress must be by steps, and how true it is that in accomplishing these steps we must rely upon the aid of those who are not with us in ultimate aim, but are for the moment, at least, only willing to take the immediate step, are matters that I would commend to the consideration of those friends of the good cause who think that not to run a presidential candidate would be to abandon the cause itself, and who imagine that with the issue likely to be joined between the two great parties in the coming national election we have no concern. The truth is that great reforms of this kind are not usually accomplished by parties formed for the purpose, and that the decisive political battles which secure them are generally fought on what are nominally minor issues. Thus the abolition of slavery in the United States was not accomplished by an abolition party, but by a party which distinctly and most emphatically disavowed any intention of disturbing slavery where it already existed; which denounced abolitionists without stint, and proposed merely to prevent the extension of slavery to the territories.

But the moment this extremely moderate measure became an issue of practical politics, upon which two great parties struggled for political power and spoils, more was accomplished for the anti-slavery cause than could have been accomplished by any amount of "standing up to be counted" on the part of thorough going anti-slavery men. For the men who fell into line for this moderate measure soon found themselves driven further and further by the impulse of movement and the reaction of opposition. In arguing against the extension of slavery to the territories they were compelled to argue against slavery itself, just as in advocating the reduction of protective duties, Presi-

dent Cleveland's supporters will in the face of republican opposition, be compelled to deny the claims of protection, and though, perhaps unconsciously in many cases, to really advance free trade principles, and thus, as Mayor Hewitt is doing, prepare the public mind for the abolition of all taxes upon labor or its products.

For our purpose it matters very little whom or what men vote for, as compared with what they think about, and our main concern should be to stimulate thought. President Cleveland's message, Mayor Hewitt's utterance, Senator Sherman's proposition to substitute a bounty on home grown sugar for a tax on the foreign product, to say nothing of the numberless magazine and newspaper articles on similar subjects, all show that, thanks in large measure to our efforts, political discussion is rapidly drifting in the direction of our principles. Let us do what we can to encourage this drift.

Signed: Henry George,  
Jan. 14, 1888.