

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"The McKinley bill is going to be an object lesson in political economy to the American workingmen," said Brown.

"To judge by what has already been done since that bill has passed," said Garlic, "it ain't banks that'll be required, but poorhouses."

"Well, that's all right," said Sinnett, "that will build up the American carpet trade and give lots of work to the carpet weaver, and that's what he wants."

"That's where you're out," said Garlic, "the carpet weaver don't want more work—he wants more money, and that's precisely what he won't get under the new arrangement."

"I don't at all agree with that," replied Sinnett, "it's a business transaction and don't interfere in any way with either the man who weaves the carpets or him who buys it."

"But can't you understand," said Garlic, "that this closing of two fifths of all the mills will throw forty out of every hundred carpet weavers out of work; that those forty, in order to live, must secure work at their trade, and that to do this they must compete with the other sixty; now this competition among the weavers will not only prevent them getting an advance of wages, and thereby benefitting by the passing of this bill, but it will actually reduce wages, because among the forty there will be many who can't afford to be idle, and who will offer their services for less than what the sixty are getting."

"It seems to me," said Sharkey, "that unless the wages of the American laborer are increased in proportion to the increase of duty through this bill, that it will not be long before Uncle Sam will be suffering from overproduction; the people of the United States are the home market of the American manufacturer, they are his consumers—this jump in the tariff has decreased the purchasing power of their dollars in the same ratio as it has increased the amount of duty, and it must follow that unless the number of the consumer's dollars are increased by increasing his wages, the American manufacturer will lose his home market from the inability of the American people to buy that which they produce."

"The strangest thing in connection with a protective tariff," said Gaskill, "is that the workingman imagines that by protecting the products of labor he protects himself; he never stops long enough to think that the products of labor do not as a rule belong to the laborer, but belong to the capitalist, and that it is he and not the laborer who is protected."

"And yet he could easily convince himself," said Brown, "that the ruling powers are not in sympathy with him, if he would only do a little bit of thinking. Whenever he looks for a job he finds labor treated as a commodity; he finds that the employer, all other things being equal, always strives to secure the cheapest labor, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred tells him straight that he regards his labor as a commodity, yet when it comes to framing a tariff he never finds this commodity in the list of articles on which a duty is demanded. Labor is a commodity, and the laborer should insist, that inasmuch as a high import duty is levied on everything coming from abroad, he should also be protected

This is not a question of dollars and cents, though it would mean more dollars in the worker's pocket, it is not a question of policy, it is a question of principle, of right, of justice. If it is right that for every dollar's worth of goods the Canadian consumer shall pay the Government a blackmail of 35 cents, it must also be right to compel everyone landing on our shores to pay to the Government 35 cents of every dollar that he may earn while he is in the country; one is as much right as the other. The only difference is that the duty on goods protects capital, while the duty on immigrants would protect the laborer."

"There is only one fault that I find in that McKinley bill," said Gaskill, "and that is that it don't place the duties half high enough. This protective policy has been held up by capital as the philosopher's stone so persistently and so long, that until some nation takes an overdose of it and bleeds itself white, the average workingman will worship it like the Israelites the golden calf. The States just now have about as much of it as they can conveniently stagger under and the next Presidential election will show what the people think of it."

BILL BLADES.

ORIGIN OF LUCIFER MATCHES

It is due to a happy thought which flashed through the brain of Mr. Isaac Holden, who so terms the idea in his evidence before the patent committee of Parliament. Mr. Holden had to rise at four o'clock in the morning to pursue his studies in chemistry, and experienced the gravest inconvenience from his tedious efforts to obtain a light from flint and steel. He was giving lectures at this time to a very large audience. He goes on to say:

"Of course I knew, as other chemists did, the explosive material that was necessary in order to produce instantaneous light; but it was very difficult to obtain a light on wood by that explosive material, and the idea occurred to me to put under the explosive mixture sulphur. I did that, and published it in my next lecture, and showed it. There was a young man in the room whose father was a chemist in London, and he immediately wrote to his father about it, and shortly afterward lucifer matches were issued to the world."

VIVACIOUS GIRLS.

There are two kinds of vivacious girls, and you shall choose between them. She of mock vivacity laughs at everything, no matter how trivial, and says, "Oh, how funny you are!" at every remark she hears. She can swim, and ride, and play lawn tennis—all of which accomplishments, in the face of her tightly-laced waist, fill one with a real admiration for her prowess, in spite of her odious manners. She is always trying to say something witty; is addicted to the punning habit; talks of learning to box; is so glad "girls now-a-days have some spirit"—as much as to

say, "You see before you a complete specimen of the admirable creature I describe," and is generally loud, slangy and egotistical. The genuinely vivacious girl is as sweet as a rose, and as restful.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF MONOPOLIES.

In every locality where there is a street railroad, a gas company, a water works company or other institution of the kind whose charter is expiring, or where it is proposed to organize services of this kind, our friends should be on the alert to advocate the retention of the service in the hands of the town or city instead of allowing monopolists to possess themselves, often at an absurdly low figure, of the means of levying high taxes on industry. The people can run their street car lines, telephones, gas works and water works cheaper and better than any monopoly. And what is equally important, they can secure to all employees good treatment, fair wages and short hours. The workingman who, by his vote or influence, assists in handing over these and similar franchises to soulless, grasping corporations, whose only consideration is the tribute they can levy from the public, either knowingly or ignorantly helps to enslave his own class. It is much easier to bring public opinion effectively to bear on the question in a municipality than in the larger arena of State or national politics. The cry is continually becoming louder for Government ownership of railroad and telegraph lines, and before long the demand of the people—that the great lines of transportation and communication shall no longer be controlled by greedy and unscrupulous monopolists—will be too strong to be resisted. But in the meantime we ought not to lose any opportunity of carrying out the same sound principle with regard to local enterprises. The introduction of a general system of municipal ownership of all monopolies requiring a public charter for their operation, in addition to the immediate advantages secured, would familiarize the public with the idea, and pave the way for national ownership of the great lines of travel and communication.—Journal of the Knights of Labor.

WILD BOYS.

It is a curious fact that in all large cities there are groups of impudent little monkeys, lads of tender years, who almost seem predestined to grow up to bad ends.

They are born with tempers that neither kindness nor a sick tames. They scoff and jibe at their parents, and, to speak the plain truth, are a nuisance to everybody.

By the time that they have grown up to schooling age their vicious propensities show more strongly. If another bad boy is to be found, bad boy number one hunts him up, becomes his chosen friend, and both play truant.

Then the wild lad takes to still worse courses, consorts with thieves, and after a time stands in the dock, and finally disappears in a reformatory.

Sometimes he changes his manners and mind, and after five years in an industrial school elects to go to sea. Here, perhaps, the discipline and the ocean winds combine to change his aspirations, and at last the man leads a steady, sober, useful life.

The great majority of these unhappy wild boys, however, only go from bad to worse, and the small scamp who began by jeering at rebukes, and habitually went wrong in a juvenile way, ends by turning out a confirmed criminal and jail-bird.

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