

phical discussion ending in a free fight, or the fisticuffs. The honor is divided among a number of famous schools.

It would be difficult to determine exactly what tendency was uppermost in the Boom School. As Macaulay says: "Man, in short, is so inconsistent a creature, that it is impossible to reason from his belief to his conduct or from one part of his belief to another." In regard to theory we are in doubt whether sensualism or spiritualism prevailed; but we vouch for certain that, at dinner-time when a tempting mess of pork and beans was placed on the deal-table, the rankest sensualism held sway. Even Tom Knott, who on most occasions was very transcendent of matter, forgot all his theories on asceticism, and plunged head first (figuratively speaking) into his favorite dish, thereby giving his animal propensities the upper hand. But this is a common fault among philosophers. There are many who belong to more pretentious schools than the present one, who shun base sensualism, as they would a rattlesnake; but who at meal-time turn all theory into thinnest air, and torment the digesting juices of their stomachs far more severely than ordinary men. We unhesitatingly affirm, however, that old Jim and foreman Knott were terrifically addicted to positivism. They never came to blows on any question after the first memorable encounter; but each man clung to his opinion as tenaciously as a drowning man holds to a straw. No quarter was given on any subject. Nothing could shake their faith in the infallible correctness of the respective judgments which Nature had bestowed upon them. It seems to us that no science suffers so much as philosophy from this kind of positivism. Every school is at daggers' end with every other school; every individual member of every school is positive that every individual member of every other school must have been stark, staring mad, to propound such gross absurdities.

Personally Tom Knott was very eclectic in his philosophical speculations. Every man's opinion was entitled to some consideration, save that of old Jim; for he now was wrong on all questions by force of habit. It finally

came to pass, as years rolled on, that foreman Knott used to have everything his own way; he became at the same time the *defendens* and *arguens* of all theses. Practice had made perfect, just as it always does. Whenever any subject was brought up, he immediately supported his contentions with such thundering rhetorical manoeuvring, at the same time pelted such a volley of jumbled up arguments and objections against the ramparts of the enemy, that old Jim in utter disgust and discomfiture would leave him an easy victor. It became evident as these triumphs went on, that old Jim's *intellectus agens* was not so agile as it used to be; yet he had the satisfaction of a philosopher, in knowing that he was right, despite the rantings of his adversary.

The writer spent a night with the boom gang and had the extreme pleasure of hearing Thomas Knott, foreman, expatiate on a variety of topics. After we all were seemingly bunked for the night, he arose, and going to an obscure corner of the shanty, appeared with an old and worn almanac, the *supreme criterion of truth*. Then having moved a heavy pine block alongside the bunk, he drove one end of his double-bladed knife into the wood, while the other end supported a tallow candle used on state occasions only. This done, he propped himself up comfortably with the blankets and read that: "A certain governor, in the early days of American history, enacted the following law; 'He that doth not work shall not eat.' "Now I don't know," began the foreman Thomas Knott, whether my pinion bout this here matter is alright, cording to the minds of the fresh gentlemen as arrived this evening. But I firmly believe that the governor as thought of such a law knew a darned sight more practical philosophy, than any other man I ever heard tell bout. Now lookye here, whats the use of talking about your supraphysical absurdities of this one or that one. Why don't yer knuckle down to business right off, and strike at the root of the evil. If such a man won't swallow yer doctrine, why just reduce the amount of eatables for that person. Of course don't chuck down on him too hard; give fair warning; and do it gradally and with reason as becomes a