

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"The City Council fixes the maximum charges of a cab driver," said Phil; "it allows him to charge so much and no more for a certain time or a certain distance, and if at any time he charges a passenger more than the price fixed by law he gets into trouble. I can't rightly understand why this should be so. Why not give the carters, who, as a whole, are certainly no worse than any other class of the community, the same privileges as are enjoyed by capitalists. If you allow an employer of labor to reduce the wages of his employees as much as he likes, without regard to the value of their services, I can't for the life of me see how you can consistently prevent a carter from charging all he can get, whether he renders an equivalent for the amount or not."

"That is easily explained," said Brown, "if you will bear in mind who your rulers are and in whose interest they legislate. Workingmen as a rule do not ride around in cabs—they leave that to the wealthier class; neither are they employers of labor any more than the man who drives the cab. They both belong to the same class and both have to work hard for a living. Our legislators, who are either themselves capitalists or else worshippers of the golden calf, use the powers conferred upon them to interfere with the liberty of contract between the carter and his fare, while they studiously refrain from exercising their authority in the same way between master and man. Without a tariff, the passenger would without doubt often be at the mercy of the carter, but not a bit more so than the employee is at the mercy of his master. Now, if our City Council wanted to legislate in an honest and impartial manner, they would have to pass a law fixing a minimum rate of wages, which would protect the laboring man against the greed and avarice of his employer just as much as the tariff protects the public against the greed of the cab driver. That they don't do so proves that in this, the same as everything else, they favor the rich."

"A money lender, charging 20 per cent interest would be called a usurer, and the probabilities are he would be prosecuted for doing so," said Gaskill, "but this self-same usurer may embark in business and pocket a 20 per cent. dividend on watered stock and be considered a smart man to boot; yet as a business man he is a greater robber than as a money lender. In the one case he collects 20 cents on the dollar, while in the other he collects as much on often less than half the amount. The one transaction may land him in the penitentiary, while the other as often as not lands him in the Senate. And the reasons for this discrimination are the same as those which prompted the enactment of a cab tariff. A workingman seldom finds his way to the money-lender, he has no security to borrow money on, at least none such as a money-lender would accept, whereas an employer has, and consequently the law steps in and protects him, leaving him a free hand to oppress his employees as much as he likes."

"Let any, or all of you, sit 'round' and think this matter out," said Phil, "and guided by your own experience of life tell me honestly: Is not the necessity of passing a law which would fix the minimum rate of pay greater than the enactment of hackney-coach-tariffs or usury laws? What is the use to you of Factory acts which at the best but indifferently well protect you from accidents if you allow your employers the right to reduce your wages until they are absolutely insufficient to procure you proper nourishment—what is the use of protecting you against yourself and at the same time allowing your master the power to

slowly starve you to death? And if it is just to limit the profits of the carter, of the money-lender, the pawnbroker—if it is right to protect the public against these—how or where is the wrong or injustice in protecting the laborer against the aggressiveness of capital. If the principle is correct, why not apply it all 'round' and if it's wrong why apply it at all?"

BILL BLADES.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE POOR?

This is the title of the leading article in the April number of the Forum. It is by the Rev. Dr. W. S. Rainsford, who regards poverty as the inevitable condition of the unfortunate. Some, to be rationally relieved by the fortunate others. If poverty is a child of injustice, Mr. Rainsford does not see the relationship; or, seeing it, he does not choose to declare the fact. His paper runs along, with eloquence and tenderness, but superficially and therefore without force, somewhat like this:

It was once supposed that the New World could be spared the discipline of poverty. We know now that it could not be. Gradually the rich became richer and the poor poorer, and all men with eyes and ears know now that in our national future, poverty must play its part.

The questions it forces on us can no longer be laid aside. Though we may not be able to uproot poverty's bitter thistle crop, we can clear parts of the field; but any effort worth making must deal with the sources whence the tide of poverty springs. Foremost among these is the apathy of the poor regarding their own condition. They will not help themselves. Another source is drunkenness, which is largely provoked by tenement-house surroundings. To grapple with poverty we must grapple with these sources. Since we cannot abolish the tenement house we must improve it. We need Peabody funds on a large scale. There must be such a state of aroused feeling and awakened conscience, of common pity and justice, as will lead our rich men to recognize the awful needs of the huddled masses. The rich must lead the way in giving air and breathing space, baths and recreation grounds, instead of devoting vast fortunes to the endowment of a degenerating offspring.

But after all outside aid, radical improvement would be impossible without a co-operating force, among the poor themselves. This must be the work of the Christian church in all her branches. Ethical movements are not sufficient. They are doubtful as to a personal immortality, and all who enter the lists in their struggle with woe and sin must realize that if this life is all, then the goal is not worth the struggle. The church believes in the value of man because in him, he never so fallen, she seeks a spark of everlastingness. She professes to accept her Master's commands. He never contemplated the abolition of all poverty, but He distinctly commanded that men should draw near to each other, forgetting those things that for a short time made them differ. This we believe; yet our rich men hear little in the public teaching of their churches to make them feel that it is their duty to give money to bring about conditions where a civilized life is possible to the thousands whose hands have helped to pile up their fortunes. They are not taught, as they should be, that their wealth is literally not their own. Two or three large free churches, built on cleared spaces, on east and west down town sites, always open to the public, provided with real preachers, having each a large kindergarten, a swimming bath, and a gymnasium, and adequately supported and endowed, would be a stride in the right direction. Near these churches a band of unmarried clergy and picked lay workers should

live, undertaking duty for a stated time, and under their control all these accessories of civilization could be placed. This would cost money; but it would right the churches in the eyes of the working people, and to right the church in the eyes of the working people is the duty of the hour.

Soon or late the State will be obliged to institute great changes. Philanthropy can never altogether remove evils that one day we shall unite in regarding as intolerable. But the duty of the hour is to bridge a fast widening and fast deepening gulf that divides the rich from the poor. Legislation will amount to little till it shall be the practical voicing of an aroused public conscience. To awaken and educate man's sense of duty to his fellow is the work of the Church of God.—The Standard.

Antiquity of Fishing.

Probably no branch of industry can lay claim to greater antiquity than that of fishing. Its origin would seem to be coeval with the earliest efforts of human ingenuity, for the oldest monuments of antiquity show the fisherman in full possession of the implements of his calling, and even those tribes of savages which have learned neither to keep flocks nor to till the fields are skilled in the fabrication of the hook, the fish spear and the net. The earliest civilization of the eastern Mediterranean was begun with fishing. Sidon, which means "the fishery," was originally a fishing village, and its enterprising inhabitants devoted their attention mainly to the collection of a certain kind of mollusks, from which they prepared the famous Tyrian purple, prized more highly for the richness and variety of its hues than any other dye known to the ancients.—Washington Star.

Pinioned to a Tree.

Here is a strange and ghastly story from the Minneapolis Journal: Freeman P. Lane, who has just returned from Chaska, says that a farmer living near that place, while traversing a copse of heavy oak timber some five miles from Chaska, discovered a human skeleton securely pinioned to a large oak. The supposition, based upon the surrounding conditions, is that the man must have met with death before the cold weather set in last fall. The skeleton was in an upright position, and the entire right arm and shoulder were wedged into a crack in the trunk of the tree. The tree is badly shattered from top to bottom, and this theory is evolved:

During a heavy thunder shower last fall the man sought shelter beneath the wide-spreading branches of the oak, and a thunderbolt rent the tree from top to root, killing the man and opening a crevice in the tree that immediately closed, pinioning the man. It is narrated that a farm hand, employed some four miles from the death trap, has been missing since early in November or late in October. It is surmised that he was the victim of nature's unwonted freak.

A Cheap Way to Warm Cold Feet.

More than twenty-five years ago, while I was in the Thirty-fifth Massachusetts Regiment, strutting around Virginia, I was sometimes troubled with cold feet, says a correspondent of the Boston Journal. At one time, while I was stamping upon the ground in the effort to warm my extremities, a comrade in the same regiment said to me, "If your feet are cold try this." He raised his foot from the ground and struck some light blows with his hand on the upper part of his leg just above the knee. I did the same with both legs, and instantaneously felt a flow of warm blood coursing downward, and the feet became comfortably warm. The experiment was repeated with good effect in the warm climate of Virginia, and also with equally good results in the more rugged atmosphere of New England.

MEN'S PAJAMA SUITS.—Pajama. The word is derived from Hindustani *Pae, pai, pa*, foot, leg (allied to Greek *pous*, Latin, *pes* foot) and *jama* from Persian *jama*, a gown, robe, clothes or clothing. You will note that the term denotes the loose, baggy trousers of silk, flannel or cotton worn in the east by many persons of both sexes, chiefly Mohammedans and Sikhs and adopted by Europeans as a part of a convenient form of night attire in hot countries. The loose shirt or blouse of similar material is generally included in a suit of Pajamas. Allan is prepared to sell Pajama Suits at \$1.75 per suit, and if you want anything in that line you will do well to see them; white cotton night robes from 50c each upwards; flannellette night robes, \$1.00; men's spring and summer underwear in endless variety at Allan's, 659 to 665 Craig street.

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