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TALES OF THE TOWN.

*"I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind
To blow on whom I please."*

IT IS NOW generally understood that a well known commission dealer has been appointed to the head of the new Bureau of Labor Statistics and Board of Arbitration. From what I can gather, the nomination when formally announced will not be a popular one, the gentleman mentioned being comparatively unknown to the working classes and one who has never had any special interest in either local or Canadian industries, which it is the policy of the Dominion to promote; his business, moreover, having been that of handling the products of the cheap labor of Great Britain and the continent. In fact he has been, in his business, the champion of the foreigner as against the home producer. Were not each one in his own way endeavoring to give an impetus to Canadian development—to the building up wherever there is a show for them—of home industries; and were all imbued with free trade notions, it might be learned with content, indeed satisfaction, that an old time importer had been appointed to the position, for all might rest assured that his sympathies would be with the foreign manufacturer.

It was partly because of their leanings in that direction that the Government of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, which came into power under auspices so favorable to their retention of office for years to come, lost their hold upon the public sympathy and confidence. They expressed their belief in the inutility of "flies on the wheel" attempting to encourage native industry or to discriminate in their tariffs against those who were not of us, had no interest in us, contributed nothing to the public revenue and, in fact, were as utterly antagonistic as they possibly could be to the advancement of our own special interests as Canadians. They argued upon the expediency of the people purchasing their goods in the cheapest markets in the world. To this, however, Sir John Macdonald replied that it was no matter how cheap goods might be if the people had no money with which to buy.

And it was to supply this article of necessity that the National Policy was brought in on the principle that when constitutional treatment is required there is no use in making local applications, that when the knife is required drugs can be of little use, or that when a course of allopathy is indicated, the homeopathist's services are not those which are needed. These are good in their way; but all depends on the diagnosis. Canada at large

is convalescing under the National Policy. In this Province, the treatment has not been so directly applied as elsewhere, for the reason that the physical conditions of this portion of the body politic materially differ from those of the sister members. Indeed, some of the remedies applied to them have actually made British Columbians feel sick, and the main object aimed at having been to a great extent attained, it is now sought to modify the prescription. Meantime, as far as lies in their power, resident practitioners have taken the case in hand and propose to treat it locally. British Columbians have been suffering from a species of torpor. They have been industrial hyphochondriacs; did not exactly know what was the matter with them; but having been stirred up by outside applications are endeavoring to get their part of the system in thorough working order.

In a word, they realize that "there is something to them, and are seeking to get capital and labor to work together in unison. It is idle to suppose that an individual who has not had practical industrial experience and who has been accustomed to handle the products of foreign capital which has, in fact, had the mastery of labor, can appreciate what is meant by a mutual understanding between them. Moreover, in so far as concerns the capitalist, if the appointee referred to failed to realize the necessity here existing for a more conciliatory attitude towards the artisan, he could hardly be blamed; but the presentation of such an excuse would in no way mend matters. As a free trader from the experience of his former personal interests, it would not be wonderful should he favor the admission of Puget Sound coal on the same footing as the native product of Wellington or Nanaimo, the lumber of Washington with the same freedom of distribution as that which is produced by local mills, and the accordance to American steamboats of the same rights of trading as those vessels have which belong to local ports.

It would not, too, be surprising if, in considering the labor question, he might regard the Chinaman as as good as a white man and not only recommend the abolition of the poll tax, but suggest his employment upon public works and otherwise endorse the unfair competition of the Mongolian slave with local free labor, the pecuniary results being deported to his native land thereby impoverishing the country in the same way as—but to the smallest imaginable extent—the land is deprived of the small amount of the natural elements that are to be found in the Chinaman's bones. An official, too, who does not appreciate the entire situation might see no harm in the ignorance of the law which prohibits

Oriental fatalists from working in the collieries where their presence is regarded by the mining class as a serious source of danger.

Home labor and home capital, too, have every reason to be anxious as to the instincts and the predilections—not to say the experiences—of the Government's nominee to the important position referred to, and should the administration make a blunder, it will be a serious one for the province, not to say for themselves individually and as a cabinet when the day of reckoning arrives.

Dumas' thrilling and dramatic story of Monte Cristo was well told in five acts in a play of the same name by Mr. I. E. Philo and a company of amateurs at The Victoria, last Thursday night. The play lacks nothing of the fascination of the book, and the company who presented it are to be congratulated for having produced stage pictures of wonderful strength and reality. This occasion being Mr. Philo's farewell to the amateur stage, naturally much interest centered in the young man's work. It would be rash to attempt a prediction as to what place Mr. Philo will fill in the drama of the future. In many respects, he displays qualities requisite for the romantic drama. He possesses the advantage of an excellent voice, a mobile countenance and graceful movements. Physically, he is well equipped for the stage. At times, he gives evidence of keen dramatic instinct, especially in the scene at the inn, where Monte Cristo returns disguised as a priest. That he has genius, no one will deny. As against this, Mr. Philo lacks many of the attributes of a first-class actor—he speaks too fast and does not pronounce his words distinct enough. These drawbacks, of course, he will overcome in time, and I will not be surprised to learn in a few years hence that he has become a great actor.

It may gratify many Victoria women to learn of the discovery by a young English physician of a process for the production of an artificial silk which can not be detected from the genuine article by any save the most trained experts. The cost of production, it is claimed, will put silk on the market for about one-third of the present price and it could be produced in any locality without the aid of worms or mulberry trees. But this doctor is a flighty, empirical genius who gets one good idea only to drop it for another, and seldom completes anything he undertakes. His discovery was not, as is usually the case, the result of an accident, but the product of hard logical thought and a good deal of experiment. He figured that if a worm could make silk, a man with all his genius and