

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"It's strange," said Gaskill, "how the opinion of men will change. Twelve months ago, if you'd asked a Canadian protectionist to tell you who would have told you that it was the foreign manufacturer, who was forced to reduce his price in order to overcome our tariff; now, however, since the McKinley Bill has become law, we hear such leading protectionists as Sir Charles Tupper declaring most emphatically that the high duties created by that bill will have to be paid by the American consumer, and not by the Canadian exporter. Now, I have not only heard Sir Charles, but all other leading protectionists, declare in reference to our own precious tariff that it would not fall on the Canadian consumer; of course that was years ago, when the protective policy was in danger; but this fact remains: That the protectionists at that time either deliberately stated that which they knew to be untrue, or else that they are doing so now. Whichever way it be, and one or the other it must be, they have proved themselves liars."

"They may have been forced to lie," said Sinnett, "in order to get the people to adopt a policy which I still believe to be beneficial to a young country like ours, and under such circumstances the end justifies the means. Protection creates new industries and strengthens those that are weak and struggling, and in this way employs our own people and makes them independent of other nations."

"But who benefits by it?" said Brown, "unless the benefits of these new industries are shared by those who pay for them in proportion to what they contribute, it will simply be robbing some people to assist others in business. Now, let us get at facts. To create a new industry and employ our own people, the Canadian Government placed a prohibitory tariff upon sugar. Take it all in all, that industry does not employ more than 5,000 people in the whole Dominion, the average earning of which will not exceed \$7 per week the year round, or a total of one million eight hundred and twenty thousand dollars. If we place the population of Canada at 5,000,000 souls, and allow them one pound of sugar per week each, they would consume 260,000,000 pounds per year. The price of imported granulated sugar, free of duty in Canada, is at least two cents per pound less than what we pay for the same article under our protective system, or a difference of \$5,200,000 on the total output; after deducting the amount of wages paid during the year we have \$3,380,000 left. Who gets this? The whole people of Canada have taxed themselves forty cents on every dollar's worth of sugar they use in order that every man connected with the industry be benefitted, yet what is the result? Of the five and one-quarter millions thus raised, capital takes three and one-half and labor receives the other million and a half, and this is why some men connected with that industry can build palaces and which compels others to vegetate in hovels."

"If our people were wise," said Sharkey, "they would pension the men employed in sugar refineries at present and admit sugar free of duty, thereby saving over three million dollars annually."

"If they admitted sugar free of duty there would be no need to pension these men at all," said Garlic, "because canning and preserving of Canadian fruits would employ them all at better wages. The reason that no preserves are manufactured in Canada is because sugar is too dear."

"The way the protective tariff works," said Gaskill, "is best illustrated on our wharves. A ship comes

up the river. It has on board, say, 1,000 immigrants. What are they coming here for? To add so much to the laboring class generally, and by the inexorable law of supply and demand to keep down the wages of Canadian workmen, and take work out of their hands. It is a case of European labor coming here to compete with Canadian labor, and operate to decrease wages inevitably by increasing the number of workers. Now, down in the hold of the ship there are, let us say, 1,000 boxes of manufactured goods. What are they coming for? To compete with similar goods in Canada, and keep down the cost to the consumer here, by competition in trade. To whom do those goods belong? To European capital. It is, therefore, a case of European capital coming to compete with Canadian capital for the benefit of the Canadian consumer. Now, how does our Government act in this situation? Is it Canadian labor or capital that it 'protects' by tariff taxation? Let us see. Miss Canada goes down to the gang-way by which the 1,000 laborers embark upon Canadian soil. She gives to them a cordial welcome. 'Come on, boys,' she says, 'come and compete with my workmen, and take their work from them, and force their wages down by your competition. The more the merrier. The more the better.' So we have absolute free trade in labor. No tariff tax to protect us against pauper labor of Europe. At another gang-way the 1,000 boxes of goods are landed. But here Miss Canada takes her stand with a club over her shoulder marked 'Thirty-five per cent. tariff tax.' And for every box of goods she demands and gets a tax of thirty-five per cent. For 'these boxes of goods, the necessities of life,' she says, 'are coming here to compete with my Canadian capitalists. I can't allow that. My capitalists must be protected.' So we have free trade in labor, and a high tax to protect capital. Now it isn't cheap goods we need be afraid of. It is cheap labor." We cannot have a surfeit of cheap goods, but we do have too much cheap labor.

"There is, however, another side to this question," said Garlic, "which none of you have touched on so far. These 'infant' industries which have been hatched by a high tariff generally spring into life in our larger cities, which on this account become crowded. The inevitable result of this crowding is not only a reduction of wages, but a raise of rents. The natural sequence of this is a rise in the value of land and the inability of labor to procure it. Here then you have the whole cause of the helplessness of labor in our large manufacturing centres. Free your land. Give your surplus labor a chance to apply itself to nature direct, and it matters not whether one or ten thousand immigrants come to your shores, for we have land enough to feed and keep in comfort every man, woman and child throughout Europe. You may abolish your tariff, you may positively prohibit immigration if you choose, you may pass and enforce stringent factory laws and liability acts, you may establish labor bureaus and assume control of transportation of every kind and do your own banking as a people, but unless you free the land, you and your children, in spite of all these reforms, will be slaves of him who owns the soil.

BILL BLADES.

A great spectacular play, which to an audience moves in all its complexity as smoothly as a simple pair of wheels over a concrete pavement, represents an immense amount of engineering skill, and what is going on behind the beautiful paintings and costumes and tinsel and fittings and the dramatic action of the play, which the audience sees, bears no apparent relation to the mass of properties, scene pieces, lights, coryphees and actors and scene-shifters and superns and the hundreds of diversified element which move about on the very verge of all the glittering order and symmetry before the footlights.

NO CHILD LABOR.

The S. P. W. & C. Refuse to be Made a Party to White Slavery.

At the meeting of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children on Tuesday morning there was a very interesting discussion upon the question of child labor in factories.

Mr. S. Carsley was in the chair. The Hon. J. K. Ward (who is a member of the Society) some time ago approached the Local Government on behalf of the cotton manufactories with a view to having the age lowered at which boys and girls could be employed in these establishments. Fourteen for boys and girls is the age that rules. The Factory Act states that no child under twelve shall be employed.

The Society invited Mr. Ward to attend and explain his views on the subject.

The latter took the following ground:—There was no compulsory education in this country, and consequently many boys and girls who ran about the streets were in great danger of falling into bad ways. They wanted the power to permit boys of twelve and girls of thirteen to work in the cotton mills, holding that not only would they thus be some help to their parents, but would be saved from evil. If there was compulsory education that would dispose of the matter, but in the absence of it he thought every man ought to see that, in the interest of the children themselves and from a social point of view, it was better that they should be working than running about the streets. The work was light. There was no physical strain. It was called "doffing," and simply consisted in picking up "ends" and "splicing" them. Another thing: in the production of cotton the competition was very keen. He need not go into details of that matter. But he supposed that not one of the mills would sell for half what it cost. A weaver could only earn now from \$4 to \$5 a week; a woman about \$3. The French-Canadians had generally large families. How did they expect that upon such a salary they could keep their children? Their children, by getting early to work, would be of some benefit to their parents. And let them remember that girls in this country matured much earlier than they did in the old country, and not infrequently got married at fifteen, so that the period in which they were of use to their parents was very short.

Mr. Grafton said that all Mr. Ward had said might constitute a good argument in favor of compulsory education, but certainly not for going back to that child labor which the laws of England had abolished. It was against boy nature to settle to steady work till after he was fourteen. Odd jobs he might do, but regular work he could not do till after that age. A boy could not be apprenticed till he was fourteen in England.

"And then," said Mr. Ward, "you make him for seven years learn to weigh out sugar or coffee. The conditions in the two countries were different. This is not a question of indenture."

"It is a question," said Mr. Alexander, smiling, "as I understand you, Mr. Ward, not only of economy but of philanthropy."

"Well, I think it is in the interests of the children themselves," replied Mr. Ward.

"And that's just where I take issue with you," said the chairman. "I know something about the question. This was agitated in Manchester, England, and the same arguments were used—cheap labor in order to produce cheap cotton. But the people said: 'We won't enslave the children in order that you may produce cheap cotton.' And we should take the same ground. We are organized to protect women and children. We are bound together particularly to protect the latter. Of all employment for children, factory employment is the worst. The noise hurts them. The dust they inhale hurts them and degenerates them. A boy between twelve and fourteen may do odd jobs where there is some freedom, but to be confined in a factory, and be driven by a boss and have regular duties which he must perform at that tender age, is the worst thing he could be put to. As to indentures, Mr. Ward is wrong in stating that there are no indentures in this country. I have several people indentured in my business, and indentures are becoming quite common. I don't agree with Mr. Ward either that young people come to maturity here sooner than they do in England. They are smarter, but the cash-boys that I get from England are worth more money for their years than native-born boys."

"All I know is they get married sooner here," said Mr. Ward, "and as for indentures I never saw one."

At this stage Mr. Ward left, and the Chairman said the Society must not be influenced by plausible arguments to agree to the enslaving of children in order that cheap cotton might be produced. "We must take our stand against it," concluded the chairman.

The meeting at once, by formal resolution, protested against lowering the age for child labor as tending to cruelty, and the Chairman followed this by moving a resolution in favor of compulsory education, in view of the number of idle boys who were allowed to run about the streets.

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NEXT WEEK'S ADVERTISEMENT.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

Henri Wertheimer, who died last week, was a queer little Frenchman, of German descent, who began life as an actor and soon drifted into business management. At one time, he was well known in theatrical and Bohemian circles. He acted as agent for managers, stars and singers, translated plays and constructed advertisements. In the advertisement department he was unrivalled in invention and economy. His clever advertisements of Pinafore, at the Standard, did much to ensure its success. Of late years, on account of domestic troubles, he had fallen out of public life.

Ravenswood bids fair to be the most successful play ever produced by Irving at the London Lyceum. A cablegram, which we doubt, states that it has been secured by Willard for this country. Next to the acting of Irving and Miss Terry, which was immensely effective, especially in the love scene in the third act, the critics praise the supremely beautiful stage-pictures by Hawes Craven—the Chapel Boudoir, the Wolf's Craig; the Mermaid's Well, and the Kelpie's Flow. Irving does not die on the stage, like the Edgar of the opera. He has sunk in the quicksands when the curtain rises on the last scene, and the faithful Caleb stretches out his hands in mute despair. Dr. A. C. Mackenzie has composed the overture, preludes and incidental music. Here is the Bridal Song, in Act fourth:

Welcome, bride of Lammermoor!  
While the world in sleep reposes,  
And the kiss of evening closes,  
One by one the graceful roses,  
Show thyself, to vie with them!  
Every little flower is wearing  
Wedding favors and are preparing  
Diamond dew drops fit for wearing  
In a marriage bed.  
Jewels meet for maiden pure;  
Welcome, bride of Lammermoor!

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