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J. W. BENGOUGH.
PHILLIPS THOMPSON.



Comments ON THE Cartoons.

WORDS WORTHY OF THEIR STUDY.—Mr. Jas. G. Blaine has of late written two or three remarkable open-letters to Senator Frye—remarkable, that is to say, as coming from the "plumed knight" of Protectionism. The

same words from the pen of any Free Trader would have passed without notice, whereas, coming from the great Maine statesman, they are being eagerly discussed from one end of the Union to the other, and amount, in fact, to a new issue in the politics of the day. Mr. Blaine's high official position has something to do with this, of course; but aside from that the explanation must be that words of sound common sense are so seldom uttered in the name of Protection. For, after all, these much-debated letters are but an echo of the idea which has been elaborated in a hundred speeches of Mr. Erastus Wiman. It is that in every case Reciprocity of trade is to be preferred to a Protective tariff—that, in Mr. Blaine's own words—Reciprocity is "the highest form of Protection." The people of the United States consume an enormous quantity of Cuban sugar, and the McKinley Bill

proposes to place unrefined sugar on the free list. Mr. Blaine thinks it would be too bad to let slip this opportunity of obtaining from Spain, as the condition of the free entry of Cuban sugar, the reciprocal freedom of the Cuban market for American products to the same amount. Carried to its logical conclusion all round this reasoning sweeps away the entire tariff, and yet Mr. Blaine, the Protectionist leader, calls it the "highest form of Protection." And so it is. Man is a trading animal, and God meant him to trade as freely as he breathes, otherwise He would not have arranged the world as we find it, with diversified climates, special national aptitudes, and varied products; nor would He have taught us the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man. Free Trade is the highest form of Protection, because it protects the citizen in his inalienable right to buy and sell where he pleases. High Tariffs "protect" him against escaping, while monopolists pick his pockets. The little economic dunces who are managing fiscal affairs in Canada, have heretofore turned a deaf ear to sound doctrine from their opponents, but perhaps they will give heed to these sensible utterances of the great American Conservative.

THE BEHRING SEA QUESTION.—This same Mr. Blaine has also of late been writing some remarkable diplomatic letters to the British Premier anent the Behring Sea seal question. We cannot congratulate him so unreservedly on the figure he cuts in this correspondence, though it is not wanting in effectiveness for Presidential nomination purposes. To make a short story of the columns of matter which loaded down our morning papers one day last week, Mr. Blaine claims that the American ownership of Alaska involves also, so far as seal fishing is concerned, the supreme control of Behring Sea, not merely within the three-mile limit, but from the American to the Russian shore, and north and south to the full extent of the Alaskan shore line. Within this watery domain, which Mr. Blaine classically refers to as a *mare clausum*, the taking of seals by foreigners is prohibited, because such pelagic fishing would soon extinguish the species altogether. To enforce this view of it, American gun boats were ordered to seize and confiscate all "poaching" outfits found within the proscribed limits. Just here is where John Bull objected, and his objection was stated so emphatically that the orders to the cruisers were, for the time being, suspended. John says he doesn't think there is any serious danger of the seals being utterly destroyed, if a reasonable close season is observed; but whether or no he can't think of accepting the Blaine doctrine as to the extent of American authority beyond the three-mile limit. This, says he, is the very doctrine Uncle Sam steadfastly repudiated when it was put forward on behalf of Russia. As the art of backing down gracefully is a part of the education of high diplomats, there is not much danger that Mr. Blaine will persist in this untenable position too long.



THE demand of certain newspaper representatives to be admitted to the current meetings of the Street Railway Committee is unreasonable, and we are pleased to see that a majority of the members of that Committee voted to keep the sessions secret. The business in hand at the present time is of a kind that the press could in no way assist—that of making up a brief for the city's lawyers for use before the arbitrators. To publish information pertaining to this would manifestly be to play into the hands of the "enemy," whereas, if nothing is to be reported, where is the necessity for the reporters being present? When the trial comes on it will be time enough for the gen-