

WE ARE CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE OF THIS MATTER.

From the New York Herald. The following interesting statement was made by Secretary Fairchild to the young Democrats of Brooklyn:

When we seek to get information from these men upon taxation questions, they answer as always liable to be prompted by the spirit which dictates the replies to a circular letter that Mr. Fairchild sent to the manufacturers in 1885. One answered: "If the Secretary of the Treasury wishes to know how much it costs to make nails let him build a nail factory," and another, whose profits are understood to be prodigious replied: "The questions are objectionable; I decline to answer them; it is not for my interest to do so."

This is rather a serious charge to make against any American citizen. Let us look at it for a moment.

The Secretary of the Treasury, acting in the line of his duties, wants to get at the probable results of a suggested change in the tariff to the manufacturers of the country; to find out whether a reduction will enable the people to get the articles produced at a cheaper rate; whether business will be disturbed in any way by putting certain articles on the free list. He sends a letter of inquiry to the big firms situated here, there and everywhere, under the conviction that it is their right as indeed it is, to have the first word in favor or in protest. They are thoroughly acquainted with the situation, because they are an important part of it. They know better than any other men what effect a reduction will have on the cost of their raw material, on the wages of the workmen, on the price of the manufactured article and on their profits therefrom.

But they get under cover behind the assertion that it is none of the Secretary's business, and is not for their personal interest to assist Congress to lower the taxes of the people. They substitute insolence for information and block the wheels of the government in order to further their private gains. All right. Then the work must be done without their assistance or advice. They ask simply to be let alone, and are satisfied with the way in which protection works that they would like to have the present condition of affairs continued. If the government, which has the welfare of the whole people in charge, the farmer and mechanic, the small as well as the large dealer and trader, wants to know whether nails can be cheapened without injury to any one, why, let it go into the nail business and find out for itself. It is not for the personal interest of the manufacturer to discuss the subject. In a word, he will not help Congress to help the people.

Well, if you dig down to the root of the matter you find the reason why. This excessively high tariff has not only heaped up a big surplus by putting a force pump into the channels of commerce and sucking the money out of the people's business—a surplus which breeds congressional jibbery and demoralizes our politics—but it has done something infinitely worse and more dangerous. It has created—no other word can be fairly used—it has actually created a class of monopolists who want to control all the product of a given kind—tin, lead, timber, copper, or what not; drive everybody who dares to compete with them to the wall, cuff, kick, pummel them until they get out of their way, and then, masters of the field, charge what they please and pocket the profits.

Where are the people? Well, they are in the dark hole of Calcutta, or if they don't like that they can move into the bottomless pit. The people have no rights; they have all been absorbed, stolen, fleeced, plundered. A few thousand men who can command the ready cash have all there is worth having, and the laboring class may take what is left. What opportunity is there, then, for a poor man to rise? There is none. His only opportunity is to stay where he is, grub along as best he can, and when he is tired out crawl into Potter's Field and make room for some one else.

But that is opposed to the genius and spirit of Republican institutions? Of course it is. You can see that with half an eye. What are you going to do about it?

It is a dangerous tendency toward an aristocratic form of society in which the rich man grows richer and the poor man poorer every day in the year? Certainly; and if you like that sort of thing you will have plenty of it unless some such measure as the Mills bill is put into operation at once.

The common people have a strong enemy to fight. He must be met, overcome, thrust and barred out of sight, or good-bye to the simplicity and popular encouragement inspired by our institutions. Combinations, monopolies, syndicates and all financial devices of that kind must be put an end to or they will put an end to us.

The people are on top, but they have got to settle this matter if they propose to stay on top.

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I notice that this book is receiving great commendation. It is written upon fundamental truths, and I wish that the facts and arguments may be in the hands and minds of every citizen called upon this year to vote upon the great economical questions of surplus and tariff.

We take pleasure in giving this work our hearty indorsement, and recommend that local committees and clubs assist in extending its circulation among the voters of 1888. STATE DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF ILLINOIS.

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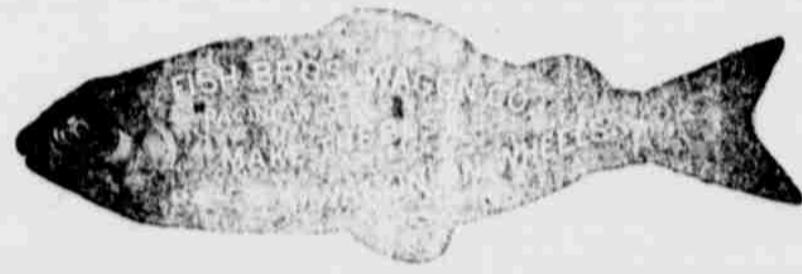
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