



Nervous

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THE ELOQUENT GRIFFIN.

He Replies to Bartlett, of New York City.

In Congressional Record for January 16th we find this eloquent reply from Hon. Michael Griffin, of Wisconsin, (rep.) to Bartlett, (dem.) of New York:

This, Mr. Chairman, is proven by the very few convictions, the very few dishonest acts, the very few cases in which perjury has been charged in the dispensing of pensions to the 970,000 pensioners on the part of this government. So that I say patriotism, valor, honesty, and integrity have traveled hand in hand together. They cannot be separated. He who was so self-sacrificing as to say he owed the country his life, if need be, is the last man today who ought to be charged with being ready to "loot its treasury" and "ruin its credit."

Now, what is the justification for the amendment introduced here on this bill, providing that widows may, in case that they have not a fixed income of \$500 per year, receive the pittance which the government is willing to give them in the shape of pensions. We find it, Mr. Chairman, in the fact that when the widow and her little ones may have a few dollars of income, under the strict construction of the law, she is deprived of the bounty of the government.

Little does the gentleman from the Seventh Congressional district of New York appreciate this state of things. He goes to his club; sits before his grate fire-toasting his extremities, with his pedal appendages incased in soft silken slippers, smoking his cigarette [Laughter] and sipping his wine with genial friends about him. The winter winds howling outside disturb not his peace or his drinks. The howling blasts that come from the homes of want and poverty penetrate not to his abode. Everything is lovely; and surrounded with luxury and comfort, what conception, what knowledge, what information can he have to move the liberal hearts of our citizens? But go to the other place, and what do you find? A house with but a single room; nothing but a tallow dip, if it be at night, to cast a lurid glare over the few objects in it; you find huddled about the dying embers of a once perhaps comfortable fire, the widow, with emaciated countenance and frame poorly clad, her little ones shivering by her side over the few fragments that remain still unconsumed, their dimpled fingers blue with cold, no food, no fuel, no nothing but want and misery, not even the common comforts, say nothing about luxury—nothing in view but want and suffering.

The few dollars income which the widow may have for herself and her little ones are insufficient, with her efforts, to support and take care of them; and yet there are the two extremes. There is a case, not an isolated one, for they are numerous in this country of ours, rich and plentiful in every other respect. There is a case, Mr. Chairman, which appeals to the favorable action of this House on this amendment. If she could add to the little pittance she has the bounty which the Government—in case this bar shall be removed—would afford her, she may be lifted up from the condition of penury, poverty, and want, and placed where she ought to be placed; and any man who gets up here or elsewhere and announces to the world that he is "the

friend of the Union soldier," and yet will not be moved to act with justice, by such an example as that, for him the Union soldier has no need, for he does not want any such friends. [Applause.]

Now, Mr. Chairman, who are the men and what are the elements that oppose liberal pension laws? Why they are a class who live wholly within themselves. They are a class whose hearts do not beat in sympathy with their fellow-men, unless they be of that class whom they number among their "chums." They are those who were opposed to the Union during the struggle for its preservation. They are those who opposed a protective tariff that would give this country prosperity, because that enabled the country to pay the pensions, and would overcome many of the objections made by the gentleman who urges the depleted state of the Treasury as a reason why we should not pass this amendment. They are those who are rich and know not want in any case; those who are members of fashionable clubs; those who ape foreign airs; who send their orders for their wearing apparel abroad; those who wear spike-toed shoes [laughter]; those who want the earth and everything in it without paying anything for it. [Laughter.]

They are those, Mr. Chairman, who, if they see a Union soldier with an empty sleeve, would elevate their olfactory organs as they passed by; those whose hearts are no larger than wooden nutmegs; in short, those who are entirely wanting in the elements of patriotism and valor and the recognition of valorous deeds, those totally lost to the impulses of a humane spirit, and whose ultimate destination will, I trust, be that bottomless pit described by the distinguished gentleman from the distinguished Seventh district of New York [Mr. Bartlett] where they can revel in the luxury afforded by the money which the gentleman is so fearful will be unnecessarily thrown therein.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the gentleman has said that we could not monopolize patriotism. Where did he ever hear the sentiments uttered by a man worthy to speak for those on this side of the house who claimed we had a monopoly of all the patriotism in this country? I deny that that claim has ever been made, either by those on this side of the house or those who thought politically as they do, away back from 1861 to 1865. In those days Mr. Chairman, all parties furnished men for the defense of the Union, and we accord to them, we accord to those who came from the party of the distinguished gentleman from New York, the same credit as we claim for ourselves.

But I will say to the gentleman that we have a monopoly of one thing; that a Democratic administration in 1860 and 1861 confessed the inability of this government, in the exercise of its constitutional powers, to suppress the rebellion, to compel a state to remain in the Union if it sought, without just cause, to absolve its allegiance to this government. When the Republican administration came into power, it stamped that doctrine out of existence, and because of that, Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. Bartlett], with every gentleman who holds a seat in this chamber today, is here under the guise and protection of the law, in a free country, and in a united American Union. [Applause.]

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