

CURRENT COMMENT.

Some time ago one of the democratic members of the legislature was questioned concerning the merits and chances of the Austrian ballot bill then before the house committee. He thought that the bill was a good one and would prevent bribery and political bossism, but he said that if the supreme court should hold the submission bill constitutional he did not want any ballot reform. He did not want to see any thing done that would make it harder for the high license rule to handle the large floating vote. Last week the senate killed the bill. It looks as though Nebraska had been denied the honor of leading a great reform in order that the whiskey men may more easily bribe citizens to vote against prohibition.

Many of our public men discuss the different social questions as if they were separate and distinct. They regard the immigration question as having nothing in common with the convict labor, improved machinery, or tariff problems. Yet it is safe to say that the opposition to immigration, to convict labor, to improved machinery and to free trade finds its strength in the idea there is not employment for everyone, that work is a precious thing that must be guarded and saved. The fear that the Chinese would do so much work that none would be left to the white man, aroused the opposition of the laboringmen of California to Asiatic immigration. All other objections were after thoughts. That the same fear torments the eastern workmen is shown by their opposition to European immigration.

Improved machinery means a higher civilization, and yet during the last winter representatives of the knights of labor were before congress trying to have the government printing done on oldfashioned, cumbersome presses in order that there might be more work for the printers.

Protection finds its strength in the idea that, with freedom of trade, someone would bring so many goods to this country that Americans would be thrown out of employment. The same fear may be seen in the demand for large governmental expenditures for public buildings, coast defences, and ships of war. Now work is not an end but a means, a means by which human wants may be satisfied, and to say that there is no work is to say that no human being is in need of anything. Why is it, then that men are idle and freezing while the earth is full of coal? Why do we have tramps, starving women, and untilled acres? Are they the result of natural law? Did He, who sent this great ship whirling through space forget or neglect to provide for its passengers? It will not do to say that the opportunities for employment are limited by the amount of available capital, because labor applied to the natural opportunity will produce capital. To say that men can not work without capital is to say that men cannot work without first saving up some of the product of labor. There might be some difficulty in building a wagon if one should try to wait until he could use it to haul his material. To say that this distress is caused by pressure of population, is as foolish as it is wicked. Those who teach this doctrine point to Ireland as an example of the awful effects of over population and yet in Ireland the population has been reduced by the million without a corresponding increase in prosperity. The United States has not one tenth the people it is able of supporting, we have hardly fenced in our broad acres, much less used them, and yet we hear the same sad story of unemployed men, crime breeding poverty, tenement houses, insane asylums, and prisons. Why is there not employment for every man? To refuse to answer this question is dangerous. To lay the blame upon natural laws is to slander God. What answer shall we give?

OPEN LETTERS.

Rah! rah! rah! Penn-syl-van-i-a!

Please excuse this somewhat lucid exordium; it is merely an ebullition of patriotic feeling, and is intended to put me in a proper frame of mind for the writing of this epistle.

This venerable and flourishing university is not surfeited with college spirit, but the students are not to blame for that. Although the U. of P. has been in existence ever since Ben Franklin made himself numerous in this village, there has never been a dormitory system in force. Consequently the students can't flock together to any great extent. Most of them live with their mammas in the town, which has of course a tendency to restrain their ardor, as they can't go out nights and irradiate the heavens with the most vivid shade of crimson. A few of us come from a distance and are not burdened with home influences, but we can't be expected to furnish red fire for the whole college, so we make virtue of necessity and get up a reputation for studious habits.

These remarks apply principally to the students of the college department proper. The medical students come here from all over the world, and nearly all of them live in Boarding-house terrace, a venerable pile near the university buildings. I don't know why it is called a terrace, but I suppose it is to throw a sort of poetic glamor over the place. It certainly needs it. Boarding houses here are not what they should be, but as this is a painful subject, I won't discuss it. I only alluded to our modest dwellings because they are an important feature in our college life, and constantly force themselves upon our attention in more ways than one.

This is not a co ed. university, which is rather unsatisfactory to one whose early education has been obtained in such places, but one gets used to the new order of things. The change is beneficial, as far as studying is concerned. I would be understood as speaking generally; the remark is not true in all cases.

The cane rushes here are very enjoyable affairs, and are conducted in a truly scientific manner. Every provision is made for the comfort of spectators and participants. The choice seats are the dissecting room windows which overlook the athletic grounds where the rushes are held. They are also a desirable place from which to view the intercollegiate ball games when an admission fee is charged.

The university hospital is conveniently near the grounds, and an ambulance is always in readiness to convey the remains to the hospital when anyone gets hurt in the scrimmage. The arrangements are really admirable, and the gentlemanly managers deserve great credit in addition to the fees they extort from the students. The cane rushes, etc., are always largely attended by the young ladies in Philadelphia, and their presence infuses a double portion of spirit into the students, by which the number of accidents is correspondingly increased.

I like to dwell on this feature of our college life, because it is so inspiring. It is full of unalloyed pleasure. We who don't exhibit our prowess in the games, sit with the ladies, engaged in pleasant converse, and with our fiendish college yell incite the combatants to their destruction. That is the consolation we have for not being an athlete. After the carnage is over we walk off with the ladies to the Philadelphia "Brown's," while the athletes are not even able to walk off with themselves, but are tenderly conveyed to the hospital covered with glory and gore. The system couldn't be better; they get the glory and we get the girls.

The evening amusements of the medical students with whom I associate are very simple. They consist chiefly of