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MALCONTENTS.

ASTORY FOR AMERICANS.

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CHAPTER VI.
SCRAMBLE RULE.

Idle furnaces, dismantled factories, silent mines, unemployed workmen and general distress are the sure harbingers of Democratic victory.—HON. WILLIAM McKIMLEY.

At last the exciting electoral canvass was over. Its result was seen in the victory of the Poik and Dallas party and James K. Poik was inaugurated with due ceremony, March 4th, 1892.

Manufacturers sighed and submitted, while labor was jubilant. The seeds of disension, so unscrupulously sown, had resulted in a bountiful harvest of workmen's votes and blazing bonfires and shouts of triumph testified to their joy at the result of Democratic victory.

A year passed by and for a while all went on as usual in and without the Fletcher Works, but, even before that period had expired, a suspicion was awakening in the minds of the people that a great fraud had been hidden behind that cry of "Poik, Dallas and the Tariff of '92."

Manufacturers throughout the country began to fear another low tariff era and their fears were not without foundation, for in 1848 the party in power did indeed repeal the famous tariff of '42, which they had so solemnly promised to defend, and that repeal was only made possible by the casting vote of the traitor protectionist, George M. Dallas!

Although the bill, now introduced for a very low tariff, was bravely fought by the Wages in Congress and by Protectionists throughout the country, it was established in spite of their protests and the tariff of '92, the lowest tariff the United States has ever known, and which was practically free trade, became a law.

That immediate ruin did not result was due to extraneous causes. A famine in Ireland, short crops in Europe, the Mexican war, the Crimean war and the discovery of gold in California all contributed to postpone the evil they had so soon as these unusual resources were cut off, the old disastrous consequences ensued.

The British free trade doctrine, put into practice by the tariff of '42, destroyed our chief industries, paralyzed all business and again were thousands of men and women thrown into enforced idleness.

Merchants and manufacturers grew pale with apprehension and labor in turn grew restive. The country was flooded with foreign goods, many factories closed and others kept on working at lowered prices. Manufacturers, workmen, merchants and farmers all shared in the general ruin and distress.

"Wages must come down," at last cried Capital throughout the country.

"Wages shall not come down!" shrieked suffering labor.

At the month passed by times grew worse instead of better; manufactory owners became bankrupt and street corners in the numerous towns and cities were filled with idle, excited men.

Thorp Fletcher, through all the trouble of these years, had kept his workmen employed and well paid, but at length he saw that the heavy losses he was daily incurring would soon result in immediate bankruptcy and ruin, and he too was obliged to join the general cry and to declare that wages must be reduced. The result was one of the most disastrous riots in the State.

One evening, during this time, three men sat crouching over a miserable fire kindled on the holy hearth. They were Gaffer Gwynne, Joe Darlie and Gentleman Kelly, and they spoke in whisper, confidential tones, although Mrs. Kelly had been sent to the corner store and the children were in their beds.

Little Nora, grown into a tall, thin, delicate girl, had been very ill since Christmas and now lay on a couch in the corner, tossing uneasily with pain and fever.

"Yes," muttered Kelly, with an oath; "an' the foin' dinn's goin' on up to the house just the same, wid the min a dyn' like sheey in the towal. There's to be a grand waddin' in a few days and them hypocrites is to sail for forrin' parts. Mrs. Peyton, she's to be, he gave a mockin' emphasis to the name, 'an' a proolier, more 'histocratic hussey 'twould be hard to find."

"She's a meddlin' here week in and week out an' faith she's not my own family up again me and this she and Fletcher pertains to re's no worruk an' lets honest min die for the want of it!"

Truly our blessings brighten as they take their flight. Work had been waiting for many years at Kelly's very door yet he had never shown a desire to embrace it until it was beyond his reach.

Then there were mere whippers between the men and Kelly ended with:

"But we'll take our revenge out of 'em, bys. Damn that Fletcher an' his Miss Ethel! Damn her, sez I!"

As he paused, a shrill, trembling voice cried at his elbow:

"How dare you damn my Miss Ethel, you bad, wicked man! How dare ye? I hate yer, thet's what I do, an' I wish yer was dead! I hate yer!"

Nora stood there, her thin, white face working with rage. She shook her pany flat in her astonished father's face, and then, staggering from beneath the blow he dealt her and followed by his dreadful outcries, fled out into the welcome shadows of the night.

Half an hour later Miss Fletcher, sitting idly dreaming by the fire, looked up to see a white face, lighted by supernaturally brilliant eyes, pressed close against the window pane. This time had been so wild and the threats she had heard so dreadful, that she arose with a shriek of terror, then ashamed of her momentary weakness, crossed the room and threw back the window.

Nora Kelly, with a ragged shawl covering her torn head and a scanty, torn dress hanging about her thin, clad feet, stood shivering and sobbing in the keen, frosty air.



CHARLIE DANA—"Serves you all right now for eating these nasty green apples. Here I had cut a nice ripe watermelon for you, too."—Judge.

They's to fire it to-night, true as there's a God they is, fivther, Gwynne an' Darlie?"

There was such terrible earnestness in Nora's voice that Ethel Fletcher never paused to loath.

The next instant she was in the hall calling to Fletcher and Peyton, and by the sound of clanging doors and hurrying footsteps down the path, the lateening crowd knew that her words had been heeded.

When Miss Fletcher returned she found Nora unconscious on the floor, a tiny stream of blood staining the white fur of the hearth rug on which she had fallen.

As Ethel Fletcher knelt and raised the sad, unhealed face to her bosom, Nora's dark eyes opened with a look of ineffable happiness.

"Would you mind a kissin' me, Miss Ethel?" Then, as the kiss touched her lips, "I couldn't get him damn yer, no, not if he is my fivther!"

A pause, in which she labored for breath, and then, looking once up at the pitying eyes above her and clutching her loved teacher's hand, she asked:

"Ye're quite sure, Miss Ethel, about Jesus, an' his a lovin' me, an' wantin' me in Heaven?"

And Ethel Fletcher, her hot tears falling upon the stiffening form in her arms, did not speak, for she knew by the smile on the dead child's lips, that the answer had reached her.

As Fletcher and Peyton drew near the works from within, and tiny streams of smoke were curling through the ironed casings.

Fletcher drew his breath sharply, and tightened his grasp on Peyton's arm.

"We're too late, the whole place is on fire from within! Run, give the alarm, Peyton, I must see if some of the machinery can be saved."

Regardless of personal danger he hurried to the side of the building with the idea of forcing an entrance, and the door yielded to his powerful blows, letting out a blinding cloud of smoke as it fell. As he stepped backward, half stifled, he ran against a man who was trying to slip past him in the darkness. In an instant he had turned, and grasping the man by the neck of his shirt, recognized by the now bright light from the burning building, the smooth, villainous countenance of Gentleman Kelly.

"This is your work is it, you cowardly bound!" cried Fletcher.

Then a sense of this man's base ingratitude, and a realization of what these ruined buildings meant for him, caused him to tighten his grasp on Kelly's throat, and to shake the cowardly wretch until he whimpered for mercy.

A shot, sharp and cruel, rang out upon the air; in the blaze Gaffer Gwynne stood revealed for one instant, a smoking pistol in his right, trembling hand, and, as Fletcher's head relaxed his hold on Kelly's throat, and fell lifeless in the doorway of his burning factory, Gwynne's unshaven, terror-stricken face disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER VII.
DALLAS NIGHTCAPS.

The cry of hard times reaches us from every part of the country. The making of roads is stopped, factories are closed and houses and shops are no longer built. Factory hands, road-makers, carpenters, bricklayers and laborers are idle and capitalists are rapidly embracing every resource in the country.—New York Tribune Jan. 25, 1892.

Weeks passed by after the burning of Fletcher's factory bringing no relief to the starving poor. The buildings that had partially escaped the flames stood with blackened walls, closed doors and tall smoke stacks covered with burrs to protect them in their idleness from the rusting frost and snow.

"Dallas Nightcaps" by the starving, desperate men whose votes had placed Dallas in power a few years before, and they could be seen for miles around, hanging, weather beaten signals of distress, over the silent factories where once happy, busy life had reigned.

One cold winter's day Margaret Gwynne and Joe Darlie again confronted each other in the path, which led to Margaret's home and looked down upon the ruined factories. Margaret's face was pale and wan and Darlie's eyes, desperate and hungry looking, gleamed in his unshaven face with wolfish ferocity. They met in anger and there was a shivering as of fear in Margaret's manner, as she stood before him.

You would see it is your own fault that you are starving and not the fault of the man you would murder."

He gazed gloomily at her, yet stood quietly under an influence that seemed to bring calm and comfort to his desperate mood.

"Look at yonder factories," she continued, with an unconscious oratorical power, raising her young voice and pointing to the silent buildings below, "look at them, Joe, with their closed doors and smoky stacks covered with burrs to keep them from rusting these idle days. Who closed those doors? Why the man you followed a few years ago. Where is he now? Back there? In Congress again? Put there by your votes. Why, the boys all the barrels hanging there 'Dallas nightcaps,' yet, they themselves sent Mr. Dallas to Washington."

"Ye're mighty wise," growled Darlie, with mingled anger and admiration, "I oppose the grand folks at the house told ye this. What else has yer learnt?"

"Miss Ethel taught me many things in those happy days," answers Margaret softly, "and now that she is gone it seems some times as though my life had gone with her. You know when grandfivther was dyin', Joe, here she strapped with a sash and smoothed the folds of her black dress, 'Mr. Fletcher came and talked to him. Oh, with a wonderful lightning of the eyes and a tremble in the rich voice, 'how be talked! If you and I could always listen to such we would never wish harm to one of them again. He was pale from the very shot grandfivther gave him that night you man burned his factory down, and yet he went up to grandfivther's bed and said: 'Margaret tells me that you are sick and suffering, Gwynne, and I thought it might make you feel better if I called and told you that I bear no ill will. God knows, I feel only pity for you misguided men with your mistaken hatreds and starving families.'"

"Grandfivther—he died the next day, you know—just turned his face to the wall and cried like a child. 'God bless you, sir,' he said, 'for coming. It is on my conscience that I raised a hand against you. You've been a good boss and I know it isn't your fault that the people are idle and starving. Would to God we had listened to you from the first!'"

"I kept up as long as I could," said Mr. Fletcher, "without reducing wages, and then I called the men together and told them I must give them less until the panic was over, but would not close the works unless obliged to. You know what happened then. They burned my factory, threatened my life and home, and now I must go elsewhere; but if it is any comfort for you starving men to know it, I go a ruined man. Joe, Mr. Fletcher is a good man."

"Let yer 'good man' leaves yer to starve, it seems," sneered Darlie.

Margaret's pale face grew warm with the crimson blood as she replied:

"I could not take money from him! God knows he thinks I have plenty, for, after Miss Ethel's marriage, just before she sailed, she called me and said: 'Margaret, these are hard times, and worse days are ahead, and I could not feel happy if I thought of you as suffering. I have placed a sum of money in the bank for you, and you can draw it as you need it. My brother will try to sell our home and his property here, and will follow us to England, soon—so use what I leave you carefully, and in a few months I will write and see that more is placed to your account. You will not be forgotten.'"

Margaret paused many times to wipe away the tears as she repeated the words.

"Well, an' where's yer money, then?" demanded Darlie.

"Joe," answered Margaret, with her dark, earnest eyes turned toward the quiet town, "do you think that I could have money in the bank and see poor folks a starving around me? I've drawn out every penny, and thank God I had it to give."

"An' an' an' an' fressin' yourselves to do it!" cried Darlie.

"I am young and strong and it doesn't matter," said the girl, "there are many sick and old ones in the town—that need it more than I."

Darlie looked at her glowing, inspired face with awe, while a new emotion was born in his breast and mastered him.

With something very like a sob he bowed his head.

"An' ye such a slip of a girl, too! God be thanked for such as ye, Meg. I've been a bad man, but God help me, from this hour on I'm a changed one!"

With a smile of newly-born trust Margaret took the hand held out to her, and together they went down into the lamene-stricken town.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

"Who is hungry? Go and see. You that are full fed and know not what it is to be hungry—go and see thousands, men and women, boys and girls, old and young, black and white, of all nations, crowding, jostling each other; almost fighting for a first chance, acting more like hungry wolves than human beings, in a land of plenty, waiting till the food is ready for distribution. If we could stop the import of the foreign articles, the gold would cease to flow out to pay for them, and money would then again become more abundant, and labor again be in demand.—New York Tribune, January 10, 1892.

In spite of the general distress throughout the country, the Democrats were so thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of British Free Trade, that they persisted in maintaining the low tariff, and foreign goods continued flooding the markets, people were unemployed everywhere, and money became scarce in consequence of the enormous importations.

Soup houses were opened in the cities and towns, and thousands of starving people looked to them daily to be fed.

Margaret Gwynne and Darlie upon reaching the town entered one of the soup houses and found Thorpe Fletcher, with two other gentlemen, standing in the midst of the motley crowd.

"I hear that this soup kitchen is one of your charities, Fletcher," said one of them. "A Christian work, the only trouble is we need more of them during these sad times."

"Yes," replied Fletcher, "I sustain this one but it is contrary to my principles. I do not like soup houses. They are a degradation to this free country. Every man in town should be taking soup from off his own table."

"Oh, they are a lay lot," drawled the other young man in a lower voice, "this is another don't you know than arguing it. Ours is the grandest government on the face of the earth for now everything is cheap for these poor devils. Did you ever know a time before you a boots and shoes could be bought for a mere pittance? Why, our working men ought to live like princes!"

"These are disastrous times, sir, and you city politicians know it," retorted Fletcher. "What matters it to me if things are cheap? I have not the money to buy? I am compelled to start my factory abroad in order to live but none the less shall I mourn my ruined country?"

"I consider these plebeians marked 'cheap,' displayed in all our shop windows, as badges of poverty, signals of distress and warnings of famine and financial ruin!"

The strangers turned to leave and Fletcher followed, after speaking pleasantly to some of his best known workmen in the crowd. As he crossed the room Margaret detected many an evil glance directed toward him.

"Damn that diabolical," muttered one man; "he pertends to be our friend, and yet, curse him, he's a takin' the gold we put in his pocket to forrin' parts and leaves us here to starve."

"He's trying to sell his grand place and the plant," said another.

"Divil of a plant we left him," chimed in Kelly's familiar brogue. "Faith, we seed to that the night we were after smashin' his windys an' puttin' a torch to the pile. Shure he's a white-livered coward, for he never so much as lifted a finger against a man of us, an' now he's for runnin' away wid the crowd we arued for him, and hopes to stop our mouths wid a soup house!"

"Be damned if he do it!" shouted the now excited crowd.

TO BE CONTINUED.

An Echo from Free Trade Times.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., July, 1892.

EDITOR AMERICAN ECONOMIST: I should like to let you know of a little occurrence that happened when I was a boy of twelve, which recalls vividly how free wool benefits the farmer.

It was soon after the Walker Tariff began to cast its blighting shadow over the country. I was at that time living in one of the most prosperous sections of the State of New York, and the farmers had got nicely started in the sheep industry, but when they were ready to sell their wool the price was not only very low, but the demand was limited; in fact, it required about as much labor to sell their clip as it had to produce it, the country being flooded with foreign wool.

The result was the farmers became discouraged, killed off their sheep, dried the carcasses down for tallow, and sold the legs of mutton in the village for two cents per pound. Thus ended the sheep industry in that and probably other sections of the State, but long before it was again, started the cunning Englishman had raised the price of wool to a higher figure than it was under the Protective Tariff of the previous four years.

Hoping our "Tariff Reform" farmers will read and ponder awhile over these facts, I remain, very truly yours,

W. W. MITCHELL.

COBDEN CLUB'S SCHEME REVIVED.

Another Attempt to Convert the West to Free Trade.

The Western Democratic Campaign Fund, headed by Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, the millionaire editor of the New York World, will appeal to the sympathies and to the pocket-books of the Cobden Club. Mr. Pulitzer, who lives abroad, and merely visits this country occasionally to see how things get along in his stupendous newspaper building down on Park Row, is doubtless in close touch with the foreign Free Traders. There is the idea of converting the Western farmers to Cobdenism.

The Cobden Club years ago saw that the farmers constituted the bulwark of Protection in this country, and realized that, if the Cobden Club was to triumph, they must be weaned from their allegiance to the teachings of George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Clay, Horace Greeley, and every illustrious American statesman who has earned the love, gratitude and admiration of his countrymen. So they hired one Professor Mongrodon to write up the side of Free Trade, and his books were scattered free by the 100,000 throughout the West. The London Times instead of the New York World was then the leading champion of the Free Trade crusade. The Times said on July 12, 1890:

"We wish the Cobden Club the best success in the arduous encounter which lies before it. We hope Mr. Augustus Mongrodon's excellent volumes, and the other publications of the club will, between them, carry the United States by storm and thrust reason [i. e., Free Trade] into all minds, whether willing or unwilling to admit it."

Substitute "Reform" Club for Cobden Club, and how like an extract from the World of 1892 this extract reads. But the Times added a serious reflection which we earnestly commend to the thoughtful consideration of the Western railway chasers of this campaign. It continued:

"But we dare not venture to be prophetic. We have heard too many prophecies, and have waited long and vainly for their accomplishment. That free trade will come some day in the United States it is perfectly safe to assert; but how and when, and other minutiae of the kind, must be left to the Cobden Club and to its twelve Cabinet Ministers in their unofficial capacity to decide. Their prophecies shall be like lovers' vows—broken, it may be, a thousand times, but uttered sincerely every time, and believed in to the very last."

That is the lover-like hope and confidence of which our Western Democratic Fund campaigners will need a goodly store to carry them through the cruel disappointments and failures lying before them.

"Tariff Oppressed" Wage Earners.

The following dialogue is reproduced in The Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association. It occurred between the District Attorney of Allegheny County and the workingman (under oath) who offered to bail Burgess John McLuckie, arrested for participating in the recent labor disturbances at Homestead: "What is your name?" asked District Attorney Burleigh. "Owen Murphy, sir." "Where do you reside?" "In Homestead." "How much real estate do you own, Mr. Murphy?" "Well, sir, I own a house of fourteen rooms with a lot 60 x 140 feet in Homestead." "What is its value?" "Ten thousand dollars." "Anything against it—any judgments or mortgages?" "No, sir." "Own any other property?" "Yes, sir, and then Mr. Owen Murphy, mill worker, proceeded to designate seven other pieces of real estate which he held in fee simple and free of encumbrance in the borough of Homestead, the aggregate value of which was \$15,000.

A second workingman was sworn, who asserted that he owned real estate to the value of \$10,000. Comment is unnecessary, but we cannot resist the temptation to inquire: Where under the shining sun, except among tariff-oppressed workers of this protection-plundered land of ours, could two steel workers, or any other workers, be found who, between them, had laid away \$25,000 from their earnings?

Free Traders Think So Still.

In a free competition for the market of the United States, the wages of manufacturing labor in the Northern States must be reduced at least as low as the wages of labor in England. The natural price of the manufacturing labor of the Northern States is precisely the same as that of the manufacturing labor of England, and not a cent more.—Speech of Free Trade Congressman Mc Duffie of South Carolina, 1832.

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