

THE PACIFIC COAST AND THE COMMERCE ACT.

THE Sacramento *Record-Union* finds the Interstate Commerce Act not only a bad kind of protective tariff, but extremely bad politics, so far as the Pacific Coast is concerned. "Protection of A in America," it says, "in his industry, as against the products of the industry of B in a foreign land, is one thing, but the protection of A in Ohio at the expense of B in California, both being citizens of a common country, with the right to trade freely between the States, is a very different thing. It means divorcement of sympathy, commercial estrangement, and possible political dismemberment." Possible political dismemberment is a pretty hard word. It is probably meant to be no more than indicative of a necessary weakening of political ties when any section of the people think that their pecuniary interests have been unjustly sacrificed, or their rights wantonly trampled upon.

Looking at the state of things created on the Pacific Coast by the multiplication of transcontinental lines of railway, and the competition among them for through traffic, we do not see how the long-and-short-haul clause of the Commerce Act can possibly be maintained as to that coast. It must be remembered that we have to deal not with the California that the miners made, but with one that we have made; not with Pacific Coast industries as they existed prior to 1869, when commerce and production conformed to the ancient lines of traffic via Cape Horn and Panama, but with one altogether different. We have put a lot of forces in train which have transformed the face of the country and changed all the currents of life. We have induced, nay required, the people of the Pacific Coast to build the fabric of their industry over in order to fit it to speedy communication with the older parts of the country, and at very low cost. Now we enact a law to deprive them of the low rates of transportation which form an integral part of their business, and which they enjoy by virtue of natural causes, and without harm to anybody else. Can we wonder if intense dissatisfaction is the result?

Attention has been drawn to the absurdity of the long-and-short-haul clause of the Commerce Act by the new schedules of rates adopted by the Canadian Pacific Railway. These rates are fixed just low enough to take the business, but are in every case higher than the rates prevailing before the Commerce Act went into effect. It is true that the Commissioners have suspended the operation of the act temporarily, but the apprehension that it may come in force again has led to the making of time contracts, by virtue of which large shipments are now making over the Canadian road at equal rates with those offered by our own lines. But there are certain kinds of freight, as, for instance, fresh fruits, that cannot be carried so great a distance without spoiling. These require the most rapid means of transit, without which, indeed, the industry must come to an end. In California and Oregon this is a great branch of industry, and no other is growing more rapidly.

Now, the spectacle offered to the eye of the business man—and most Americans are men

of business—of the traffic of the Pacific Coast going around through a foreign country in order to reach American markets, and paying at the same time higher rates of transportation than our own railroads would be glad to make, is too absurd to hold the stage very long. We might, through a stern sense of duty, like that of Abraham offering up his young son Isaac, sacrifice the California fruit trade outright, but to see our business carried off by the Canadians over a longer line than any of our own, and at greater cost, will move the national sense of humor to a degree. What has happened in this particular is exactly what ought to have been expected. The Canadian Pacific has one terminus on Puget Sound and another on Lake Superior. It stretches practically from all points on the Pacific to all points on the lakes. A little more coal is required to get the goods to and from its terminus than on our own lines, but on the other hand it costs a great deal to keep hands and machinery idle. The Canadian road can afford to burn a little more coal at the two ends of its route in order to keep itself fully employed along its whole course. It was just as certain that the Commerce Act would cause the result now witnessed, *i. e.*, the transfer of American traffic to the Canadian Pacific Railroad at higher rates than those heretofore prevailing, as that a stone thrown upward will come down. If Mr. Reagan or any other Congressman fancied that merchants would, on grounds of patriotism, pay two dollars for an article that could be had for one, he is probably now undeceived.

The Commerce Act allows the Commissioners to suspend the operation of the long-and-short-haul clause in any particular case. They have suspended it as to the transcontinental lines for a period of seventy-five days. They will have to suspend it again at the expiration of that time, and they might better suspend it altogether than do it piecemeal, since shippers will naturally prefer a route which they can depend upon, rather than one which may be closed to them at the end of a few weeks.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE TRADES-UNIONS.

WE gave some account, a short time ago, of the diverting performances of the Illinois Bureau of "Labor Statistics," as set out in its Report for 1886. The volume is full of entertaining matter, though intended by its authors to produce nothing but serious reflection. The figures collected by Commissioners in the state of mind in which the report indicates these gentlemen to have been when preparing their work, are not likely to be very reliable; but on some points which they approach without any theory in their heads, they probably have come as near accuracy as anybody could. The result of their inquiries into the nationality of the members of the trades-unions, and into that of the Knights of Labor, is especially interesting, as throwing some light on a question which has both social and political importance, and which a great many people have been asking with some anxiety during the late labor troubles—namely, the extent to which native-born Americans are

wrestling with the labor problem by means of strikes and boycotts.

According to the Report, there are in Illinois 54,247 members of trades-unions. Of these, 21 per cent. are Americans, 33 per cent. Germans, 19 per cent. Irish; English and Scotch together, 10 per cent.; Scandinavians, 12 per cent., and Poles, Bohemians, and Italians, about 5 per cent. The Americans are mostly found in the railroad service, in the cigar manufacture, in the iron-moulding and gas and steam-fitting trades. The Germans are mostly bakers, brewers, bricklayers, masons, carpenters, cabinet-makers, coopers, furriers, harness-makers, metal-workers, and wagon-makers. Curiously enough, however, hardly any of them are found among the sailors on the lakes. The Irish abound in the railroad service, especially the freight-handling, and among the bricklayers, stone-masons, plasterers, butchers, seamen, salt-workers, and printers, but make no great figure as hod-carriers; the Germans strange to say, having secured the lion's share of that calling. The Scandinavians, as might be expected, furnish most of the sailors on the lakes; "the hollow oak" is still their favorite abode.

The Report finds a very platitudinous but probably correct explanation of the paucity of the Americans in the trades in the disinclination of the American to settle down for life in any one calling, and in his strong desire to escape at the first moment from all manual labor properly so called, and engage in clerical work or "trading," in which, partly through education and partly through inherited quick-wittedness, he has a decided advantage over foreigners. He has, too, they might have added, a decided reluctance to engage in prolonged disputes, like strikes, over any business matter. His disposition is to drop quickly what does not seem likely to turn out profitable, and try something else—a trait which the directors of fraudulent banks and railroads find to their advantage, because it prevents the embittered legal pursuit to which they are sometimes exposed in England. The American stockholder, when he finds himself duped or betrayed, always prefers "selling out" to fighting. The American mechanic exhibits the same peculiarity. He does not care for an occupation in which he has to keep striking to get his due.

The fact which the Illinois Report brings out, however, that the Americans constitute 45 per cent. of the members of that more miscellaneous body, the Knights of Labor, of whom there are 33,544 in Illinois, is probably correctly explained by the Report in saying that, "though the order is really composed in the main of working people who have a common interest in maintaining wages, the more universal bond is doubtless the promotion of certain measures of public policy upon which men may readily unite who would have no status in a mere trades-union." The notion that wage-earners "have a common interest in maintaining wages," is of course as absurd as are a great many of the Commissioners' notions. It cannot be each man's interest that every other man should be highly paid. They might as well say that all consumers had a common interest in keeping up prices. But it is doubtless true that a large proportion of the Ameri-

can Knights look on the organization as something in the nature of a political party like the Grangers. We saw something of the same kind in this city last fall, when thousands undoubtedly voted for Henry George who had no sympathy with his land theories, for the simple purpose, as they thought, of protesting against "Machine rule" and breaking it up.

#### "THE RULE OF HONOR."

A LETTER from an "Anti-Gladstoneite" Englishman, in the *Evening Post* of Saturday, is interesting in many ways, but principally as an illustration of the queer twist, as we consider it, which the anti-Gladstoneite mind in England has undergone, through its excitement over the Irish question, and on which (as illustrated in the case of Lord Hartington) Mr. Gladstone, in his speech before the Eighty Club, commented with much severity. Lord Hartington, who throughout this crisis has been posing, in the eyes both of friends and foes, as a model English gentleman, has accepted two current Tory assumptions. One is, that all charges printed in the *Times* have to be treated with respect, because of the generally high character of the paper and large amount of capital dependent on its maintaining this character. The other is, that an offer to prove it in a court of law, and a refusal to produce proof of it anywhere else, is all that can be asked of an honorable man who makes a charge against private character.

The demand made on behalf of the *Times* we shall not discuss. It will be received with a smile everywhere out of England, and everywhere in England outside anti-Gladstonean circles. The *Times* is a very respectable newspaper, but the reverence of Englishmen for it is one of the amusing local superstitions. It would be more amusing if it were not that it is part and parcel of the glamour which surrounds anonymous journalism in all countries where it exists. The truth is, and it is a truth which is very clear when stated, that the *Times* is just as honorable and as wise as the editor, a young gentleman named Buckle, until a year or two ago quite obscure, and as the chief proprietor, an elderly gentleman named Walter, neither of them in any way elevated above the rest of the community in character or talents. If the claims made for the *Times* on the trust and confidence of the community, when making passionate attacks on the private character of political opponents, were made in behalf of Messrs. Buckle and Walter, as they ought to be, they would convulse people with laughter.

But this opens a field of discussion on which we do not propose to enter now. What most interests us is the notion, that the offer of Messrs. Buckle and Walter to prove the authenticity of the Parnell letter in a court of law is the only offer they are bound to make, and justly leaves Parnell, pending its acceptance, under suspicion. This, we say, is a complete reversal of the rule of honor, in fact a complete novelty in the ethics of gentlemen, as Mr. Gladstone intimated in the speech to which we have already referred. It is a notion which probably has grown out of the importance attached in most

disputes about property or crime to what is called "legal evidence," and which, in Anglo-Saxon countries, lawyers are apt to talk of, and laymen to accept, as if it were the only evidence with which the human mind is competent to deal. The truth is, that it is not evidence at all in the full logical sense; or rather it is evidence which in Anglo-Saxon countries is greatly restricted in order to adapt it to the capacity of jurors. The law of evidence is mainly a body of rules intended to prevent certain facts from getting before juries which they would not be competent to weigh, and the judge is charged with the enforcement of these rules. Hence great importance has come to be attached by lawyers, and people who live much with lawyers, to evidence being "legal" in order to give it value. Many of them have recently held that even a legislative inquiry, such as that which took place in the matter of the Aldermanic "boodle," should only have been pursued through "legal evidence," as if the affairs of life, either in politics or business, could possibly be carried on without constant disregard of the rules of legal evidence by everybody who attempts to make any plan for the future, or form a working judgment about either persons or things.

The respect for "legal evidence" leads naturally enough to the idea that a court of law is the only place in which a charge can be examined, and its truth or falsehood ascertained. The truth is, however, that a jury is really, as everybody knows, everywhere an indifferent tribunal for the investigation of any charge against character. But a trial at law gives both of the parties the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents, and gives the proceeding the superintendence of a judge, which makes it, especially for all complicated transactions requiring a great deal of proof, in a large number of cases the best available method of investigation. There would, for instance, probably be no better way of examining the charges made by the *Times*, in the articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime," against the whole Irish party, than through the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which has been refused, although the charges have been steadily used by the majority in debate to discredit the Irish members.

But the Parnell letter is a different matter. Here the question is simply whether a signature of Parnell's is genuine or not. The body of the letter is not in his handwriting. In the intercourse of all honorable men in civilized countries, a man's repudiation of a signature imposes on the person who offers it as proof against him, the burden of at once giving his reasons for believing it to be genuine. If the accuser says he will not produce them now, but next spring, or next fall, and in the meantime continues to use the signature for the detriment of the alleged signer, he is among gentlemen all over the world, so far as we know, considered a scoundrel. This is, in fact, the reproach to which Messrs. Buckle and Walter lay themselves open. Their offer to produce their proofs in a court of law if Parnell will bring a suit, is an offer to produce them next autumn or next spring on the expenditure by Parnell of some thousands of pounds. No such suit as is pro-

posed could be tried before next November at the earliest. It would probably not be tried before next February or March. In the meantime the imputation on Parnell's character as a man and a politician would have done its work. Suppose A were a candidate for a place of honor and profit, and the appointment was to be made in July, and B, a rival or enemy, were to produce a letter with a signature resembling his, revealing complicity in a disgraceful transaction, and the candidate repudiated it, what would be said in any company of gentlemen to the holder of the letter who answered, "How this letter came into my hands, to whom I suppose it to have been addressed, and what are my reasons for thinking A wrote it, or for disbelieving his denial, I decline to state. He can sue me if he pleases, and then I will tell all, some time next winter. In the meantime I will act and talk precisely as if he had acknowledged it to be his—that is, as if the very highest proof of its genuineness were in the possession of the public"?

We venture to say that few, if any, men living in decent social circles ever had an experience of this kind, except with a blackmailer or confidence man. Most men who had such an experience would, if in good health, at first blush be disposed to treat the case with a cudgel—all the sooner if B cried out that he knew the letter was genuine because the writer was such a bad man. The whole affair of the Parnell letter is, in fact, as disgraceful an incident as has ever occurred in English politics—as disgraceful to "journalism" as to society.

#### QUESTIONS FOR THE JUBILEE.

LONDON, April 21, 1887.

At the centre of that curious fabric of laws, customs, and institutions which we call the English Constitution lies a mystery. The unknown element of political life in England is the Crown. Parliament, as Bagehot has pointed out, has inquired into many things, but no committee has ever sat, or, while the Constitution lasts, will sit, to inquire into the conduct of the Queen. To an English monarch is ascribed by law not only real irresponsibility, but fictitious sovereignty. One result of this has been little noted. As every act of state is done in the royal name, and as in many acts of state the Queen has no more personal concern than has, say, the Archbishop of Canterbury, no one really knows what, if any, are the matters really determined more or less in accordance with the royal will. Hence, no one, except a few statesmen who know the innermost life of the court or the best-kept secrets of the Cabinet, can with any certainty determine what have been the acts, the feelings, or the influence of the lady who has nominally ruled England for half a century. But if you do not know a person's actions or sentiments, you do not know his character. The veil which shrouds the official life of the Queen has also, in spite of the self-revelations afforded by her books, also concealed from public view much of her own personality.

At some future day Victoria will, no doubt, be as well known to historians as is George III. But, for the moment, she is less fully known to her subjects than any other person who has played a part on the stage of political life. Of her conduct and wishes there are and always have been rumors. Hints are dropped that she likes one Premier or dislikes another. It is whispered that her personal intervention facilitated the passage of the last Reform Act, and it is hinted that she