

didate for President and opposing the Republican platform and the election of Congressmen who stand upon that platform. This seems to us a case of extraordinary stultification, for the election of Gen. Harrison would obviously nullify the work which the *News* hopes for from the tariff-reform Congressmen, inasmuch as he would be bound by the platform upon which he stands to veto a bill such as tariff reformers would send him. We hailed Gen. Harrison's nomination as "a very respectable one," and a happy escape from the threatened re-nomination of a personally unworthy and unfit candidate. At the same time we pointed out that his personality would cut but a small figure in the canvass, and that the selection of such a man "leaves the field open for the freest discussion of the principles which divide the American people." We must confess, however, that Gen. Harrison's record in the Senate proves, upon examination, to be far less creditable to him than we had supposed, and that his position upon certain great issues was so indefensible that we could not support him, even if he stood upon a decent tariff platform. First among these issues we rank that of centralization. We hold stoutly to that view of the relations of the States to the Federal Government which was held by the Republican party of Abraham Lincoln's day; and we believe with Gen. Hawley, one of the few Republicans in Congress who still maintain the ancient doctrine of the party, that the "tendency towards a consolidation of the entire powers of Government," as illustrated in the bill for Federal interference in education in the States, "is one of the strongest to-day, and one of those most dangerous to the Republican experiment as our fathers understood it." Gen. Harrison holds the opposite view—a view which runs directly counter to the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court, and which would sanction an entire revolution in the relations between the States and the general Government. His support of the Blair bill, given, as the *Congressional Record* shows, after careful deliberation and with full knowledge of what it implied, proves him a believer in centralization in its most dangerous form.

Gen. Harrison's pension record shows that he is not a safe man to trust with executive power at a time when the Treasury needs protection from the raids of the claim agents and camp followers. He voted for the Dependent Pension Bill, which President Cleveland vetoed, with the approval of the country, in February, 1887—a bill which even so partisan a Republican journal as the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette* was constrained to admit "opened the door for vast abuses." Moreover, he introduced a great number of private pension bills, several of which were so very bad that Mr. Cleveland had to veto them, one of the proposed beneficiaries having been a man who had deserted. Furthermore, he would be bound to approve any pension grab like the revival of the arrears job, involving the payment of hundreds of millions, which would surely pass Congress if the Republicans controlled both branches, the party being already committed to it.

Gen. Harrison's position regarding the pension question should cost him the support of independent voters.

The Republican candidate has shown himself a man who favors the most reckless extravagance. The St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*, a Republican paper of standing, was quite within bounds the other day when it called the Hennepin Canal scheme "the most gigantic and unequalled piece of jobbery" ever contained in a river and harbor bill, and described it as an "attempt to commit the National Government to the construction of a stupendous system of sewerage for Chicago." Senator Ingalls of Kansas once described it (July 10, 1886) as a scheme "to commit the Government to the expenditure of between \$10,000,000 and \$25,000,000 to lift the commerce of the Northwest step by step up a gigantic water stairway of 208 feet up to the Mississippi River, and then let it down again step by step, and up again 140 feet more to Chicago." Nor is the scheme bad alone in itself; it would inevitably prove the forerunner of many other equally tremendous jobs. Congressman Browne, the oldest and ablest Republican Representative from Indiana, who has always earnestly opposed the project, argued against it on one occasion (July 20, 1886) with great force upon this broad ground: "Rich as this nation is, great as are its revenues and its sources of wealth, you are entering upon a system which, if not arrested, may bankrupt this magnificent republic of ours." Gen. Harrison voted for this "most gigantic and unequalled piece of jobbery"; and, what is worse for him, he did it with his eyes open, for he once delivered a speech in favor of it in the Senate (July 8, 1882). A Senator who endorsed the Hennepin Canal scheme, by that very act showed himself unfit to be President.

All that has come to light about Gen. Harrison's private character since his nomination strengthens the impression that he is an estimable person, and does not live in constant apprehension of somebody's printing letters which he had directed to be burned because they would expose his dishonesty. This is a great gain over the situation four years ago. But it necessarily eliminates the personality of the candidate from the canvass, and leaves him to stand before the people upon his party's platform and his own record in the Senate. The former alone should condemn him, but if it were not sufficient, the latter is fatal to him. The advocate of centralization, the defender of reckless pension schemes, the friend of Hennepin Canal jobs, is not a safe man to be President.

#### PUBLICITY.

THE value of the proceedings before the Fassett Committee can hardly be overestimated. The work which these legislative investigations have done for the cause of good government and political morality during the last few years has been very great. The effects of the Sharp investigation, for instance, will undoubtedly be felt in municipal affairs for many years. It brought a whole band of criminals to justice, or

drove them out of the country, or checked their activity, and, what was better than all, revived public faith in the possibility of enforcing the Penal Code against corruptionists. It was, in fact, on the general disbelief in the possibility of obtaining convictions for bribery that men like Sharp flourished and grew rich. Very likely they will before long again grow bold and resume their trade; but they will not in our time be as bold as they were, or make as much money as they used to make. The press might have denounced them for a hundred years without making as much impression on them as was made by one hour of examination under oath.

The investigation of the Custom-house affairs by the Senate Committee was also very fruitful. Without it, Assistant-Secretary Maynard's flat denials would have stood unimpeached, and apparently unimpeachable, and he would have lived on as a martyr of newspaper malignity and slander. But the minute the subpoena was applied to his case, a flood of light about appointments and removals and frauds and "pernicious activity" burst forth and helped purify the political atmosphere. At this moment, too, the aqueduct investigation is giving us illustrations of political manners and morals even among what may be called picked men, which are and will continue to be most wholesome for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction in righteousness.

It has often been said bitterly of these investigations, by people who do not like to be investigated, that they do not confine themselves to "legal evidence," and that they are conducted under the influence of partisan motives. It is true that the evidence they take is not always legal evidence, but legal evidence would not answer the purpose. No rational man who wishes to inform himself about a person, place, or thing confines himself to legal evidence. He takes human evidence—that is, the evidence on which the human race manages its affairs and shapes its conduct—and mighty good evidence it is. Lawyers do not like it, but it makes the world go round.

Nor is it an objection to these investigating committees that they are animated by partisan motives. Their motives do not hurt their work, except, possibly, by restricting the field of operations. But even when they do restrict the field of operations, they make compensation by driving the plough deeper in the ground which they cover. No politician can be got to make a thorough inquiry into anything from a simple desire to benefit his country or his race. He must be allowed a few earthly aims and low desires in order to get really good work out of him as an investigator. What the public demands is that he shall summon witnesses, produce books and papers, and ask a full line of pertinent questions. If he does this, it matters little how corrupt his motive may be.

Now, what is the fundamental reason why these investigations are so valuable? Simply the fact that they supply publicity about transactions which ought never to have been private. They communicate to the public information the public ought to have pos-

essed from the beginning, but which it is the chief aim of a great many men in office to keep from it.

A large proportion of the public officers in this city, we venture to assert, would like the business of their offices to be considered strictly private and a large proportion of their subordinates "confidential" agents; but nothing worse could happen either to them or the service. There is hardly a man in any public office who is not helped and fortified, not only against other people's badness, but against his own, by having the world know what he is about.

Take, for instance, the case of this Aqueduct Commission. Nearly everything of an objectionable or disreputable character which has been revealed in the evidence is the result of secrecy. The Commissioners were expressly directed by the statute to open the bids or proposals "publicly." They evaded this with the connivance or consent of men of Mr. Dowd's standing, by secretly ascertaining beforehand what bids would be made, and what bids they would accept. They took, moreover, every precaution possible to keep from the public all knowledge of the motives which animated them in performing this most important of all their official duties, by failing to keep any minutes or other record of their proceedings. Had these proceedings been public, as they ought to have been, there is little doubt the work would not have been awarded in two huge sections to two firms of contractors, because the flimsiness of the reasons for this arrangement, which is now acknowledged, would have been detected at the outset. The theory that from any point of view it was desirable to give the work out in two large slices would, of course, have never been produced when all concerned knew that the job was immediately to be divided up among a large body of sub-contractors. Nor is it at all likely that Fish would have got up his little scheme of reorganization had he known that the other Commissioners would not give him the shelter of silence, and that he was going to intrude himself into a body of men who were in frank and loyal relations with the people of the city, handling the public money on the table with open books.

#### BRITISH WAGES.

THE present agitation of the tariff question has given rise to a great demand for statistics bearing upon the various aspects of the subject. It is, however, almost a commonplace that no cause is so poor but that it can find statistics which can be made to appear to support it. The complexity of most statistics is such that a skilful and not too scrupulous advocate can make them tell strange tales. But this is not all, nor the worst; there always remains the connection of cause and effect, which statistics alone cannot enable us to determine. Those who laud our protective system as the corner-stone and the only safeguard of our prosperity and of the welfare of our workmen, usually consider

their task accomplished when they have written down the figures which record our progress during the past generation. This progress has taken place under protection, and they think they are acquitted of the task of showing that protection has been the cause of it. But, fortunately, our own is not the only country which has statistics; and any one who examines the statistics of other countries will soon convince himself of the absurdity of the claim that our indebtedness to the protective system is shown by the evidence of statistics.

There are two classes of facts, especially, which are a dreadful stumbling-block to the protectionist statistician: the superiority of English to Continental wages, and the rise of wages in England during the free-trade era. As to the latter point, we have fortunately very high authority for determining it. On the opening of the fiftieth session of the Statistical Society of London in 1883, its President, the eminent statistician, Mr. Giffen, chose for the subject of his inaugural address "The Progress of the Working Classes in the Last Half-Century." The table which he there presents, though itself showing in a striking way what opportunities such tables offer for intentional perversion, exhibits unmistakably an enormous rise in the wages of British labor. The least increase shown by any occupation in the fifty years is 20 per cent., in nearly every case the increase is more than 50 per cent., and in one case, that of the Bradford weavers, it exceeds 150 per cent. From a table showing so great a diversity in the different occupations, it is difficult to draw an accurate numerical conclusion; what is plain is, that the workmen of England have made an enormous advance in their rate of wages. Nor is this all. At the same time that his wages have been increased, the English workman's hours of labor have been diminished, the nine-hour day being now almost universal in England; Mr. Giffen estimates the average reduction of hours at 20 per cent. A French economist, M. Émile Chevallier, in his work on 'Wages in the Nineteenth Century' (Paris, 1887), to which was awarded the prize of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, sums up the matter in this way (p. 100): "The English workingman has obtained in fifty years an increase of from 50 to 100 per cent. in his money wages; and a diminution of 20 per cent. in the duration of his daily work; he has therefore made an advance in round numbers of from 70 to 120 per cent."

As to the comparison between English and Continental wages, that is a less simple matter; the variations are great in each country, and the classifications of employees vary from one country to another. The fact, however, that there is a vast difference in favor of the English workingman is notorious; it is as unnecessary to prove it by statistics as it is to prove that our own workmen have better wages than those of Great Britain. As to the exact figures, one can only appreciate the difficulty of arriving at them by taking a glance at the bulky volume published by

the United States Bureau of Statistics in 1875, under the title of 'Labor in Europe and America.' No mode of striking an average could lead to a really accurate result; and any result arrived at by one who was illustrating a thesis might be suspected of being more or less influenced by bias. We shall, therefore, quote the figures given by the French economist already cited as being apparently the best attainable, though no special importance should be attached to them: "The United States, then, hold the highest position; wages there are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. higher than in Australia, 84 per cent. higher than in the United Kingdom, 162 per cent. higher than in Germany, and 205 per cent. higher than in France. Great Britain, in its turn, shows a rate of wages higher by 42 per cent. than that of Germany, and by 65 per cent. than that of France."

The statistics we have cited as showing the increase in British wages during the past fifty years are not adduced to show that free trade raises wages. They are merely given in rebuttal of the ever-recurring fallacy that any improvement which has taken place in our own country under the régime of high tariff is to be attributed to that institution. But the contrast between English and Continental wages—which, we repeat, does not rest upon any special statistics, but is matter of common knowledge—this contrast is something more than a mere rebuttal. Not only does it utterly break the force of the position that the superiority of our wages to those of Europe is due to protection, but it constitutes in itself a positive proof that a high rate of wages has its source in something deeper than a system of taxation, and may be maintained by an energetic and favorably situated people in the face of the inferior wages of inferior and less fortunate competitors.

#### ARGENTINE FINANCES.

THE remarkable material expansion of the Argentine Republic during the last seven years of peace has not entirely escaped notice in our own country, despite our limited commercial relations with the great Páramo of the Plate Valley. The rapid extension of her railroad systems, the vast sums devoted to other public works, the reclaiming of immense areas of fertile land from the danger of Indian forays, the marvellous quickening both of domestic and foreign trade—of all these things we have heard vaguely, though, at the same time, color has been given to the suspicion that the whole might be an unnatural inflation to be followed by a disastrous collapse. Argentine credit, for example, has all along been comparatively low, inferior to that of Chili or Brazil. A new 5 per cent. loan, negotiated in January, 1887, commanded only  $85\frac{1}{2}$  in London. Specie payments had to be suspended early in 1885, and when the two years had elapsed which had been fixed as the limit of the suspension, its term had to be extended, resumption now being promised for the 9th of January, 1889. Meanwhile, the national income had been steadily falling behind expenses, the foreign and domestic debts were each mounting higher and higher,