

# The Democratic Sentinel.

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## THE DEMOCRATIC SENTINEL

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JAS. W. McEWEN

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Homeopathic Physician & Surgeon,  
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Ten per cent. interest will be added to all accounts running unsettled longer than three months.  
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**DOES A GENERAL BANKING BUSINESS:**  
Certificates bearing interest issued; Exchange bought and sold; Money loaned on farms at lowest rates and on most favorable terms.  
July 5, '89.

## MINER'S WAGES.

### BRAIDWOOD'S CURSE.

(From last week—Concluded.)

#### COREY APPLIES THE THUMBSCREWS

Having reduced the scale to 80 cents a ton and introduced the truck store, the company was not long in finding a new source of oppression. There was no longer any great danger of a strike. The men were submissive and apparently stupefied by the fearful strain on their strength. So the screw was given another turn. The coal, when excavated is loaded onto a car which carries about 1,500 pounds. In hauling these cars along the rough roads to the mouth of the shaft, it was inevitable that some of this coal should fall off. In former years this was taken into allowance by the weighers and the miner given credit for the coal which lay scattered along the roadway and which was eventually picked up. After the protected workingmen and farmers of the United States had elected Harrison President, and free trade had been dealt a death blow, Superintendent T. B. Corey, of the Chicago, Wilmington and Vermillion Coal Company, issued an order that the company would allow weight for just the amount of coal found in the car. Men were then employed at small wages to pick up this coal. One man could thus collect a large amount of coal in a day, far more than the most skilled miner could place to his credit. It seems almost incredible, but the men claim that the company has conspired to deliberately rob them by this scheme. They allege that the road has purposely been made rough so as to shake the coal from the cars. The men in the rooms have not been supplied with a sufficient number of cars, being thereby stimulated to pile on a big load, part of which would more certainly fall off. This humane and christian scheme has made lots of money for the company. It has been a great success. The miner was compelled to either throw on a small load and remain idle for hours with a certainty of diminished wages, or pile on a decent load and have part of it jolted off and appropriated by the company without pay.

#### ANOTHER TURN FOR THE QUIV'RING WRETCH.

So successful was this scheme that the company was encouraged to adopt another and similar method of reducing the wage fund. It had been the custom to weigh the coal before it was dumped onto the screens. This gave the miner the benefit of all the coal which had not fallen off on the road. Superintendent Corey decided that in the future the coal should be weighed after it was sifted, and that the men should receive nothing for the weight of the screenings. That settled it, and an order to that effect was posted forthwith. The men read it in silence and turned away. By this ingenious plan the company obtained without expense for mining screenings which have been sold in the Wilmington and other manufacturing towns for thousands of dollars. There are other though smaller sources of revenue for the company. Two blacksmiths are employed at a salary of \$40 a month. Each of the 1,400 men have 25 cents a month deducted from their wages to pay for having their tools sharpened. This makes a total of \$350, from which deduct \$80 as the wages of the blacksmiths and there remains as loss to the men and profit to the company the sum of \$270 a month, or the snug total of \$3,250 a year. No petty tyranny which the ingenuity of the company could devise was spared. The wages were slowly but relentlessly forced down until it seemed as if organized selfishness would go no further in the oppression of faithful workmen.

The limit had not been reached. With the average wages less than \$18 a month for the year ending

May 1, 1889, the company announced a reduction of 10 cents, a cut of 12½ per cent. For digging coal they offered 70 cents a ton. Deducting the exactions so systematically made from the men's wages this scale fixed the pay per ton at less than 55 cents. By the hard st kind of work the men have been unable to mine two tons of coal a day. It would have been possible to slightly exceed this amount had the company furnished the men with the requisite number of cars and placed but three men in a room instead of four. Such a course was against the policy of the company. High wages would give the men money to spend outside the truck store, and the company did not propose to stand any such nonsense.

#### WAGES AND THE TARIFF.

The tariff on coal is 75 cents a ton. The Braidwood miner actually receives less than 55 cents a ton for digging it out of the ground. They do not even receive the tariff. To state it another way, the Chicago, Wilmington and Vermillion Coal Company is enabled to get its work done for nothing and receives 20 cents royalty from the United States for each ton hoisted above the surface of the earth. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill did not calculate on any such condition of affairs when they penned works on political economy. During the presidential campaign of last fall a large, red-faced man with a hoarse voice and plug hat made a speech at Braidwood. He told those of the miners who had strength enough left to drag themselves from their miserable shanties that the protective tariff enabled the mine owners to pay them wages which were princely compared with those received by the pauper and free trade laborers of Europe. This great orator and statesman went on to tell them that but for the republican party and its policy of protection to American industries the workmen of this country would die off like rotten sheep through competition with the sore-eyed and palsied cripples who made up the pauper labor of Europe. He drew a glowing picture of the prosperity of the United States and recalled instances where friends of his had arisen from obscurity and were now worth \$20,000,000. He told the men that any American workman could save his money and become wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice. In the course of a lengthy speech he told them many other things equally true and convincing. Braidwood and her protected American workmen gave a round majority for the republican ticket, the old flag, and protection for American workmen. Were the men entirely to blame? The word was passed around that the man caught voting other than the republican ticket might consider himself discharged. The men had been taught to believe that their prosperity depended entirely upon the prosperity of the company, and that big profits for the company enabled the latter to pay them high wages. So they crawled up out of the dark corners of the earth and deposited their votes for the grand old party which freed the slaves. Not all of them did this. Many of them had already begun to see the enormity of the political crime of which they were conspicuous victims. They realized for the first time that antebellum slavery was merciful compared with their thralldom. They had been forced by semi-starvation to learn that the profits of a protected monopoly and the wages paid its workmen bore no more relation than the length of a mule's ears does to the movements of the heavenly bodies. But the majority were either yet ignorant or intimidated. They had no time or opportunity to read and learn. The horizon of their world was limited to a coal shaft and a wretched cottage. When work was over and the tired limbs of the unfortunate man had dragged him home, sleep came like a merciful death with a short reprieve from his misery.

Many a Braidwood miner has gone to his home so exhausted by the fearful work as to be unable to partake of the humble meal set before him. Under conditions such as this, it is little wonder that men live in ignorance and die in poverty. The great world is with them only a myth. They are born, exist for a time and die without having lived. They have not had a chance to fight in the battle of life.

#### FORCED TO SEEK CHARITY AT LAST.

Aid should be given these men, and should be given at once. The Herald will receive and forward to the proper authorities any contributions which may be made. The 1,400 miners of Braidwood have received from all sources less than \$600 since May 1. How they have existed is a puzzle beyond the solution of the writer. The majority of the men have large families dependent on their work in the mines. There is absolutely no other form of employment 'n or around Braidwood. Though many of the miners own their own little houses, they cannot eat them. It may be suggested that the houses can be sold or mortgaged. To whom? There are no purchasers for Braidwood property. A large building on the best site of the principal street in the city was erected five years ago at a cost of \$10,000. It is renting to-day at \$15 a month, and could not be sold for \$1,500. There are houses in Braidwood which represent the total result of twenty years' hard work—the combined savings of some honest workman. One of these houses could not be traded to-day for two barrels of flour. The people have abandoned all hope. They have watched the steady growth of the Chicago, Wilmington and Vermillion Coal Company and seen it wax wealthy on the lives of starved men, women and babes. They have seen their property decrease in direct proportion as the dividends of the company increased and nothing has transpired which sheds a ray of hope for the stricken people of Braidwood. They are cursed and abandoned. During the past twelve months the company has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in the purchase of valuable coal lands. Three thousand acres were purchased in Bureau county and 600 acres adjacent to Braidwood. In the face of such prosperity and with the certainty of starving innocent people to death, the Chicago, Wilmington and Vermillion Coal Company has the brazen effrontery to again reduce the wages of its workmen.

#### HELP NEEDED IN ANY EVENT.

From a careful investigation The Herald is convinced that the striking miners of Braidwood are entitled to the support of all charitable people. Should the mine owners relent and throw open the mines for work it will be weeks before the men would receive a cent. The company takes no chances and advances no money. The miner might starve or be killed before he had earned the small sum advanced in wild-cat money. But the mine owners will not relent. They deliberately forced the strike after having laid in a good stock of coal. They are now engaged in raising the price to the protected consumer. It has already gone up 25 cents a ton. In a week the price will again advance. By the time the miners have been properly starved into submission the price of coal—through the coal famine—will have advanced from 75 cents to \$1 per ton. The men will then be allowed to return at the reduced scale of wages and the company can divide the proceeds among its stockholders.—Chicago Herald.

Thus it is seen that so-called protection to labor is a farce. Monopoly alone is benefited, and it has been truly said that monopolies are soulless. The evil can be corrected at the ballot box. The

laborer has vastly more to fear from monopolistic greed and competition upon our own soil with the pauper labor of foreign lands, than he has from competition with the products of Europe.

**Loose's Red Clover Pile Remedy,** is a positive specific for all forms of the disease. Blind, Bleeding, Itching, Ulcerated, and Protruding Piles. Price 50c. For sale by Long & Eger.

A good suit of clothes may now be had at R. Fendig's for \$4, never before sold for less than \$6.50.

**Loose's Red Clover Pills Cure** Sick Headache, Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Constipation. 25c per Box, 5 boxes for \$1. For sale by Long & Eger.

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CHAS. M. PAXTON.  
May 3, 1889.