

ON TARIFF REFORM,

The Hon. Thomas R. Cobb was then introduced and spoke for about forty minutes. He delivered a very logical address which was well received. He said:

"You know my views upon the great political questions of the day. We are in the midst of peace yet not so prosperous as we would like to be. We have no political excitement now, yet you have turned out in great numbers to-day for the purpose of quietly listening to such arguments as may be presented. You have come here from the hill-tops and the valleys—have come with minds open and ready to receive arguments with reference to the future of your country and with reference to those things which may benefit you. I intend to pursue the even tenor of my way now as a private citizen. I have studied with great care and thoroughness those questions that are of interest to you and to me, and am here to talk plainly and truthfully concerning them.

"To-day the tariff is the greatest question that arises for the consideration of the American people. We have witnessed its operations and have seen that by it the poor man has been made poorer and the rich man richer. We were told by republican politicians and stump speakers last fall that in case the republican party—and I allude to it in no partisan sense—was advanced to power in the nation much good would follow. Now, one Harrison of our own state was elected president. Has it brought about prosperity or increase in wages? They uttered the direful prophecy that, in case of Grover Cleveland's election, depression in business and hard times would be the result. From the mouth of every republican speaker came the promise of unbounded prosperity, in the event of a victory for republicanism. Have the promises been carried out? I ask every intelligent man within hearing of my voice if those promises have been held sacred? My friends, in my judgment, the fact that the republican party succeeded in electing Gen. Harrison, who was known to be a high protectionist, was a signal that wages were to be lowered and that the prices of your farm products were to be reduced. And such has been the result. Do you now believe that the demagogical orators who mouthed in behalf of republicanism last fall told you the truth? Don't you know they deceived you? You expected to profit by the results of republican legislation, but you have not done so. The Carnegies down East lied to you. They said the price of wages would go up, but you have already heard that the wages of the Carnegie employees have been reduced, and that they are now protesting by means of a strike. This tariff is one of the main causes.

"My friends, God made this country, and He made you and me. He intended in His divine wisdom that you and I should be free to enjoy all the profit of our labor, save enough to economically administer our government. When I have rendered tribute unto Caesar then I shall render tribute to my fellow-man. The tribute to Caesar shall be the necessary tax for Caesar's government, and the tribute that I owe my fellow-man is equality of rights. It is an outrage that a tax should be levied upon you to make me rich. It takes time to effect a reform, but already more than twenty-four years have elapsed since this tariff was first put in operation. The consequence has been that it has torn from each year a certain portion of your earnings and put them into the pockets of those who deserve them not. Such is a violation of God's laws and a violation of true political economy.

"The main argument for the tariff is that it is a blessing—it makes things cheaper. This

is the veriest nonsense. With equal absurdity republicans claim that everything which is good comes from their legislation. They claim—or would seem to—that every invention due to mechanical genius and by which certain things have been cheapened, is a result of the tariff."

Here the speaker gave a resume of inventions of the country, and explained that they were due not to the tariff, but to the handiwork of skillful artisans.

Mr. Cobb closed with a pointed and lucid explanation of the working and nefarious results of the present tariff system.

Judge Robinson of Owen county, followed Mr. Cobb, and having explained the fact that "he was nothing but a scalawag of a lawyer," said: "Looking into the faces of so many farmers, it occurs to me that this must be principally a farmers' meeting. I shall not detain you long, but wish to say at least, how—de do. I am glad to enjoy this most excellent political speech to which you have listened. What a happy thought to call together these people to take council for mutual benefit. The heat of the campaign is past. Our passions are fled. The smoke of the battle is gone. Republicans as well as democrats have the opportunity to ask the question, what has this all been worth to us? We fought in this great political campaign. We marched under the banner. We shouted long and loud for Harrison and protection. We carried high the old republican standard. We won the fiercely fought battle. What has it been worth to us? What has it been worth to me and to you? and you? and you? By it has my wife been better clothed or my children better clad and fed? Am I taxed with fewer hours of labor? Are the necessities of life cheaper to me? Is the product of my labor rendered better? It is the great law of labor since the early dawn of the world that 'by the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.' Does this great law rest more easily upon my shoulders to-day than before Harrison's advent into office?

"Every workingman in the country to-day has occasion to ask these questions. If he goes to the store to buy the necessities of life he gets the answer that not one iota are prices decreased. If he goes to his employer to get the fruits of his labor he finds that not one penny is his wages increased. If he takes the products of his farm to market he must sell it at the same old price. All around the fact confronts him that in no earthly way has his condition been bettered. In fact, the prices prevailing for his labor and his product he finds to be lower almost than ever within his recollection. The republican party boasted that in the alchemy of its politics it had discovered some mysterious something whereby you who labor should obtain wealth without toil. But to-day the falsity of that boast is very apparent. We still have to work, still have to toil for the bread we eat. They point to the pro-

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ducts of human toil—to the products of human industry, to the accomplishments of master minds—to schools and colleges and public structures of surpassing magnificence, and tell you, if they tell you the truth, that your father and your brothers and you have been made to slave until your farms are wasted and you are ready to die. They have made you do this to pay for these. The republican party owes much of its success to the word 'protection.' I want, in trouble, or in danger, what word is sweeter to our ears than that of 'protection'? But the word has been prostituted that half its beneficence is lost.

"We were beaten last fall, but not by the popular voice. We followed a leader the like of whom for political honor and ability modern history does not mention. Grover Cleveland, the choice of the people, the man who to-day is first in the hearts of his countrymen; a man by the side of whom his opponent sinks into insignificance. We fought a hard battle for a just and liberty loving principle. And I would rather follow such a leader in such a cause to complete political annihilation than to ride to a thousand years of political supremacy with the principle that triumphed last fall."

Mr. Robinson was cheered repeatedly throughout his discourse, as were the other orators of the day, and by the time the last speaker left the stand the sun was nearly down.

The vast concourse of people who had shown the greatest enthusiasm throughout the day poured out of the grounds to scatter in all directions to their homes. The meeting was a gigantic success. People were present from Sullivan, Vigo, Parke and Clay counties. Among them were large delegations of miners from Clay and Parke counties who have been "protected" to such a great extent. The crowd was very orderly, not a disturbance of any kind breaking the harmony of the day.

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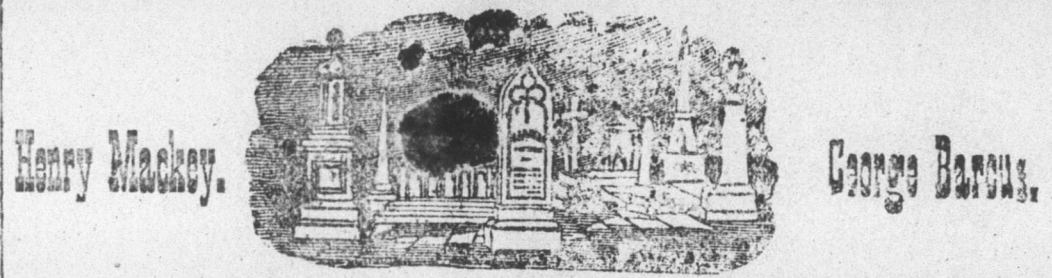
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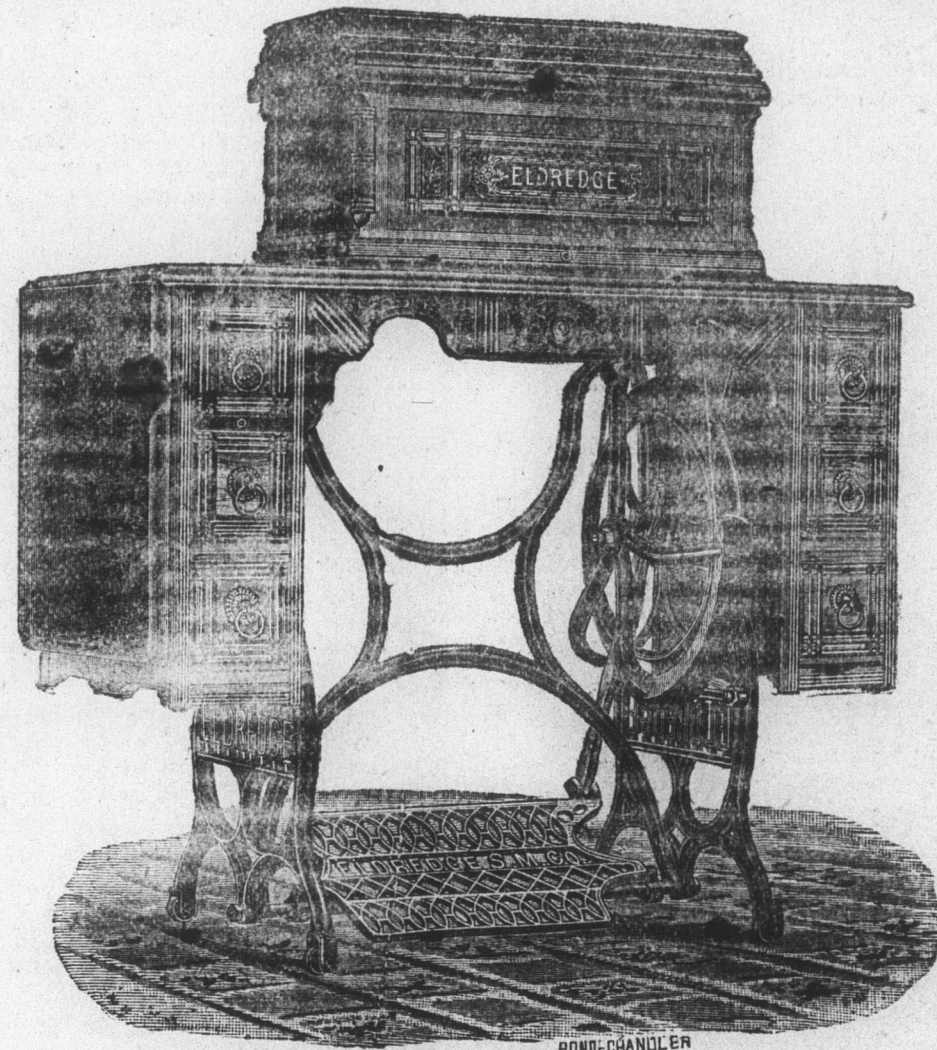


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