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"When thieves fall out, honest men get their dues"—sometimes. Let us hope that this old saw may prove true in the case of the legislative war now waging between the cane sugar cabal and the beet sugar combine.

In alluding to these belligerent conspirators as thieves we do not mean, of course, that they are thieves in the indictable sense. Before the law, they are all honest men; or, if not quite so, they haven't yet been found out. But stealing does not consist merely in violating larceny laws. Though there were no larceny laws in the statute books of any state, stealing would be none the less a moral crime, and those who stole would be none the less thieves. The eighth commandment would be in force nevertheless; and the immutable moral law, of which that commandment is the traditional expression, would still prevail.

To steal, is to take the just property of another against his will; and, in the eye of the moral law, the manner in which this is accomplished makes no difference. Some men do it by stealth. When detected, these are consigned to the penitentiary. Some do it by violence, using club or pistol or sandbag to enforce their nefarious demands. These, too, are imprisoned when caught. Others do it by procuring the enactment by legislative bodies of statutes authorizing the deprecation. When successful, these are awarded high places in society and figure among our best citizens. But there is no room for moral distinction. It is all stealing. The victims of the stealth or the violence or the

predaceous law are divested of their property against their will and without equivalent; and the beneficiaries are to that extent enriched at the expense of the victims.

In the category of predaceous laws is the protective tariff on sugar, its object and effect being to compel American consumers of sugar to pay more to American sugar producers for the sugar they buy than they would otherwise have to pay. The sugar rings are thereby enabled to plunder sugar consumers. They do this with greater profit, it is true, than they could get by the conventional modes of stealing, and with absolute immunity from criminal prosecution. But the moral culpability is not less. We are quite within the reasonable proprieties, therefore, when these rings or combinations or cabals get to fighting among themselves, in extracting hopeful expectations from the apothegm that honest men get their dues when thieves fall out.

The quarrel between the cane sugar combination and the beet sugar aggregation—to make what would seem to be a significant distinction—is over the question of reducing the tariff on raw sugar imported from Cuba. Under the tariff law now in force in the United States raw sugar imported from foreign countries is taxed at the rate of nearly one cent a pound, and refined sugar at the rate of nearly two cents. The tariff on raw sugar is intended to enable the American producers of sugar cane and sugar beets to get higher prices for their products than they could get in a free market. The further tariff on refined sugar is intended to enable sugar refiners to get higher prices for refining than a free market would yield them. It is only the tariff upon

raw sugar, not the greater one upon the refined article, that it is proposed to abolish or reduce. The cane sugar refining interests are understood to favor the change, while the cane growers and the beet sugar interests oppose it; and a battle royal between these financial janizaries is now waging at Washington and through the press.

Into the front of this battle the cane sugar refiners have pushed the poor Cuban. The United States is responsible for the prosperity of Cuba, they tell us, and Cuban prosperity depends upon the ability of Cuban sugar raisers to send their raw sugar into the American market. Such an argument from such a source is suspicious. It appeals to sentiment, and the sugar trust is usually too practical to regard sentiment as a valid factor in business problems. Is it not in process of exclusion even from political problems? It is much more probable that there are strong financial reasons for this sudden sentimental interest in the Cubans. One such reason has been suggested. It is said that the sugar trust has bought options on the Cuban sugar crop, and that the product is now held in Cuban warehouses awaiting the maturity of the options, which have several months yet to run, the intention of those holding the options being to complete the purchase if the tariff on Cuban sugar is reduced, and if it is not then to charge off to profit and loss the small payments originally made to secure the options. Meanwhile, the Cuban planters, with their crops locked up with options so that they can neither sell them nor borrow upon them, are upon the verge of despair and of course are using all the influence they can command to induce congress to lower the duty on raw sugar from Cuba. This explana-

tion may not be true. We cannot vouch for it. We tell it, however, as we have heard it directly from Cuba. And it has all the advantage of probability. The prospect of making an enormous profit upon the Cuban sugar crop now in warehouses, simply through a reduction in the tariff, would account much more plausibly for the expensive activity of the sugar trust in behalf of such reduction, than do its lavish expressions of sentimental interest in the welfare of the Cuban people.

Another of the urgent pleas which the sugar trust advances is also too sentimental, considering the intensely practical philosophy which usually governs the gentlemen who put it forth, to be regarded as altogether sincere. It has the weakness, besides, of going too far for its purpose. This is the lugubrious appeal for the breakfast table of the poor American workingman. A specimen may be quoted from the American Grocer of December 18, which, in urging the repeal of the raw sugar tariff, said:

It is a direct tax on the workingman's wages. It is an iniquitous tax if not needed for revenue, and because that which it seeks to protect needs no protection other than that essential to counteract the bounty-fed sugar of Europe.

There is richness indeed! For the sake of the workingman's wages let us repeal the tariff on raw sugar, but maintain a tariff on refined sugar. Let the sugar trust buy its raw material in a free market, so that the American workingman's wages can no longer be taxed for raw sugar, but continue to empower it to tax the workingman's wages so as to get more from him for doing his refining than a free market would pay. Whether the American Grocer so intends or not, the sugar trust itself speaks when this distinction between the tariff on raw sugar and the tariff on refined sugar is made.

It is not to enrich the trust, however, that the sugar-consuming workingman must have his wages taxed through the sacred tariff on refined

sugar. Not at all. The object is only to give to the trust protection against "the bounty-fed sugar of Europe." That is to say, being interpreted out of sugartrustese into English, that inasmuch as some European governments are good enough to pay bounties to their sugar refiners upon their sugars which the American workingman consumes, and inasmuch as in due course of trade the American workingman would get the benefit of these foreign bounties in cheaper prices of refined sugar, therefore, the American workingman ought to be taxed enough by the American sugar trust to prevent his getting that benefit. It might spoil him, and incidentally hurt the trust, to make his breakfast table too free. And that is one of the reasons why, though the tariff on raw sugar should be repealed, the tariff on refined sugar should be retained.

But the beet sugar crowd and the American cane growers exhibit no sentiment. Prosperity for Cuba does not appeal to them. Neither does the American workingman's breakfast table. They are out for the "swag" and don't care who knows it. Yet there are signs that out of the conflict of interests between them and the sugar trust a complication may result from which the people will get free sugar. Some of the beet sugar people threaten to make reprisals upon the other crowd if the tariff on raw sugar is repealed. They threaten to tie up the movement for the repeal of the tariff on raw sugar with a proposition to repeal the whole sugar tariff. They would not expect, of course, to have this comprehensive proposition adopted by congress, their purpose being only to head off all legislation. But they might build better than they intend. Their proposition might carry. This is almost too good to hope for. Clashes between financial interests seldom go so far. But it is the only honest disposition of the whole matter.

The sugar tariff is not needed for revenue. Both raw and refined sugar

could be put upon the free list without the slightest risk of a treasury deficit. The tariff on refined sugar, therefore, like that on the raw, is without the slightest legitimate fiscal reason for continuance. The only reason for retaining the former is to take from American consumers of sugar, earnings which belong to them and give them to the sugar trust to which they do not belong. The argument about the "bounty-fed" sugar of Europe is transparently silly. If the people of Europe wish to subsidize American sugar consumers, what of it? What right has congress to interfere, and why should any American, except the American sugar interest, want it to interfere? Suppose Europe should send us everything we need for nothing, would that justify congress in putting countervailing tariffs upon imports so as to compel us to reject the foreign gifts and to buy of our own trusts? To state the matter in the extreme form is to expose the absurdity of all countervailing tariffs. For there is no difference in principle between a countervailing tariff to prevent foreigners from giving us goods outright, and one preventing them from giving us goods at "bounty-fed" prices. The proper solution of the Cuban sugar question is not to reduce the tariff on Cuban sugar. It is not to repeal the tariff on Cuban sugar. It is not to make a "reciprocity" agreement of any kind. The true course, both in good morals and good sense, is to repeal the American tariff on all raw sugar and on all refined sugar. That would not please the beet sugar interests; but legislation which does please any special interest is apt to be bad. It would go too far to please the cane-sugar refiners; but even a sugar trust ought not to expect to have everything exactly as it wants it. On the other hand, however, it would put an end to one kind of tariff robbery, would kill off one kind of law-corrupting combine, would turn one kind of industry away from the public crib to make its own living in an honest way, would protect American workingmen from one species of legalized plunder,

and would afford to Cuba all the commercial benefits which are being now so vociferously demanded for that infant republic. "Abolish the whole sugar tariff!" should be the platform of every newspaper that is not subsidized by the protected sugar interests, and of every congressman who honestly aims to represent all the people in their common interests, and not the special interests of a favored few.

An acrimonious discussion took place in the Senate on the 26th, over a reported interview of Gen. Wheaton's, sent to the American press in a dispatch from Manila. It was a comment by Gen. Wheaton upon the recent anti-imperial speech made in Boston by Mr. Schurman. This speech was especially significant because Mr. Schurman, who is president of Cornell university, was at the head of the first American commission to the Philippines. He had been understood to be opposed to imperialistic expansion, but upon his return was quoted as a convert to the McKinley policy. In his Boston speech referred to above, delivered before the Boston Reform club on the 20th, he was reported as saying that inasmuch as—

both Americans and Filipinos desire the political enfranchisement of the Filipinos, there can be no issue between them except in regard to the time when an independent and sovereign Philippine republic should be established.

In the course of his speech he made this comment upon the American administration in the Philippines:

Those Americans, patriotic but unversed in history, who desire to recreate the Filipinos in their own similitude, will always be able to demonstrate that Oriental clay is still without shape and seamliness in the American potter's hand, and that, for a perfect product, a vessel of honor and glory, the American wheel must be kept going for years, or perhaps for generations, or possibly even for centuries. Heaven save the Filipinos from such an impertinent and meddling earthly creator! The Filipinos are to develop along their own racial lines, not along ours, and it is colossal conceit and impudence to disparage them because they are different from ourselves. Any decent kind of government of the Filipinos, by the Filipinos,

is better than the best possible government of Filipinos by Americans.

He insisted accordingly that—

if the Filipinos are to learn to govern themselves, in the manner of the really free nations, the sooner they get at it the better.

Gen. Wheaton, as reported by Manila dispatches, severely criticized this speech, including the anti-imperialist senators in his strictures, and it was for that criticism, Gen. Wheaton now being on military duty in the Philippines, that some senators urged that he be reprimanded, while others, without approving such criticism by military officers, questioned the authenticity of the alleged interview.

Much more important than Gen. Wheaton's military offense, if he committed one, is the condition in the Philippines which one of his reported remarks disclosed. He was quoted by the dispatch as saying that men are now in prison in the Philippines for remarks such as those of Mr. Schurman. Whether Gen. Wheaton actually said this or not is a minor consideration. The vital question is whether the thing itself is true. Are men in prison in the Philippines, by American authority, for advocating Philippine independence as Mr. Schurman did? The probability is that Gen. Wheaton did say this; and, whether he did or not, the probability is that it is true. For the American commission in the Philippines has provided for just such cases. It has promulgated what it calls "an act defining the crimes of treason, insurrection, sedition, conspiracies to commit such crimes, seditious utterances whether written or spoken," etc., which has the force of law in the Philippines wherever the American military arm reaches, whether it has the sanction of any legitimate law-making power or not. This "act" of the American commission provides, among other things—we quote section 10—that—

Until it has been officially proclaimed that a state of war or insurrection against the authority or sovereignty of the United States no longer exists in the Philippine islands, it shall be unlawful for any person to advocate,

orally or by writing or printing or like methods, the independence of the Philippine islands, or their separation from the United States whether by peaceable or forcible means, or to print, publish or circulate any handbill, newspaper, or other publication advocating such independence or separation. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not exceeding \$2,000 and imprisonment not exceeding one year.

With that provision in force in the Philippines, what value is there to the reports we get at intervals to the effect that the islands are "pacified," or soon will be, and that their people are delighted with American sovereignty? Who in any country would not appear to be delighted with foreign subjugation if he could not express, either orally or in writing, a desire for separation from the invading power, even by peaceable means, without incurring a fine of \$2,000 and imprisonment for a year. In a country where such a decree has the force of law, no expressions of dissatisfaction, however intense the longing for independence might be, could come from anyone but insurgents in the field. And no matter from whom they came, the correspondent at Manila, official or private, who should advise the American people of them, would have to be a hero, for even to publish anything advocating separation from the United States, though only to inform the American people, would be a crime under this imperialistic decree. To those innocent-minded persons who suppose that this country is engaged in conferring the boon of American liberty upon the Filipinos, or that our invasion of those islands is welcomed by all but a few "ladrones," or that the complacent dispatches from Manila on that subject are trustworthy, we commend the thoughtful reading of the gag law which Mr. Taft's commission has imposed upon our Filipino subjects, and which is quoted verbatim above. The Wheaton interview, whether authentic or not, has served a good purpose in calling attention in America to the suppression of free speaking and honest reporting at Manila; and we respect-