Dear Mr. Fourgeé:

I always try to read your Saturday letters in the Inter-Ocean of Chicago. While I cannot always agree with you, I find your Notes stimulating and suggestive.

I have just read your reply to the brumptious free-trader who thought to convert you with a book. I admire the spirit of your reply, and the ease and finish with which you dispose of him. You most clearly state propositions fundamental to the subject - propositions too often unknown or disregarded.

But as I read I thought the free-trader may be half right after all. Free thought, speech, press, vote, why not free trade! And after I had finished reading your article, and sat reflecting upon it, and upon some speeches by protectionists that I also had read, I wondered if life was worth living. There are the horrors of unrestricted competition leading the way to barbarism!

Then my thoughts dwelt upon what little I knew of barbarous peoples, and I tried to recall what unrestricted competition ~~did~~ had done for them. The North American Indians, for instance, those noble tillers sinking under the slavery of unrestricted competition! The more they mined and plowed and sowed and reaped and hammered and wove

and spun and builded and traded and sailed the seas the deeper they sunk into barbarism, until now! Where are they! I never realized until I read your article, just what it was that killed off the Indians, Feejee Islanders, Australians, and other barbarous races. Unrestricte competition!

And again, when we have good stiff protectur tariffs to keep out our commercial enemies we don't have any competition within our own borders. Not a bit of it. We are brothers and help each other. We have all things in common, like the first christians.

Seriously, this seems to be the difference between protectionist and free-trader: the free-trader desires the largest return for the least expenditure, be it the expenditure of labor, commodity or money. The protectionist desires the largest return for the largest expenditure. He is willing, so he argues, to pay the highest prices all round the circle, providing he receives the highest prices. Ofcourse, some one always receives highest prices when some one pays highest prices. But the general rule of economic conduct is to give the least that will procure a given quantity. This is the method of nature. It is common sense. The farmer doesn't sow ten bushels of wheat to the acre for seed when two bushels is the proper quantity. I am no richer in any way when I can earn a dollar a day and must pay a dollar a day for board, than when I can earn five dollars and must pay out five dollars.

And if we as a nation, can avoid the evils of unrestricte competition by adopting the policy of protection

tection,

I would like to ask what, in your opinion, are the schedules in Mr. Mc Kinley's bill (after it became the law of the land) which most effectually accomplished the result?

Supposing I had before me a class of young men studying sociology, and I should say: "Young men, unrestricted competition in the industrial world is a law of barbarism, and just in proportion as we trade with foreign nations we place ourselves at the mercy of this barbaric law. To cure this evil we impose protective duties on imports. A high duty on lumber has been very effectual in counteracting the evil's results of unrestricted competition. Especially has it benefited the farmers of the western prairie states. And while to a large degree the American workingmen in the pineries have been French Canadians, we have succeeded in so shaping conditions that a large number of "lumber kings" has come into being.

The duty on wool is especially designed to benefit those who wear woolen clothing. By paying the farmer higher prices for his wool, he is thus enabled to pay higher prices for what he buys. Now, young gentlemen, this seems to amount to nothing more than saying' if I give you ten dollars you can give me back ten dollars, and if I give you twenty dollars you can give me back twenty dollars,' but in fact it means much more than this. Just what it is, I don't know.

The steel and iron schedule has been the best and strongest barrier against the barbarism of unre-

strictio competition. It has made iron kings by the score. It has invited to our land the most degraded peoples of the old world. These foreign paupers do not ~~compete~~ compete with American workmen, they simply take their places. And the 'kings', like Mr. Carnegie, knowing a good thing when he sees it, spends his vast sums in European capitals. In this he (and his like) is very thoughtful as he takes his dollars, made in this country, to other lands so that they do not compete with the home dollars. He is very patriotic; the barbarism resulting from the competition of dollar with dollar he confines to Scotland, principally. It is hard on the Scotch, tho they make no complaint. And again, young gentlemen, we counteract the harm of unrestricted competition by bounties and subsidies. These bounties and subsidies grow on every bush, so to speak. They do not come by taxation — they just come. Or if they don't come, by some shrewd move we take advantage of a sister nation and get from her something for nothing that we can pay bounties, and premiums, and subsidies to our own people, with. This is not theft; this is the golden rule: we simply do unto them as they would like to do unto us. Remember, we are christian nations. And then we pay such bounties not in order to help our citizens to be more powerful in the warfare of unrestricted competition; these bounties are paid first for fun. And it is beautiful to observe, young gentlemen, that these recipients of gov-

ernmental favor never strive after them, nor influence votes, nor log-roll in congress, nor take advantages of the common citizen. In fact, young gentlemen, look protection up one side and down the other, it is the most unselfish, altruistic, benevolent, Christ-like policy, ever born in Hell, nursed by the Devil, and adopted by men," is this what you mean?

Pshaw! Dourgei, what's the use of your writing such stuff as your last letter as if you had any faith in it. I admire you. You can fairly sweat blood, on paper, for the wrongs done the Negroes. Every whack you give the southern lyncher, or any other lyncher, I say "Amen!" But what's the use, what's the use of being sincere or consistent. Its bounties and premiums and subsidies all we are after. You're a man of keen intellect, you see clearly the main lines, the fundamental principles. Its a queer world tho. Here you sweat blood for the Negro, wage everlasting warfare against injustice, oppression, bribery in high places, faithlessness in Congress, desertion of principle for policy, and wind up by pretending to fall down and worship the golden calves of bounty, premiums and subsidies! But then, a fellow must earn his bread and butter some how.

Yours truly,

Philip Le Compere

Belvidere, Illinois
Oct. 6, 1894.