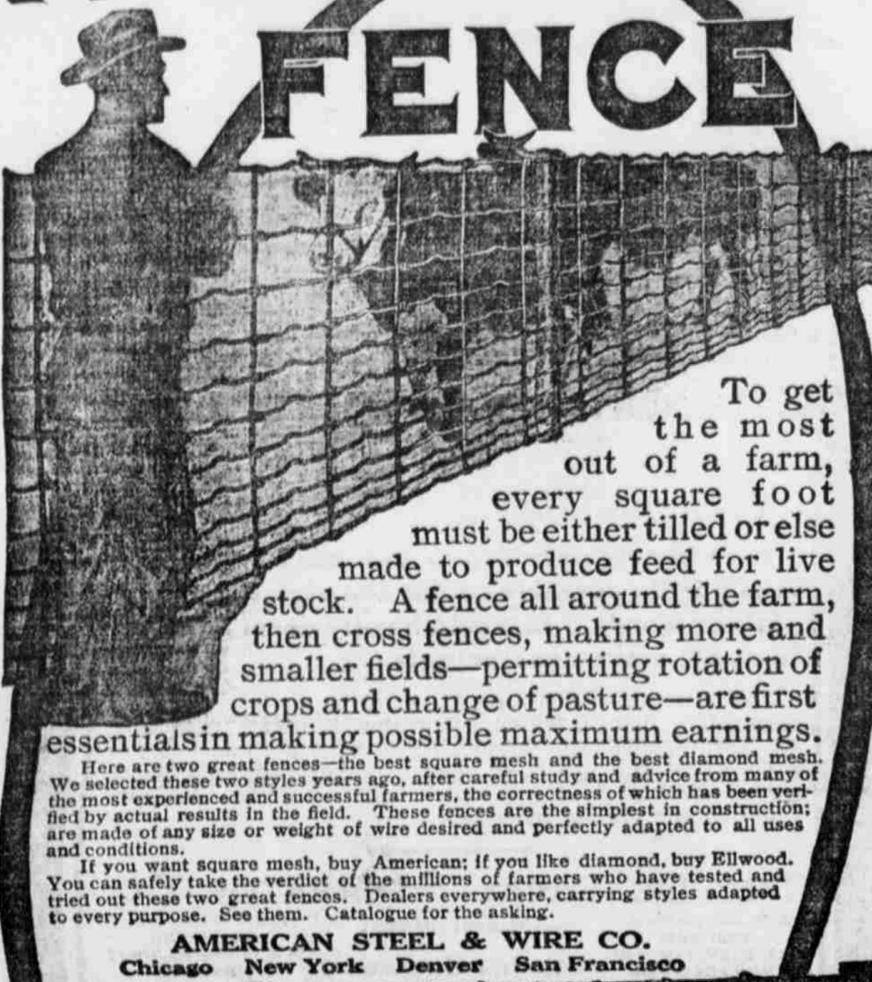


AMERICAN FENCE

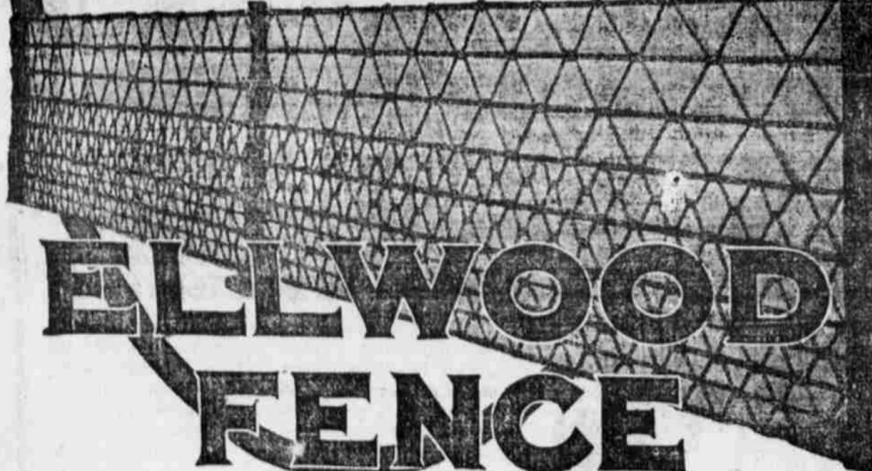


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restaurant, we will say, entombing a tripe sandwich; but that does not deter the speaker from announcing testily after another fruitless glance around the house:

"The gentleman from Missouri asks consideration for the following bill."

The clerk reads the bill and it is passed; and the speaker told the truth, for although nobody in the house heard the gentleman from Missouri ask consideration for the following bill, least of all himself, it's a thousand to one that he had asked consideration for it in the Red room an hour or two before the house met at all. * * *

In some ways he's an engaging old despot, is Uncle Joe, and occasionally his victims have to laugh even while they agonize beneath his yoke. On one occasion an unusually large number of republicans happened to get hungry about the same time, while for some unknown reason the democratic appetite did not require attention. Catching the speaker napping, the democratic floor leader, perceiving that he had a majority, called up a bill and pushed it to a vote. The speaker strung out the voting in all of the various ways that are known to him, but,

at the end of the second roll call, the democratic votes were still in a majority. Though the rules of the house expressly forbade such a thing, a third roll call was ordered by the speaker, a proceeding which called out a red hot protest from one of the democratic leaders who demanded to know the reason for the speaker's extraordinary action. The speaker genially advised the protesting democrat:

"The chair will inform the gentleman," said he. "The chair is hoping that a few more republicans will come in."

A gale of strictly non-partisan laughter swept over the house and, before it had entirely subsided, enough republicans had been rounded up by the hurrying scouts to fulfill the speaker's wish so candidly expressed. * * *

Among the irreverent the judiciary committee is pleasantly known as "the Speaker's Morgue." Troublesome bills are frequently sent there and oftener than not their friends and sponsors never see them more. The judiciary committee is a very busy committee and it takes a long time to reach a bill. There time oft approaches eternity. It has frequently been charged that this com-

mittee has been deliberately packed by the speaker, who has denied the allegation with a high degree of characteristic heat. At all events, all the republican members of this committee eat out of the speaker's hand. Jenkins, of Wisconsin, long a faithful Cannon man, was superintendent of the "morgue," but he was last fall defeated for renomination by Lenroot who made his contest on a red hot anti-Cannon platform. * * *

Next to the speaker himself, more power resides in the committee on rules than anywhere else. This has been composed of the speaker himself; John Dalzell, of Pennsylvania; James S. Sherman, of New York, and two members of the democratic minority, John Sharp Williams and DeArmond, of Missouri, who are figureheads. As Congressman Williams, the former democratic house leader, said of it: "The majority having prepared the outrage, the minority will be summoned to be told what it is." The committee on rules is practically omnipotent as to procedure on the floor of the house. It can at any time report a special rule which takes precedence over everything else and sets aside the standing rule.

John Dalzell and Sereno Payne, who are the two chief assistant barnacles on the hull of the ship of state, and among the half-dozen rulers of the house, under Uncle Joe, are very different men. Payne is chairman of the highly important committee on ways and means, and he is one of the reasons why the tariff stand-patters have had things all their own way up to so recent a date. He is the titular floor leader of the majority, though, as a matter of fact, it is Dalzell who as ranking member of the committee on rules claps on the gag or turns the thumb-screw up another notch whenever emergency requires.

Payne is a large man with a grizzled moustache, a ponderous stomach, and slow and heavy ways of speech and movement. Benevolence is written large upon him—upon the outside. He smiles and smiles and smiles. It is the smile that won't come off. He has an annoying way of saying the most savage things and smiling while he does it. It isn't that he likes to smile. He would probably give a good deal to look as savage as he sometimes sounds. But he just can't make that smile behave. If the truth were known, that stereotyped, unchanging and unchangeable smile is probably the tragedy of his life. But he deceives no one who knows him. Barnacle he is, and as such he will cling closely to his snug place until the ship of state is put into dry dock and he and the other barnacles are scraped off. And if the tariff gets a real revision he will not regard it as his fault but as the result of the clamorings of a misguided populace urged on by demagogues like Andrew Carnegie.

Both Payne and Dalzell are far from gentle in their exercise of the great power that is theirs. They grant and refuse requests with a finality little less than the speaker's own and with far more brusqueness. They are the type of committee bosses whom the unfortunate congressman struggling for his political life at home is most unwilling to offend. For they are merciless and he knows it. Too well he remembers certain victims of their wrath.

Dalzell is in some ways the counterpart of Payne. He is a spare, little man, with quick, alert ways, and is generally regarded as one of the "frostiest propositions" in the house. He is as magnetic as a crutch. He occupies the second place on the big ways and means committee, and as a barnacle his record has been as consistent as that

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