

EDITORIAL

## POETRY IN THE TARIFF DEBATE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**ARIFF debates ever hang swords of Damocles over the heads of a number of Interests, inferentially also over the heads of the Congressmen who represent such interests. The present tariff debate is no exception to the rule. Thereupon a spectacle is seen illustrative of the quality of the human mind that drives grief to break forth in hilarity. The quips of men who are about to be hanged are proverbial. High and low tariff congressmen have enriched the list. They did so in the course of the tariff debate that has just closed in the House of Representatives. They did so in poetry.

A few of these outbursts will typify the rest:

John W. Langley of Kentucky worked into his defense of the American hen this skit:

“Said a Congregational preacher  
To a hen, You are a beautiful creature.  
And the hen just for that,  
Laid an egg in his hat,  
And thus did the hen reward Beecher.”

J. Hampton Moore of Pennsylvania recited this swan’s song:

“Of all the creatures of the land,  
Of pedigrees supremely grand,  
There’s none that do respect command  
Like Garner’s goat of Texas.

“The modest sheep may brouse around  
From Maine way out to Puget Sound,  
But they don’t count a cent a pound  
With Garner’s goat of Texas.

“The noble steer may be of use  
If free from tyrant trust abuse;  
But even that would be the deuce  
To Garner’s goat of Texas.

“If you want wool, the wool is fair,  
If you want hair, the wool is hair;  
If you want meat, the meat is there!  
That’s Garner’s goat of Texas.

“So, while you kick the wool of sheep,  
And beef and mutton make so cheap,  
Protective tariff now will keep  
The Garner goat of Texas.

“Oh, wondrous breed of Lone Star State,  
Premier of wool and hair, thy rate  
Of 10 per cent. is truly great—  
Thou Garner’s goat of Texas.”

Henry A. Barnhart of Indiana warbled this bit of satire:

“There was a man named Joseph Cable,  
Who bought a goat just for his stable;  
One day the goat, too prone to dine,  
Ate a red shirt, right off the line.

“Then Cable to the goat did say:  
‘Your time has come; you’ll die this day.’  
And took him to the railroad track,  
And there he bound him on his back.

“The train then came, and the whistle blew;  
And the goat well knew his time was due,  
But with a mighty shriek of pain,  
Coughed up the shirt and flagged the train.”

James W. Good of Iowa shot this Parthian shot at low tariff meat:

“Hark; the heavenly angels sing,  
‘Beechman’s pills are just the thing!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
Two for a man, one for a child.’”

The tariff debate was carried on in the House of Representatives by barely seven members. The rest of the debaters were “fans” who concealed in enthusiasm their ignorance of the details of production, or who drowned their sorrows in senseless howls, occasionally in doggerel.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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