

CONGRESS IN THE DOG DAYS.

WASHINGTON, D.C. August 27, 1893.—“If Congress were sitting in New York and the Wall street brokers could see it as it is now they would mob the House.”

These were the words of a New York merchant as he stood in the press gallery a few days ago and looked down upon the House during the silver debate. There were one hundred empty chairs on the Republican side of the chamber and every other Democratic desk was vacant. The remainder of the seats contained men who were writing, reading, loafing and chatting, picking their teeth, playing with their keys and doing the thousand and one other thing which the average congressman does when he is not making a speech. Catchings of Mississippi had the floor. A baker's dozen sat around and watched him, and you could not imagine from the scene that we were in the midst of one of the great financial crises of our national life nor think that Congress was going to do much to help us out of it. The people outside of Washington have little idea how the House of Representatives really looks when it is in session. They think that the Democrats and Republicans are at swords points. The truth is some of the strongest friendships of public life are between men of opposite politics. They fight each other in debate like Kilkenny cats, but they hobnob together in the cloak rooms and go about the hall of the House arm in arm. As I write this David B. Henderson of Iowa and Isadore Raynor of Baltimore are laughing together at the back of the chamber. Henderson can't speak without denouncing the Democratic party, and Raynor has never said anything good of the Republicans. On a lounge at the side of the chamber Lafe Pence of Colorado and Bynum of Indiana are telling stories. They had a fight on the floor the other day, but they seem good friends now. Tom Reed and Speaker Crisp are holding a conference in another corner, and the smiles which shine out of the baby face of the ex-czar are thrown back from the brunette phiz of the present ruler of the House.

CONGRESS AND THE DOG DAYS.

The hot weather takes all the dignity out of Congress. The day used to be that no statesman ever appeared in any thing else than a swallow-tail coat with brass buttons. The last of the “steel pen” statesmen passed from the Senate with Omar D. Conger and from the House when Luke P. Poland finished his term. With these came the era of the Prince Albert coat and the double breasted frock, and for a generation or so there was a mixture of swallow-tails and black broadcloth suits. Now every one dresses to please himself and there are seersuckers and dusters to be seen everywhere. One of the queerest dressers is Tom Reed, and he is one of the queerest looking characters on the floor. He weighs over two hundred pounds and he rolls about like an elephant. His every pose would make a newspaper sketch, and he comes out every Congress in a new and striking costume. A year or so ago he wore a white sash about his waist and a derby hat as large as a peck measure. Now he has a rakish sailor straw chapeau and he clothes his great form in a flimsy iron gray stuff which is known here as Kentucky jeans. The cloth is loosely woven and it makes

the wearer feel as though he were dressed in a sieve. The air whistles through it almost without hindrance, and one of Reed's fellow members told me the other day that he had put on one of these suits and had thrown it away. Said he: “It seems so open that I really felt indecent. I imagined every one could see through it and I thought I was naked.” This light suit of Tom Reed's gives him a very different appearance. He is, you know, a strawberry blonde. His big round face is as rosy as that of a baby. His bald pate has the parchment whiteness at the top of a new drumhead and his eyebrows are white, while his little mustache and the fringe of hair about his ears are of a reddish silver. This iron gray suit adds to this white effect and makes the great statesman of Maine a symphony in light gray. It is hard to keep clothes of this material in shape, and Mr. Reed's pantaloons bag at the knees and fit in wrinkles over his yellow shoes. Under his fat chin shines out a sky-blue necktie and he keeps his linen coat buttoned up close at the neck. Physically he appears to be in splendid condition, and mentally he was never greater than he is today. He is by all odds the strongest man on the Republican side of the chamber and his tongue has as much vitrol at its roots as ever.

TOM JOHNSON OF CLEVELAND.

No one ever speaks of Reed otherwise than as “Tom Reed.” He is more like an overgrown boy than a man, and has none of the airs and snobbishness of the five-cent statesman who thinks he is great. The Democratic side of the chamber has also a “Tom.” I refer to Tom Johnson of Cleveland, one of the shrewdest and most practical business men in the House and, at the same time, one of the wildest theorists. Johnson believes in Henry George and he says that his property really belongs to his fellow men as much as himself. I have not noted, however, any inclination on his part to make a division. He is, you know, a street railroad magnate and is probably worth somewhere in the millions.

He began his life as an office boy in Louisville and when he was hardly out of his teens got hold of a street railroad in Indianapolis. The road never amounted to anything while he managed it. He paid no attention to improving it, but he learned the business, made some money and then went to Cleveland. The city was already covered with a net work of roads belonging to close corporations. These objected to Johnson laying new tracks and opposed him in every way. He finally got a charter for a tract down Scoville avenue. This ran through one of the best parts of the town, but he had no line by which he could reach the heart of business and the other roads would not let him go over their tracks. He changed his tactics as to the character of his road from those which he had used in Indianapolis. In Cleveland he put down everything of the very best. He paved Scoville avenue at his own expense, spending \$90,000 on it and made himself noted as a friend of the people. He got a little line of track on the west side of the city and he began to carry passengers from one side of Cleveland to the other for one fare. He had to have omnibuses to carry his passengers two miles in order to do this, but he stuck to it and in this way made himself more

popular, as the regular roads charged two and three fares for the same distance. In the meantime he did everything to get his roads connected. He worked with the city council, but in his own way. He never gave any passes over his road. He said he did not use a pass himself and no one should ride free. He was willing to pay a man or a councilman for his services, but he would not give him a pass. Well, he finally got his measures through and eventually secured one of the most valuable street railway properties of the city. In the meantime he invented a number of things connected with street railroads and he gets a big royalty from these. He has a rolling mill at Johnstown, Pa., and he is said to have an income of a hundred thousand dollars a year. He is a peculiarity among statesmen in that though all of his business is largely protected by the tariff he is a free trader. He frankly says his railroads ought to belong to the city, but until Henry George principles prevail he will keep them. Tom Johnson is a queer looking man. He makes me think of Dickens' fat boy. His round fat head is a cannon ball of rosy flesh, thatched with wavy brown hair and pierced at the front with two bright eyes, which look out at you over a fairly shaped nose. This head is fastened by a short, thick neck, to fat, round shoulders and his roly-poly form-rolls around the house at a good pace. Tom Johnson does not look to be over thirty years old, but he is in reality forty. He is a good off-hand speaker and he is especially happy in ten-minute orations. He dresses in a business suit and cools his fat face during these warm days with a palm leaf fan.

A LOOK AT BOURKE COCKRAN.

One of the most marked men on the floor of the House this session is Bourke Cockran. He would be a striking character if he had no brains, and his figure would attract attention anywhere. The fact that he has brains and an eloquent tongue make him the more interesting. He is one of the straightest men in Congress. His tailor could lay him on his back and measure him for his well-cut suit of clothes and he dresses like a French dandy. He looks like a Frenchman, but he is an Irishman and his voice has all the mellowness of those of the best speakers of old Erin. His French appearance may come from the fact that he was educated in France and also that he is well up in French literature. He reads French and a great many of his heroes are Frenchmen. He is a great admirer of Napoleon and he is not averse to French novels. His mind is well stored with history and he has been practicing stump speaking from his boyhood. His greatest speeches have been made at conventions. He jumped into fame at Chicago when Cleveland was first nominated and he added to his reputation by his great speech at the last convention. Mr. Cockran is a rich man. He lives here at Washington in Secor Robeson's house on 16th street. He paid I think \$87,000 for it. He has a magnificent country seat on Long Island consisting of about 100 acres and his stables are said to be among the finest in the United States. He is fond of horse-back riding and he keeps himself in good physical condition by constant exercise. He has a wonderful lung power and he is a good long distance swimmer. He weighs, I judge, about