

SIDNEY SMITH ON AMERICA

Karl von Herrmann, writing in the Chicago Record-Herald, makes interesting reference to "What Sydney Smith thought of Americans eighty years ago." This writer says:

In all that has been said and written about America's commercial invasion of Europe I have failed to see any reference to the celebrated sneer gratuitously hurled in our direction by Sydney Smith, when, in the Edinburgh Review for January, 1820, he propounded that famous and temporarily embarrassing question, "Who reads an American book?" after figuratively making sorry hash of our fondest hopes. Mr. Smith was reviewing Adam Seybert's "Statistical Annals of the United States," and seized the occasion to lambast this puny little nation to the best of his not-to-be-despised ability. Granting, for the sake of crowing louder afterward, that he in nowise treated us unfairly in considering us as we were then, and that possibly we deserved worse than we got, one cannot but wish that he might return to his former haunts for a period long enough to enable him to reperuse his own pompous balderdash concerning the U. S. A., in the light of things as they are. This is what the gentleman had to say eighty-two years ago:

"Such is the land of Jonathan—and thus has it been governed. In his honest endeavors to better his situation, and his manly purpose of resisting injury and insult, we must cordially sympathize. We hope he will always continue to watch and suspect his government as he now does—remembering that it is the constant tendency of those intrusted with power to conceive that they enjoy it by their own merits and for their own use, and not by delegation and for the benefit of

An Unsubsidized Newspaper.

In a republic where the policies of the government are shaped and controlled by the people through the power of the ballot it is of the first importance that every citizen exercising the right of franchise should keep himself thoroughly acquainted with political affairs. He should realize the responsibility he owes to himself, his children and future generations to use his ballot judiciously and intelligently. He must read and study, then act courageously. The money power of the country has realized the powerful influence of the press and either owns or controls almost every large newspaper in the United States. Much of the truth is kept from the people or they are wilfully deceived by the publication of only half the truth. Every public man who dares to champion the cause of the people is soon the target for slander and ridicule by all the plutocratic press. He is lied about and vilified until his influence is destroyed and the public plunderers continue their work unmolested. However, there is no rule but has its exceptions, and so among newspapers. The Independent, published at Lincoln, Neb., the national paper of the people's party, has always been true to the cause of good government. It discusses every issue of state or national importance, in a fearless, unbiased and scientific manner, and denounces wrong and injustice wherever found. Everywhere it is recognized as the most fearless champion of the rights of the plain people. It deserves the support of every patriotic citizen interested in good government. Write for free sample copy, or, better still, send 10 cents for three months' trial subscription. Address your letters to The Independent, Lincoln, Neb.

others. Thus far we are the friends and admirers of Jonathan. But he must not grow vain and ambitious, or allow himself to be dazzled by that galaxy of epithets by which his orators and newspaper scribblers endeavor to persuade their supporters that they are the greatest, the most refined, the most enlightened and the most moral people upon earth. The effect of this is unspeakably ludicrous on this side of the Atlantic—and even on the other, we should imagine, must be rather humiliating to the reasonable part of the population. The Americans are a brave, industrious and acute people, but they have hitherto given no indications of genius, and made no approaches to the heroic, either in their morality or character. They are but a recent offshoot, indeed, from England, and should make it their chief boast, for many generations to come, that they have sprung from the same race with Bacon, Shakespeare and Newton. Considering their numbers indeed, and the favorable circumstances in which they have been placed, they have yet done marvelously little to assert the honor of such a descent, or to show that their English blood has been exalted, or refined, by their republican training and institutions. Their Franklins, and Washingtons, and all the other sages and heroes of their revolution, were born and bred subjects of the king of England—and not among the freest or most valued of his subjects. And, since the period of their separation, a far greater proportion of their statesmen and artists and political writers have been foreigners than ever occurred before in the history of any civilized and educated people. During the thirty or forty years of their independence they have done absolutely nothing for the sciences, for the arts, for literature, or even the statesmanlike studies of politics or political economy. Confining ourselves to our own country, and to the period that has elapsed since they had an independent existence, one would ask, Where are their Foxes, their Burkes, their Sheridans, their Windhams, their Wilberforces?—where their Arkwrights, their Watts, their Davys?—their Robertsons, Blairs, Smiths, Stewarts, Paleys and Malthusen?—their Parsons, Parrs, Burneys or Blomfields?—their Scotts, Campbells, Byrons, Moores or Crabes?—their Siddonses, Kembles, Keans or O'Neils?—their Wilkies, Laurences, Chantryes?—or their parallels from our little island, who, in the course of the last thirty years, have blest or delighted mankind by their work, inventions or examples? Insofar as we know there is no such parallel to be produced from the whole annals of this self-adulating race. In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? What does the world owe to American physicians or surgeons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? or what old ones have they analyzed? What new constellations have been discovered by the telescopes of Americans? What have they done in mathematics? Who drinks out of American glasses? or eats from American plates? or wears American coats or gowns? or sleeps in American blankets? Finally, under which of the old tyrannical governments of Europe is every sixth man a slave, whom his fellow creatures may buy, and sell, and torture?"

It would be vastly instructive and entertaining to take the trouble to answer this document piecemeal, but it would require a whole series of large, fat volumes—and what's the use? Verily, times have changed since grandpa was a little boy!

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An Abortive Cleveland Boom.

The democratic "reorganizers," who so signally failed to demonstrate their strength and influence in the recent congressional and state elections are making a desperate effort to "rejuvenate" Mr. Cleveland as a presidential possibility.

It is pointed out that he is the only democratic nominee elected to the presidency since the war, and it is gravely contended that no other man of the present day can win as a democratic candidate.

In the first place the contention is unsound. It is mere assertion to say that the democratic party contains but one man in whom the country has sufficient confidence to make him president. If it were true, then his election would be a personal triumph and would signify nothing for democratic principles; and if that be the condition we should surrender the party name and disband, for if we have nothing more cohesive than Mr. Cleveland's personality we do not deserve success and we cannot endure after he passes away. All of which is the rankest nonsense.

In the second place the election of Mr. Cleveland, conceding for the moment that he can be nominated, will mean the certain and speedy revival of populism and the disintegration of democracy. The anti-Cleveland democracy is not identical with populism, but the two elements entertain in common an unyielding hostility to the greedy money interest which Mr. Cleveland represents as truly as Mr. Hanna represents it and more than Mr. Roosevelt represents it. Indeed, it is plain to see behind the Cleveland movement a design to commit both parties to a Wall street policy and to anticipate a possible anti-trust campaign by Roosevelt with a positive pro-trust campaign by Cleveland.

It is true that Mr. Cleveland is strong in certain quarters of the east, and it is true that the party needs help from those quarters. But Mr. Cleveland would win, if he should win at all, not by reason of his democracy, but by reason of the policies on which he is in a state of antagonism to democracy.

The Cleveland promoters are counting upon a solid south, and they would likely receive it in the election, though this must not be too confidently assumed. It is altogether possible that a revival of populism and a coalition with the republicans might cost one or more southern states. But one thing may be assumed for a certainty, and that is that Mr. Cleveland cannot be nominated by the help of a single southern state, and the south has a right to protest against the false expediency of a nomination which will wreck the party and expose this section again to the terrors of populism.

If Mr. Cleveland is unselfishly desirous of democratic success he will hasten to forbid the use of his name in this connection and then throw the weight of his personal following to the cause of the party under such leadership as the party may choose.—Houston Post.

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