

Approaching a Political Climax

"Some metropolitan newspapers do not require that their editors shall possess even ordinary intelligence. If they did, several men now engaged in befogging knowledge by writing editorials would be earning an honest living at manual labor. Nowhere is there displayed such crass ignorance of public sentiment as on the editorial pages of those New York newspapers which wear the greatest air of profound wisdom.

"The foregoing paragraph is written with the New York Sun particularly in mind. It applies with equal force, however, to several other great journals of the most provincial city on the continent. Published as they are within the zone of crooked finance, and drawing both inspiration and sustenance from big business, these newspapers are apparently unaware of the existence of any voters outside the area of their own city, or of any public sentiment worth taking into account except that dictated by Wall Street.

"The best illustration of this utter provincialism is furnished by the present political attitude of those newspapers. They are laboring to bring about a condition whereby the progressives of both old parties shall be prevented from casting a progressive ballot in the presidential election next year. They seem to believe that such a condition can be created. They assume that the reactionaries will be able to control the republican party, and to bring about President Taft's renomination. Therefore their energies are being directed toward the capture of the democratic party by the plunderbund for which they speak.

"Their object, of course, is to nominate on the democratic ticket a man like Judson Harmon, or some other candidate as satisfactory as President Taft to the forces of reaction. They believe, or seem to believe, that the progressive democrats and the progressive republicans, as in days of old, can be induced to align themselves on one side or the other in a sham battle between these twin candidates of special privilege and vested wrong.

"Nobody can blame a flabby and swollen beneficiary of privilege for entertaining the notion that the progressives can be disfranchised by the simple process of buying the two old party organizations. It is characteristic of the intellect which devotes itself exclusively to making money, that it believes unquestioningly in the omnipotence of the dollar, and is consequently unable to understand that anybody can be influenced by other than sordid motives. It is true, moreover, of the bourbon mind in every age of the world that it has been totally incapable of sensing public sentiment. But of trained newspaper men, whose mission in life is to read and interpret public sentiment, something better is expected. They are looked to to produce a higher grade of intelligence than the fat-necked and dull-witted financier or tariff beneficiary whose pocket they serve.

"In the case of several New York editors of distinction, however, it is painfully evident that they have sunk to the intellectual level of their employers. Hence they imagine that a double-barrelled scheme of political reaction can be worked out in American politics; that both parties can be brought to serve the Mammon of Unrighteousness, and that after the candidates are nominated predatory wealth may take its ease and view the result in November with stolid indifference.

"Now, if there is one thing in politics more certain than another, it is that the progressives are not going to be disfranchised. They will most surely find a way of expressing their opinions at the ballot box. If that opportunity be denied by both existing parties, a new party will be born—a party certain to receive millions of votes, and which, while it may not be immediately successful, will close one epoch in American politics and usher in a new one.

"The immediate effect of the birth of such a party would be the disappearance of either the republican or the democratic party along the gloomy trail to limbo which the whig party travelled over sixty years ago. Our national experience has proven that there is not room enough in this country for more than two chief political parties. When the slave interest captured both the whig and the democratic organizations, a new party was born almost in a day, and the whig party vanished into the realm of

things forgotten. History is bound to repeat itself if the reactionary leaders of this day force the progressives to form a new party.

"Most of the reactionary press of the country just now is professing an ostentatious devotion to the welfare of the democratic party. It makes that pretense because of superficial indications that the democratic party is to win the next presidential election, and because its masters wish it to be on the ground floor. The real owners of these newspapers believe they can serve their purpose best by pretending to be democratic. It would seem that the democratic party had been afflicted sorely enough in the past few years without having to suffer the visitation of this latest scourge, but evidently it was not to be.

"Of course all the advice which the reactionary press gives to the democratic party is bad advice. It cannot help being bad, because it is prompted not by a desire to conserve the party welfare, but by a desire to promote the financial interests of men who have no party. Followed, such advice would either wreck the party, or, in the event of a victory, would make that victory more costly than a defeat.

"Take the case of the New York Sun as an example. Here is a list of some of the things it has advocated since the democratic success last fall, following which it edged itself over into the democratic camp:

- 1. Election of W. F. Sheehan and 'Jim' Smith as United States senators from New York and New Jersey respectively.
2. Denial of statehood to Arizona, because that state's constitution provides for direct legislation and the recall.
3. Elevation of Fitzgerald and other notorious Cannon democrats to places of importance in the house organization.
4. Defeat of direct primary legislation in New York, New Jersey, and other states where the democratic party for the first time in years is in control.
5. Nomination of a 'conservative' democrat for president in 1912.

"These, of course, are mere details of a general program so reactionary that, if carried out, it would drive from the party ranks progressive democrats by the millions. The program differs in no moral particular from the course followed by the stand-pat republicans—the following of which caused the republican party to be repudiated at the polls. It goes without saying that the man or the newspaper that advocates it knows nothing of and cares nothing for real democracy. An attempt to commit the democratic party to it is inspired either by treachery, or by a belief that an extreme reactionary policy will win enough votes in the east and in the solid south to elect a president satisfactory to big business.

"It may be the result of deliberate calculation. Possibly a reactionary democrat might be elected in 1912 as a result of the formation of an independent progressive party. But even that is figuring on only one presidential campaign, and takes no account of the future. The ultimate result of the formation of a progressive party is bound to be an alignment of all the voters in two parties—one reactionary and the other progressive—and unless big business has gone mad it is not trying to bring about that result.

"It is perfectly clear, however, that reactionary democrats will make a desperate attempt to control the democratic national convention. That effort will be backed by all the money needful for a campaign of corruption, intimidation and political debauchery. It will command the support of every reactionary democratic politician in the United States, as well as the support of every timid democratic business man, who, after all, would serve the democratic party best by getting out of it.

"These politicians and business men are in the democratic party under false pretenses. To save their lives they could not intelligently differentiate themselves from stand-pat republicans. They have bolted the democratic ticket in three presidential contests; they have no comprehension of what democratic principles are; they simply sail under a black flag. But they are influential and powerful in the democratic organizations of too many states, and they constitute a black menace to the success of progressive democracy working within democratic party lines.

"It is already apparent that, barring some political cataclysm, reactionaries will control

the republican party, and that President Taft will be renominated. Whatever the progressive leaders may do—whether they bolt or yield a nominal allegiance to the party nominee—the progressive rank and file will not vote for Mr. Taft.

"These progressive republicans can be attracted to the democratic ticket if there is virtue enough left in the democratic party to attract them. Much depends, of course, on the developments in the new democratic congress; but even more will depend upon the action which the democratic party takes in its national convention, namely, the character of its nominees and the declarations of its platform.

"If the schemes now incubating in the financial centers of the country can be worked out, no effort will be made by the democratic party to attract the independent and progressive vote. The plan is to nominate a reactionary in each party, and firm in the delusion that the voters can be bamboozled forever, to let the election take care of itself.

"In the light of what has happened in the past few years to awaken public sentiment and to enlighten public intelligence, is it possible that such a scheme can succeed—even at the next election?"—D. K. L., in The Public, (Louis F. Post's paper.)

THE MEXICAN TROUBLE

The Mexican trouble assumed a serious aspect when the Mexican troops undertook to capture the Mexican town of Agua Prieta, near the Arizona border. The revolutionists, repulsed the government troops and the bullets from both sides fell in Douglas, Arizona, wounding five Douglas residents. A troop of United States cavalry sought to protect the residents of Douglas, but its efforts were in vain. Later Balarario Garcia, commander of the revolutionists at Agua Prieta surrendered himself to Captain Gaujot, of the First United States cavalry.

Governor Sloan, of Arizona, reported to President Taft the firing upon Douglas and advised that radical measures were necessary to protect Arizona people. The president replied to the governor, saying that, while he appreciated the seriousness of the situation, he was reluctant to take radical measures because the motives of the American government might be misconstrued; he said he had warned both the Mexican government and the leaders of the revolutionists.

President Taft later laid the entire matter before leading members of congress, letting it become known that United States troops would not cross the border unless authorized by congress.

Senator Stone, of Missouri, offered in the senate, a resolution calling for investigation by the committee on foreign relations as to the Mexican situation. The resolution was tabled at Senator Stone's request, and he will later make a speech upon it.

Have you ever seen the dam that is being built at Keokuk, Iowa? If not it will pay you to turn aside and inspect it. It is one of the really great engineering enterprises of the generation.

HE DIED SMILING

A Cleveland, O., correspondent for the Louisville (Kentucky) Times, sent to his newspaper this dispatch, concerning the late Tom L. Johnson:

During his last illness Mr. Johnson was requested to write his autograph in the birthday book of Miss Louise Graham, a friend of the family. Commenting on the paragraph he selected, Mr. Johnson's secretary remarked on its appropriate sentiment. Mr. Johnson said he "hoped it would be so," and signed his name to the following quotation:

"His face was a thanksgiving for his past life and a love letter to all mankind."

When Arthur Fuller, the chauffeur for Mr. Johnson, visited the patient Sunday afternoon he remarked that his employer was still smiling.

"Yes, Arthur, I'm dying, but I still have my smile, and I am going to die smiling," replied the former mayor.

And he did, the end coming at 8:47 o'clock.