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OBSERVATIONS

To the Editor of The Courier:
You say that Nebraska will give a plurality for McKinley and "sound money." Do you not know that the people of this state, of all parties, are clamoring for free silver? On what do you base your opinion? Yours respectfully,
E. J. B.

Seward, Neb., July 6, 1896.
Some people in Nebraska are clamoring for the free coinage of silver. Nebraska is a great state for clamor. A few years ago there was a clamor for constitutional prohibition all over the state. The question was submitted to the people. It was argued, and it was dismissed. At another time there was a clamor, precipitated by Jay Burrows, that Nebraska was hopelessly ruined by the burden of farm mortgages. The subject was investigated, and it was found that the farm mortgages represented substantial, permanent improvements, and that the average and total were lower than in other progressive and prosperous states. The bugaboo ceased to frighten and the clamor died out. Then Jay Burrows and his co-workers went into the business of farming the farmers and they succeeded in producing a big crop of Farmers' Alliances. There was a loud clamor for communism, for the government ownership of railroads. There was a clamor for public warehouses. There was a clamor for government loans on farm products. So, for years, clamor has succeeded clamor. The people in this state are used to it. It has been dimmed into their ears.

There is, undeniably, a clamor for free silver now going up. The sentiment and specious reasoning that used to be directed to impressionable people for the purpose of working up opinion favorable to prohibition, or general socialism, or government loans on corn and cabbage, are now addressed to the people in the interest of the free silver fad, and a little investigation will prove to the satisfaction of anybody or everybody that the mass of the people who are now for free silver are the very people who, a few

years ago, were clamoring, just as noisily, for prohibition, for government ownership of railroads, for public storehouses, for the issuance of money on piles of perishable products. They are the people who are imbued with the idea that, in some way, the legislature or congress can and should pass a law paying everybody's debts, or putting so much money into everybody's pockets, or distributing a certain quantity of happiness among all the people. They have a vain idea that by some legal, governmental process, anybody may be suddenly made rich and happy. Successive fads have distracted their attention from the serious business of creating prosperity out of the earth and building up individual success. They have forgotten that the greatest office of the government is to protect them in their industry and in their various social relations, and to secure permanent prosperity by the stability of the nation's money and the fixity of all commercial laws, leaving to the individual the work of building his own fortune.

There is a considerable number of these people, and they are raising a considerable clamor. But here in Nebraska we have heard so much of clamoring that sober, intelligent people have learned to distinguish between noise and numbers. We have heard the din of the various clamors lessen and die away. We have seen reason conquer rant, honesty prevail over hypocrisy, intelligence supercede idiosyncrasy, and the experience of the past is ample reason for the belief that the people of Nebraska will sift this latest fad to the bottom and, when the time for voting comes, see that this state shall take its position on the side of the policy that insures the maintenance of national credit and honor, that guarantees protection to the wages of the working people, that says our currency shall not be debased and defiled. When the people have studied and investigated they have always come out on the right side.

It must not be forgotten that this money question has never been adequately presented in this state. The republican party has never addressed itself seriously to the task of combating the silver heresies. McKeighan and Kem and Bryan and VanWyck have spoken to thousands on the emotional side of this question; while our speakers and orators and writers have, for the most part, contented themselves with personalities. They have presented their views seriously, persistently. We have answered with jests and sneers. We have not settled down to the business of meeting argument with argument, as we will have to settle down in the campaign that is now about to open. The great mass of silver advocates in this state have never listened to but one side of the question. For the next four months they will have the other side put before them, and we are confident that when the republicans of republican Nebraska once look into this great and momentous problem they will abide by republican and honest policy and show to the people of this country that Nebraska is republican still, that the people of Ne-

braska are not in favor of repudiation or ruin.

We have too much faith in the ultimate wisdom of the people of this great, prosperous, progressive state, to believe that they will commit themselves to a policy that would, primarily, disrupt every business interest in the United States and spread panic and ruin; that would crowd into this country the \$1,500,000,000 of silver bullion European nations are waiting to work off on the first victim, and drain us of our gold; that would take the United States out of the rank of the most advanced nations of the earth, wherein there is a premium on manhood and intelligence, and place us on an equality with such nations as China, Japan and Mexico, wherein silver is free and men are slaves, where ignorance and poverty and misery are the common lot; that would cut in half the day's wages of the laborer, and reduce by 50 percent the \$1,800,000,000 of workingmen's deposits in savings banks; that would utterly destroy the credit of this nation abroad by adopting as the nation's debt-paying money a currency composed, one half of value and one half of repudiation.

The debate between Mr. Bryan and Mr. Irish at Crete last Saturday attracted considerable attention, and has been the subject of much discussion. In Mr. Irish, who is a prominent democrat, our own jingling orator met a man well able to cope with the ablest speakers in the country, and Mr. Bryan was kept busy. We will not say that Mr. Irish, representing the cause of honest money, completely vanquished his opponent. That would be untrue. Neither will we say that Mr. Bryan came off victor. That would be equally untrue. The fact of the matter is the men were pretty evenly matched.

Some able men have been pitted against Mr. Bryan, notably Allen W. Field and E. Rosewater, but no Nebraskan who has met him in joint debate on the money question has possessed the superficial, showy qualities of the trick speaker, which so conspicuously distinguish Mr. Bryan. Judge Field and Mr. Rosewater were argumentative, but lacking the theatrical ability, the art of the comedian, the facility of the oratorical gymnast, that, unfortunately, count more with the average political audience than sober sense or solid argument—and we do not wish to be understood as saying that Mr. Bryan did not make use of legitimate argument—they failed, in a measure, to meet the requirements of the crowds that listened to the debates. But Mr. Irish is something of an actor himself, agile, facile, quick-witted. He has played the same role that Mr. Bryan is now playing. He was a boy orator himself in Iowa for ten or fifteen years, and he is versed in the tricks of boy orators. So when our boy orator made a thrust the other boy orator parried; when Mr. Bryan smiled and danced an intellectual skirt dance Mr. Irish dropped into low comedy. It was give and take, nip and tuck, a spirited, flashing, showy, superficially brilliant combat; and it

was interesting.

Mr. Bryan was in the house of his friends, and he had the advantage of being on the emotional side of the subject. He elicited the most applause. On the other hand, when the debate was over, Mr. Irish received the most congratulations—and the congratulations came from sober, thinking people. In addition to possessing the gifts in which Mr. Bryan is well nigh perfect, Mr. Irish is generously stocked with intellect, and he made much sound argument. He was entertaining and instructive. It is to be hoped that the people of Nebraska will have frequent opportunities to hear Mr. Irish in the coming campaign.

Much has been said in these columns about the variability, the volatile quality, of the people who make up the population of this part of the west. We have no settled convictions. We run after fads. We are influenced by trivial circumstances. We are easily moved by emotion and stirred by prejudice. We are in an ecstasy of optimism one day, and deep in the depths of despair the next. A few months ago the people of Nebraska were greatly depressed and disheartened. Successive crop failures had brought the people to the point of despondency. But hope took hold of us and raised us up. A large crop was put in. The sun shone. The rain descended. The sun came out brighter and warmer. The rain came again in grateful quantity. And thus passed the months of May and June. It seemed as if the heavens had concentrated their blessings on Nebraska. Never did nature appear in more luxuriant or beautiful attire. The earth exhaled a promise of glorious harvest, and men sang with joy. They forgot the disappointments of the past and became rare optimists. But now, in the last week or two, discouragement has begun to take on its hold again. Complaint is heard on all sides. There is no contentment that Nebraska will not raise the greatest crop ever yielded by our fertile soil. It is not quantity that is bothering. It is the price that it will fetch. There is talk about 7 cent oats and 12 cent corn. And some farmers are saying that times will be worse than ever in Nebraska.

Here in Nebraska we have a disagreeable way of periodically raising up some will-o'-the-wisp and frightening ourselves by telling ourselves what a terrible thing it is. Suppose prices are low. It is estimated that this year's corn crop in this state will reach the enormous total of 225,000,000 bushels. Should the entire crop be sold at the low price of 12 cents there would be realized the comfortable sum of \$28,000,000. But a large quantity of it will bring a much higher price. The prevailing low prices cannot long continue. Our corn may bring us \$50,000,000. And there will be an immense sum realized from oats and wheat and hay and beets. When it is considered that we have raised practically nothing in the last three years it must be admitted that even with exceptionally low prices, there must be a decided improvement in business conditions