

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

The Bryan-Irish debate on the 4th was a revival of the excitement of 120 years ago on the same day in July. The auditorium at Crete holds about four thousand people and the "standing room only" sign was put up and taken down again. One end of the shed, which is all that the auditorium is, is filled up by a platform which extends across it from side to side. The roof and pillars are painted white so that the interior is lighted by reflected and twice reflected light. The open sides of the shed are so low that only the grass and trees are visible from the inside. Even on the sunniest day, therefore, the light in the pavillion is grateful. The platform that fills the end of the shed was filled with two or three hundred people, most of whose faces are familiar to Lincoln people. Nobody was sure that in a few days one of the debators would not be the nominee of a great party for president. All the interest that a people feels in the heir apparent this audience felt in looking at Mr. Bryan. He was not self-conscious under the scrutiny, but bore it with a dignity that showed him not unfitted, so far as aspect goes, for the office which, if a democrat should fill it, Nebraska republicans would be pleased, in spite of party, to see Mr. Bryan fill. Mr. Irish looked stern and determined. While his opponent was speaking his lips were set firmly together and he looked mad; so did the solid gold advocates who came up from Lincoln. Mr. Harwood, Mr. Whedon, Mr. Low, Mr. Wing and Mr. Burnham. None of Mr. Bryan's sallies and flashes amused them. So far as they were concerned, white cotton gloves, crepe hat bands and Mr. J. Sterling Morton would have added only to the funeral aspect. Their gloom would have satisfied the spectacular love of mourning inherent in an Irishman or a darkey. On the other side Mr. Bryan was flanked by vociferous silver men that laughed on both sides and yelled for Mr. Bryan only. The latter's large, regular features are fitted for the stage. He is at his best when opposed, though after speaking for a few moments he controls the audience, whether it be of his own political faith or not. His absolute control of the situation, nettled Mr. Irish, who was somewhat at a disadvantage, having just arrived from California. Probably no orator in the country has the coolness and the skill to turn unfortunate remarks and accidents to his own advantage that Mr. Bryan has. If he should ever be elected president some of the most important rights granted by the people to individuals might change hands. It is just such men as the laboring man discontented with his position and anxious to select representatives who will listen to his side of the story. Attention to their complaints may cause changes, which, of course, are to be deplored. A matter of such national importance as the grass around the White house might be overlooked by a man like Mr. Bryan. He would listen to what an army of tramps had to say just for the sake of appearances and because they were men. Such a course would be destructive to the peace that it is desirable to maintain. "Every man in his place" is the only rule for quiet, though only a few are brave enough to announce it.

Except the pyrotechnics inside the auditorium on the afternoon of the Fourth there were none to be heard on the grounds. The Chautauqua small boy was content with very few and small firecrackers, which, of course, he had set off long before noon-time.

Today, Wednesday the 8th, is the first day that rain has fallen. The grounds are in good shape. The grass is at its thickest, the foliage as its

thickest. Ornithologists say that there are more birds in Nebraska than in any other one state of the union. Most of them have come to Chautauqua. I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Brown Thrush, as well as hundreds of sparrows, wrens, meadow-larks, martens, robins, orioles, and a humming bird or two, besides others in the woods that hide or skim by too rapidly for recognition.

Superintendent Scott is lecturing on the later Bible writing done, more especially by the Germans. Dr. Scott is a clear and concise thinker and his addresses are shaped by these qualities. His speeches have body, a head and extremities. He has read the later German, English and Scotch writers on the Bible. The attitude of the German religious mind on biblical subjects is sincere, at the same time reverent. It is critical to the extent of rejecting the errors due to an oriental imagination and the crudeness of a very early people, and acute enough to appreciate the unique greatness of Christ's character.

Dr. Scott, with the face of an ascetic, has a spirit steeped in kindness. The aroma of it fills the consciousness when he speaks.

In spite of the hard times the assembly is coming out ahead this year. Mr. Welch has advertised it better than in previous years and the program is better.

The grounds are beautiful and except for the rain of Wednesday the weather has been delightful.

The Slayton jubilee singers are very pleasing when they sing darkey songs. The sentimental, however, seems to be as irresistible to them as to the Telyn quartet, who seem to think love the only lyric.

S. B. H.
Crete, Nebraska, July 8th.

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