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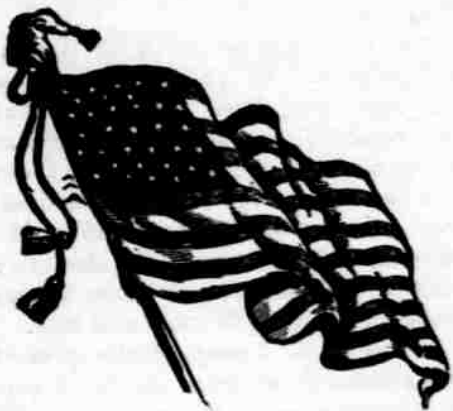
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OBSERVATIONS

When Mr. Bryan was nominated for president by the national popocratic party an unwonted fervor was imparted to politics in this state. In this city, where the penalty for taking the state capital from Omaha and not locating it in Nebraska City, has been constant political turbulence, the enforced company of political adventurers, the example of politicians' shiftlessness, the effect of the sudden elevation of the Boy of destiny has been particularly marked.

If we were surfeited with politics before the late unpleasantness in Chicago we have been buried beneath the crushing burden of it ever since. When the Boy emerged from gloom in Chicago and became the dazzling center of light there was started an avalanche of agitation in this city that has all but overwhelmed us. Mr. Bryan has a good deal to answer for in disturbing the home life of our people and in making politicians of us all, even of the children, and when he comes back to us after November 3, our sympathy for his mis-

fortune will be tempered by a feeling of vengeance for making ward heelers of our women and political pests of the little children.

Lincoln presents a political aspect that is nearly if not quite unique. With the possible exception of Canton it is doubtful if there is another city in the country of any thing like Lincoln's size that has a political activity at all comparable to Lincoln's. There wasn't much business doing before the campaign commenced. Now there isn't any. Everything, except politics is in a state of statu quo. Politics is warmer than the boiling springs, livelier than a merry go round.

We have in this city a considerable class of people superinduced to abstinence from work, people with a natural inclination to garrulity, with an inherent fondness for basking in the sunshine. These lazaroni have always had a bent for congregating at the intersection of our principal streets, and congesting the avenues of trade. They have sunned themselves and set their tongues wagging on politics, while, mayhap, the wife was bending over the washboard at home, and the little children were searching the railroad tracks and sundry back yards in quest of wood and coal. But as soon as the Boy spoke his piece in Chicago and was called to take his place at the head of the screaming popocratic brigade, these were rapidly increased in number. Where before at Eleventh and O, there were ten or twelve gentlemen of elegant leisure, there are now one and two hundred, and sometimes the ranks are swollen to several times this size. Garrulity has given place to impassioned eloquence and wild gesticulation. These street corner gatherings are no longer annoyances merely. They are public nuisances, an advertisement of municipal shiftlessness, an obstruction to business. This wonderful development of street corner politics was the first result of the apotheosis of the beautiful Boy. In other cities men gather on the streets to talk politics, but Lincoln is the only city where garrulous political gossips and wild eyed cranks have been allowed to take complete possession of the public thoroughfares.

The visitor who comes to this city for the first time in these hysterical days is shocked at the changing spectacle of puling patriotism. He is bewildered by the prevalence of idleness. He wonders if all the people of Mr. Bryan's city have no occupation, and are able, like the Boy, to make a living out of politics. He is surprised and shocked, and if he came, intending to transact any business, he leaves town by the first train—in disgust. Travellers and newspapers are carrying tales of these street

mobs, and far and wide are we being advertised as a lot of screaming idlers.

It is wonderful how idleness is conducive to wisdom. Did you ever stop to think, gentle reader, how much more these shambling sidewalk gentry know about all the questions of the day than you do? These men of the streets, these men who make up the human blockades, not only possess all knowledge, but they are men of the ripest judgment. They are statisticians and philosophers, preachers and poets. Venture into any one of these throngs and at random ask, "What was the public debt in 1873?" and you will find out to a fraction of a cent. The information you secure may not exactly coincide with the figures you already have on the subject, but candidly, would you not rather trust these men of leisure, who have time to think, than a mere machine like the secretary of the treasury, for instance? You can gather more facts about this nation than you ever dreamed of, in a five minutes' attendance upon one of these public intelligence offices. You can learn more beautiful schemes of government than ever Moore put in his Utopia or Bellamy gave to fiction, or were gathered together in the new Atlantis. Venture into one of these gatherings at Eleventh and O, and you will be convinced that you are at the source of all knowledge—the fountain head. You will stand appalled at the ebullition of intellect. You will appreciate, perhaps for the first time, the miserable paucity of your own knowledge. These men, who have nothing on earth to do but plan schemes for the salvation of the country certainly do a proper job. Perhaps, after all, their wisdom is an adequate excuse for their idleness.

A few days ago we spent a few minutes in one of these gatherings that are daily instructed by Col. Pace and Father Hardy et. al., and learned that:

George Washington was the first man to advocate the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one, without waiting for the consent of any nation on earth.

Thomas Jefferson believed exactly the same things that the Boy believes.

This is the worst country on the face of the earth for the poor man.

The national debt is larger now than it has been since the war, and the taxes are higher than they have been since the war.

Abraham Lincoln advocated the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one, without waiting for the consent of any nation on earth.

The only thing that has interfered with our prosperity in recent years was the "crime of '73."

Into this arena plunge all of the

bright minds and idle bodies, without reference to color, weight or previous condition of servitude. Sam Grant may find himself in close juxtaposition with Patsy Mears, and John Wingo may touch shoulders with Ah Long. The negro and the Irish, the German and the Swede and the American—they are all there. These meetings are erudite and cosmopolitan. But they are not all the Boy has done for us.

The second distinctive manifestation is pictorial. This presidential campaign, more than any that have preceded it, is heightened and made spectacular by the lithographer's art. Lincoln was one of the first cities to catch on to the illustrative features of the prevailing excitement, and the result is our erstwhile happy homes are transformed into political signboards. Windows that used to let in the sun light now show to the passer-by the stern and serious countenance of the "advance agent of prosperity" or the bland visage of the Boy.

Some years ago it was the custom to suspend ground glass transparencies of Niagara Falls and other exciting scenery in the front parlor windows. The custom finally gave way, probably because people got tired of looking at the world out of doors through the translucent falls or the geysers in Yellowstone Park. The pictures of the Major and the Boy are certainly a big improvement over the old fashioned inarties. The houses are dotted and placarded as if quarantined or to let. At first a stranger might imagine everybody wanted gasoline, or had furnished rooms for rent, or would like day boarders, or any old thing. But a closer view discloses the familiar countenances, and the heart of the partisan swells with joy as he parades by McKinleyized or Bryanized residences, as the case may be. Republicans who walk down town have carefully selected their routes, and they walk on those streets only that exhibit a preponderance of McKinley lithographs. Followers of the Boy in like manner select for their daily march those streets where they may gaze upon the Bryan glad smile every two or three minutes. Candor compels us to add that the admirers of the Boy have a dizzy, zig-zag time of it keeping in sight of their favorite.

Pictures of McKinley are especially numerous and prominent in the neighborhood of the Boy's house on D street. We met the other day a man who lives a few blocks from Mr. Bryan. He was carrying a Bryan picture. We remonstrated with him because we had observed that his house was already decorated with a McKinley lithograph. "That's all right," he said. "The McKinley picture was hung up in the