

"FALLEN IDOLS" = A TALK TO INDIANA DEMOCRATS

Before the Jackson club at Lafayette, Ind., January 8, 1906, Richard L. Metcalfe speaking on the topic: "Fallen Idols," said:

Mr. Toastmaster and Gentlemen of the Jackson Club: I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honor conferred upon me when I was invited to address this gathering of Indiana democrats.

We meet tonight under strange conditions. It has recently been revealed that for several years a considerable portion of the American people have been worshipping at a false shrine. They have been told that for every ray of sunshine, for every drop of rain, for every blade of grass, for every ear of corn, and grain of wheat, for health, for peace, and for all the good and wholesome gifts, they are indebted to the republican party. They have been assured that every tear that falls responsive to another's woe, every hand held out in help to a troubled creature, every sentiment that appeals to the best within the human heart, owes its inspiration to the republican party. They have been informed that with the republican party and the men who represent it and dominate it, honesty in public affairs, fidelity in the discharge of private trusts and integrity in the smallest as well as in the greatest concerns of life are, as it were, "blown in the bottle."

But somehow or other a change has come "o'er the spirit of their dreams." Somehow or other it has leaked out that the republican politician is, after all, a mere man; that the "captain of industry" has no more concern for the national honor than he has for his own; and that the republican party is not, in truth, God's chief of commissary within this world of trouble. Somehow or other the American people have learned that so far as morality is concerned the republican party "kneels at the foot of the cross but worships the impenitent thief."

It is not necessary to detail the stirring incidents of the great campaign of 1896, but we cannot forget some of the things that were then daily doled out to us through the medium of the Associated Press and in the columns of the republican newspapers. Day after day high-sounding interviews with men who were referred to as models of good citizenship, were printed in these publications, and not a day was permitted to pass without the presentation of the views of some unctuous individual who posed as the defender of national honor and warned the American people that the democratic party had made a covenant with hell.

In this day, as in 1896, the names of these same gentlemen occupy conspicuous places in the daily press; and these are the days when the American citizen, unfolding his morning newspaper glances at the headlines and involuntarily soliloquizes: "One more defender, heedless of evil, pompous pretender, gone to the devil!"

In recent days the idols have fallen in bunches. They are too numerous to mention, but see one sample lot passing in review: Andrews, the Detroit banker, defaulted for \$1,600,000. Bigelow, the Milwaukee banker, went broke with \$3,000,000 of other people's money. Baer, who boasted that he was one of the trustees of God, notoriously oppressed God's poor. Deitrich, who as the republican nominee for governor redeemed Nebraska, being rewarded by a seat in the senate, was indicted and escaped by an appeal to technicalities. Depew who pleaded for what he called "the salvation of the country," yet holding office under the republican party, has been exposed in various ways. While his voice was most eloquent in defense of the national honor, his fingers were busy filching from the dead. He was a mighty idol, but he has fallen low. He will hardly respond again to the party call for good and pure men to teach and preach political morality. "When bleeding Greece again shall call Achilles she shall call in vain." The McCalls, the McCurdys, the Hydes, the Harrimans, the Alexanders, the Odells—all so jealous for the national honor in 1896 and all so indifferent as to their own integrity. Schwab, at one time head of the steel trust, fell in the gambling houses of Monte Carlo. Corey, the present head of the steel trust, fell in the brothels of the variety stage and deserted a faithful wife. Carnegie who, from the millions taken through a robber tariff builds libraries, entertained as his guest of honor the notorious wife-deserter who continues to pose as a captain of industry at the head of the steel trust. Rockefeller, the Sunday school leader, scurrying over the country and hunting for dark corners in

order to avoid an officer of the law charged with the duty of serving on the oil magnate a writ commanding him to appear before a court of justice and tell the truth. Taft, who won widespread praise when he announced that he would go abroad to purchase supplies for the Panama canal, yielding to the impositions of the trust magnates and paying considerably more for two vessels in this country than he could have obtained similar vessels for in England. Walsh, the owner of the Chicago newspaper that was too thoroughly committed to "national honor" to support the democratic ticket in 1896, and finally because of its self-righteousness left the party, now retires from the banking business because of methods which, we are told, are not entirely above criticism.

Rather than the canting hypocrisy of these self-chosen trustees of God, one prefers the candor of the Vanderbilt who, in a genuine republican speech said: "The public be damned!" Or that of Borie, director of the Lehigh Valley Railroad company, who, when reminded that the public was anxious to learn something of the affairs of his company replied: "Well, let them go to hell!"

A fine old Kentucky colonel was invited to dine at a home where the mistress was devoted to music. Dinner was late, and, while waiting, the lady of the house took a seat at the piano and gave several selections from the masters. The colonel was very fond of music but "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" represented the limit of his technical knowledge. Turning to the colonel, the lady asked:

"Colonel, would you like a little sonata before your dinner?"

The colonel gave a start of surprise and pleasure and replied:

"Well, I had a couple on my way down here, but I reckon I could stand another."

The American people suffered a couple of victories for national honor and integrity under the direction of these self-elected defenders, but two of that kind of victories will suffice for a long time in the history of a free government—and they couldn't stand another.

And last but not least among these fallen idols is the republican party itself, to whose very treasury has been traced several hundred thousand dollars of money belonging to policyholders, and for the misappropriation of which the McCalls and the McCurdys are today arraigned at the bar of public opinion.

We find republican newspapers greatly exercised because Senator Platt accepted from insurance chiefs an occasional ten thousand dollars for use in the New York campaign, but these same papers are significantly silent with respect to the acceptance by the republican national committee of several hundred thousand dollars embezzled from its rightful owners and for the benefit of the republican party in the nation, just as the money accepted by Senator Platt was embezzled for the benefit of the republican party in New York state.

From the party of God and morality to the party of speculation and plunder; from the one organization that might be depended upon to protect the widows and orphans to the despoilers of the funds held in trust for the widows and orphans,—from the party of Abraham Lincoln to the party of Chauncey M. Depew,—this represents the rapid descent of the republican party; and what a fall, my countrymen!

It is the party of God and morality, yet it becomes the beneficiary of stolen funds. It is the champion of soldiers and sailors, yet it has repeatedly snubbed and sought to humiliate Dewey, Schley and Miles. It is devoted to the American system, yet it creates colonies and governs them as King George governed the American colonies. It is business-like in its methods, yet during the last year it increased expenditures to such an extent that there was a deficit of \$24,000,000. It is devoted to popular government, yet it gave to Great Britain all the aid and sympathy it dared to give in the cruel war waged by that nation against the South African republics. It is devoted to American traditions, yet it sent a special envoy to the coronation of a king. It is opposed to trusts, yet under republican administration trusts have multiplied so that since 1896 more trusts have been organized than existed in all the history of our government prior to that year. It is opposed to rebates and discriminations, yet when special counsel Judson and Harmon recommended the prosecution of those responsible for such discriminations it threw its protecting

arm around one powerful and conspicuous offender. It is in favor of purity in the public service, yet it continued to hold the mean-spirited Loomis in the diplomatic service after his irregularities had been exposed, and then permitted him to retire with honors, while it dismissed in disgrace the faithful Bowen whose only offense was that he displayed his temper upon the discovery of dishonest practices. It is the party of the people, yet what is presumed to be the popular branch of congress is controlled by a coterie of men through whom the voice of the people can not be heard, while the senate is so absolutely in the control of the corporations that even the president elected as a republican cannot persuade that body to give the people relief even on one point. It stands for a sound currency and relentlessly opposes "50 cent dollars," yet its secretary of the treasury boldly advocates an asset currency—a plan for creating an assortment of no-cent dollars. It is the vigorous opponent of the quantitative theory of money, yet its spokesmen today point with pride to the marked increase in the volume of money, and while republican newspapers generally could not be prevailed upon to admit the quantitative theory, not one of them dares, at this moment, question that theory which was, in fact, the foundation of all arguments made in behalf of bimetallicism. It pretends to be responsive to the present-day demand for reform with respect to special interests, yet its representatives in congress are just now seeking to foist the ship subsidy upon the people. It pretends to favor reciprocity, yet on that question it "carries a big stick" while campaigning among the people, but "speaks softly" when it comes to the enactment of legislation. It is opposed to contributions for political purposes by corporations, yet when reminded of its own misappropriation of policyholders' money it turns a deaf ear to the popular and growing demand "Put it Back!" It pretends to be the foe of bossism, yet the flag carried by the enemies of Mayor Weaver in Philadelphia and of Mr. Berry,—that grand old Pennsylvania democrat,—was the republican flag, while Boss Cox who fell before the onslaught of the gallant John M. Pattison in Ohio went down to defeat hugging the republican colors to his patriotic breast. It is opposed to free passes, yet Secretary of the Navy Bonaparte is the only republican official who has returned his passes, but we all know he is not the only republican official who received passes. It favors a "square deal," yet while discharging District Attorney Baxter at Omaha because the federal judge imposed a ridiculously light sentence on two men who had illegally fenced government land, it caused District Attorney Johnson in the Indian Territory to resign in disgust. Newspaper readers generally have not been given the details of this affair, but we are told by the Washington correspondent for the Boston Transcript that Mr. Johnson resigned because the republican administration had ordered the dismissal of indictments brought against five men who were charged with conspiracy to defraud, and out of which conspiracy they have already profited to the extent of \$92,000. They had the favor of republican leaders, and, like some other distinguished republican offenders, were permitted to escape without trial. It is in favor of publicity and economy, yet there is considerable mystery about the expenditures for the Panama canal, while suspicion is very generally growing to the effect that there is something rotten about the management of that great enterprise. It professes small respect for democratic doctrine, yet it is significant that the president elected as a republican has increased his popularity among the people only as he has advanced along the pathway which has been blazed by the democratic party. And now they even boast that "democrats are following Mr. Roosevelt!" But the records show that democrats "follow" Mr. Roosevelt only as Mr. Roosevelt follows democracy.

Pretending to promote the general welfare, the republican party enriches the few at the expense of the many. In dealing with the people of our new possessions it stands for force where our forefathers would have stood for love. In its relations with the people of our own land it is snivelling and hypocritical; its arguments are those of the sophist; its pretense is patriotism, but its purpose is plunder.

Did it ever occur to you that music will most effectively recall memories of other days? "A song will outlive all sermons in the memory"

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