

Observations

Indianapolis, Ind.—Up to a short while ago the railroad magnates were jaunting over the country in their gorgeous private cars—paid for by the companies that also pay their salaries, and deducted from the dividends that stockholders are supposed to get—and at board of trade and chamber of commerce dinners and banquets scolding the people for complaining of wrongs or insisting upon their rights, and asking serious attention to their protests against the fostering and maintaining of an unkind sentiment among the people towards the sacred interests they represented. They were the belated reflected effulgence of Holy George F. Baer—the creator's creditor—whose railroad owns and operates coal mines contrary to the laws of Pennsylvania—and who is immune from obedience to that same law. But they—the junketing railroad magnates—lectured and scolded the people, with full reports of their lecturings and scoldings in every Associated Press paper in the country next morning; and proceeded to even get angry and begin to threaten. But some wise heads among them took a reef in Mr. Hill and Mr. Harriman and a few others, and, evidently, whispered to them something that might be construed into the idea that they were making fools of themselves, and that if they got the people angry their railroads would be about the first thing the people would be inclined to take possession of.

It would seem that some such good and sound advice got close enough to their common sense to stick, and since the first snow of winter we have been receiving assurances that the railroads and other corporate combinations, even some insurance companies, intended henceforward to obey the law much better than heretofore. And not a judge or court or governor in the land blushed at the condescension of the law violators, in their admission that those whose duty it is to enforce the law had wholly failed to perform their duty. Either that is true or we have demonstrated our inability to protect ourselves—our society—and are therefore proving our incapacity for self government. We are a very boastful people and shriek our own greatness to the world constantly, but we should realize that our government is no older than a man may live to be, whilst the British government is over eight hundred years old. Wherefore, we are only entering upon the proof of our ability as individual men, each an equal quantity in the government, to sustain a government that shall rightly and justly govern. It is not an unqualified fact, it is but our boastful and braggart assumption, equal to that of the American Indian who thumped his breast and proclaimed his prowess and greatness and glory as he burned at the stake of his conquerors.

And just at this particular time of our history we are contributing some very strong testimony that, as a people, we are too unreliable in our observance of the laws of both God and man, as to truth and honesty, and entirely too subservient to the wish, will and power of wealth to argue a very long life to any form of government dependent upon the people in their allegiance to principles and institutions that look for their perpetuity to the steadfast loyalty of the people.

But since the promises to be good, by the "interests," there have been happenings that may well be termed staggering. One is reminded of Arnold's "reluctant seal of a broken promise," whenever our railroad, money or merchant princes are parties to agreements. A "gentlemen's agreement" means, we will contribute our share and divide the swag and no questions asked of the divider.

But to contemplate Theodore Roosevelt as the dupe and fool of the railroad or other magnates is angering. We are not prepared to accept from him either "I didn't know it was loaded" or that he was deceived. If some of these captains of finance or any of their representatives deceives or attempts to deceive the president, we will accept no defense. He knows them and their methods and purposes; and he knows they are never disinterested, therefore never, never, never to be trusted; and that it is his imperative duty to wholly ignore anything and everything coming from them directly or indirectly, whatever its nature and in whatever form. They are not looked upon as men whose methods are honorable and their word is not good and he knows it. Wherefore, no whine or whimper, reason, argument or purpose will be accepted by the people from the president for his being deceived in any way by any of those individuals, or collectively. Would he be misled by a band of successful burglars? What better are these men save in their legal counsel?

And we grin and ask what has Harriman done to the president? For of course we have no sym-

pathy for any one being deceived in that quarter, and that yell of "wolf" we are getting tired of. In a general sense, the people have given Theodore Roosevelt his full title to a character that denies the right to stoop to the cowardice of falsehood; but he is not the only one to whom they have accorded the same virtue and honor, nor can his most voluble yell persuade them that they are wrong. The president has questioned the word of men equal in good name and fame with himself, and who would sacrifice life itself rather than forfeit their honor by falsehood; and his acceptance of the counsel and advice of such men as I have named, denies him the right to question the word of men who would scorn to accept assistance from a source that practices the methods he must know them to pursue. There are very few shrewd men of business who could be fooled by any of that element, and when the president is deceived or is put "in a hole" he must not be surprised if some people laugh.

In scanning a new novel by Ian MacLaren, now running in some of the papers, I was attracted by this sentence: "Now there's the Carnegies and the Gordons and the rest o' the royal families of the northeast, and the sour-blooded covenanters down in the west, and it's not in the nature o' things that they should agree any more than oil and water."

And I laughed at the silly, vulgar vanity of men.

Long ago, when I was more familiar with things in the newspaper world, George O. Starr was the popular advance for Barnum, and the newspaper boys were always glad to see George drop in on them, as he was good for from a half to a column of "good stuff" shape of a story, with, of course, the name of Barnum inserted. The stories, as I have indicated, were always good, and the boys would gladly have used Barnum's name a dozen times to get one, but Starr could write them so well that he was generally asked to do so. He quite readily consented and, never abusing his opportunity, he used the name Barnum but once in each story. In this way, traveling constantly, he managed to keep the press of the country talking Barnum all the time, but in such a way as not to wear out the worth of the stories by the advertising word "Barnum."

The above sentence attracted my notice because of the "Barnum" feature, and I wondered if the old showman's method is to go into our libraries as evidence for the "Herald's college" of the future to refer to. I hope I am wrong, but the canny method was not all confined to the men and time of those who betrayed their king for gold. I would like to hear Carnegie parse his escutcheon.

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Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., May 13.—The authorized chroniclers of White House facts and fancies still insist that there is no purpose on the part of the president to either seek or accept a renomination. What he is going to ask, however, so they say, is that his administration, and his policies should be approved by republican state conventions as fast as held. This is surely a moderate request. Seldom, indeed, has a state or a national convention failed to endorse the administration of the president elected by its party. The most famous case to the contrary was that of the Chicago convention of 1896 which emphatically refused to endorse the Cleveland administration. The first republican convention to which Mr. Roosevelt will appeal will be that of Pennsylvania called to nominate a state treasurer. This convention will be dominated by Senator Penrose, the hero of the famous \$5,000,000 conspiracy story. Men wonder whether the president will accept an endorsement at the hands of this prime conspirator.

Meanwhile the president is still insisting that his successor be a man holding his views and able to give them effect. People ask why with this in contemplation he does not add to his list of men of this type Senator LaFollette, who above all men in the United States senate has stood most sturdily for curbing the railroads and putting shackles on predatory wealth. Yet poor LaFollette is ignored.

There was some interest aroused in Washington Sunday by the publication here of a poll of republican editors throughout the country made by the New York Times. Three hundred editors were asked to express their opinions concerning the possibility of Mr. Roosevelt becoming again a candidate for the presidency. Only sixty-eight answered, but of these sixty-seven said that, in their opinion, he would be a candidate, and that he

never was so strong before the people as he is today. What they said of his strength was flattering; what they said of his candidacy, in view of his insistence that he will not run, is not a high tribute to his veracity.

Whatever the three hundred editors polled by the New York Times may think, the correspondents of their own newspapers here in Washington emphatically disagree with them, though they may possibly not be able to get their views printed. If there could be a consensus of the opinion of the most representative journalists at the capital, men who are close to the administration and whose business it is to study the president in all his majesty, the result would be an almost unanimous opinion that he has been materially weakened by the occurrences of the last month.

Polling three hundred republican editors throughout the middle west means getting the opinions in very many cases of postmasters, United States marshals or the men who have secured for their friends such pieces of federal patronage. That is why such a polling is of little or no value.

When Colonel Watterson comes back from Europe, after carefully studying American political conditions from the vantage point of Baden-Baden and the Riviera, what he has to say is naturally received with much deference by the American press as a whole.

Perhaps after all Colonel Watterson, whose political services have always been entertaining if not useful to the party he professes to serve, may be able to judge of political conditions better if some three thousand miles of ocean intervened between him and the country of which he talked. When he was closest to the democratic organization he asserted in a burst of oratory that if a person named Grover Cleveland were nominated for the presidency, the party would march through a slaughter house to an open grave. As a matter of fact the party marched through one of the easiest campaigns ever fought to victory. Yet perhaps Colonel Watterson was right in the end, because after the election of Mr. Cleveland and four years of his service, he led it to the grave which Watterson had foreseen, but which did not present itself at the moment that the distinguished Kentucky editor had predicted.

Nor can we forget that when the democratic party, which had cast nearly seven million votes for Mr. Bryan in 1896 against Mr. Watterson's bitter antagonism, and which in 1900 cast over six million with his ostensible support, nominated a certain Judge Parker and received Mr. Watterson's earnest and strenuous aid and enjoyed his prophecies of victory, the candidate whom he was sure would be elected fell over a million votes short of Bryan's vote in 1900 and was defeated by the greatest popular majority ever registered against any presidential candidate.

Watterson stands as the last survivor of the great editors of the olden times. We all love him. He is what Horace Greeley was years ago, and when the boys in journalism quote him they are doing well and rightfully. But political observers have a right to ask whether when he predicts the triumphant election of Hughes or another republican, he speaks with more knowledge than when he predicted the defeat of Cleveland or the victory of Alton B. Parker.

Attorney General Bonaparte has now under consideration the proposed constitution of the new state of Oklahoma. If approved by the president that constitution will be submitted to the people of the state and its adoption will mean the admission of the state to the union—the adding of a new star to the national flag.

But there are sinister rumors as to the outlook. Representative Watson of Indiana, a state quite far away from Oklahoma, has brought to the president a copy of the proposed constitution with the assertion—I quote an administration newspaper—"that it was such a conglomeration of constitution and legislative enactments that he thought the president should refuse to give it his approval, which would have the effect of not admitting the state at this time, and postponing its admission almost indefinitely."

It was as a result of this Indiana protest against self-government for Oklahoma that the constitution was sent to the attorney general for an opinion as to whether the people of that thriving southwestern community are still, like the Filipinos and the Porto Ricans, incompetent to govern themselves.

The proposed constitution is long—one of the longest ever written. It is long because its makers were most explicit in guarding the rights of the people against corrupt corporations on the one hand, and predatory political bosses on the other. It can not be summarized here, but