

The Passing of Bryan

Bryan and Nebraska

The "Passing of Bryan" is an old theme, so very old that it can hardly be handled with confidence now in spite of the new interest that has been given it by the Nebraska convention. Much depends, of course, upon the outcome of the campaign in the state. If the republicans win with county option Bryan may claim that the democrats made a fatal error in scorning his advice and refusing to indorse county option. Upon the political value of the local issue outsiders should be slow to pronounce judgment.

But Bryan seems to have lost much of his power as a party director in Nebraska, and there can be no doubt that this will please large numbers of democrats in other parts of the country. For with all his personal popularity and strength he has lost prestige through his defeats, and there is an eager desire to be rid of his leadership. Such being the condition the most will be made of the Nebraska rebuke, which is encouraging to the larger revolt. But there may be several chapters left of that old story, "The Passing of Bryan." And they may be painfully exciting to divers democratic politicians.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Speaking of Waterloos

William Jennings Bryan never measured higher in the love and trust of his fellow citizens than when he fought for the right, and yet was overwhelmed in the democratic convention of his state.

It is a fair assumption, from the evidences at hand, that the people of Nebraska are ready for county local option in the liquor traffic. Both republicans and populists have declared for it. Democratic resistance is apparently in the hope of winning a political victory, by walking between the divided forces of prohibition. Upon this, advocating the local option plank, Bryan as usual was outspoken. He made his views uncompromisingly clear. Facing an assured convention defeat, he was, as ever, fearless.

The proposition fell; but it carried no downfall of Bryan. He may have been wounded by the separation from his old political associates, but there can be no sense of personal defeat. He stands where he stood before the convention. The policy is as just now as it was before his party declined to adopt it. And in making his alliance with principle rather than expediency, he has gained rather than lost in splendor.

If we were compelled to guess, we would incline to the view that not Bryan but the Nebraska democracy met a Waterloo on last Tuesday.—Denver News.

Not Decisive

Defeat is not a new experience for Hon. William Jennings Bryan. He has met it on two or more other notable occasions and has survived. There is no reason for believing that he will be unable to survive that administered to him by the democratic convention of his state last night.

The nominal result, of course, is to deprive him of the leadership of his party in Nebraska. It's a leadership that he had retained for upwards of twenty years and through which he had acquired and retained national leadership, despite frequent reverses.

Politicians play the game to win. They tire of a loser. They desert his standard, and the wonder is that Bryan has been able to retain his leadership during all the years of his successive defeats at the polls. He couldn't have done it had he not placed principle above personality and party itself and had not the vast majority of the "common people" of his party believed in the principles that he advocated and the sincerity of his purposes.

Bryan is sincere in his advocacy of principles. He was sincere in the advocacy of the one presented to his state convention Tuesday. It was one that has been accepted by the democrats of several states as sound party doctrine, but afforded Bryan's political enemies in Nebraska the opportunity they were looking for to overthrow him. The issue was the excuse.

This doesn't mean that either the issue or its advocate is politically dead. Both may come to the surface again, when conditions have changed, when those same practical politicians of Nebraska have tired of their new leader, as they will tire of him if he too develops into a loser. History, especially political history, has a confirmed habit of repeating itself.

Bryan is defeated, but not whipped. He will

continue to fight for the principles that he believes in and will continue to exercise an influence and a wide one, in the democratic party. His followers are legion and the most of them are faithful. Perhaps they are not numerous enough to force him into acknowledged leadership again, but their voices will be heard through the "peerless one" for several years to come in democratic affairs, state and national.

In short, however much the practical politicians of the party may desire it, democracy is not yet rid of Bryan or Bryanism, unless he chooses to cut the ties himself. He can and will "come back" if he wants to.—St. Louis Star.

"Make It Nation Wide"

For twenty years William Jennings Bryan has dominated the democratic party in Nebraska. For fourteen years he has dominated the democratic party of the country. Yesterday the democrats of his own state, who know him best and have followed him most loyally, repudiated him and his leadership. The example of his home folks is worthy the imitation of the party throughout the country. We are sorry for him in a sense, for he is personally a very likable man; but we rejoice that he has reached the end of his rope in Nebraska.

There has been much speculation as to what course he would take if the Nebraskan democrats should turn him down and out, and it has been reported that he would ally himself with the republicans of his state. We do not know and do not very much care—he would be less dangerous to the democracy on the other side than if he should continue to affiliate with his own party, which has honored him as it has honored no other man in its history, and has paid for its loyalty to him at a fearful cost.

The opponents of Mr. Bryan in Nebraska did their work so thoroughly that it is reported he would not "carry the fight to the floor of the convention." The odds were too great; the people had made up their mind. Mr. Bryan yielded. That he will cease his political activities is too much to expect, even to hope; but the Nebraska democrats have set the pace the party must travel if it is to make a winning fight for the rescue of the government at Washington from the hands of the marauders.—Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch.

And the World Came Also

Mr. Bryan is not the first political chieftain who has met defeat at the hands of his own party in his own state. Against the judgment of a great majority of the democrats of Nebraska he has insisted that in the form of local option the liquor question be made an issue in this year's campaign. The convention yesterday rejected his advice and the demand that he made was taken up by the republicans.

We fail to see anything in this proceeding that is discreditable to anybody concerned. There was an honest difference of opinion, and in spite of his great popularity Mr. Bryan was outvoted. It is gratifying to observe that while he could not convince his fellow-delegates he was treated with consideration. Few of our public men are more courteous in controversy than Mr. Bryan, and the democrats of Nebraska, no matter how sharply they might oppose him, could not do less than give him a respectful hearing.

This much was also due a man who so recently exercised almost supreme control over his party. Two years ago he was practically without a democratic rival in the whole nation. Today a score of politicians unknown beyond their home districts overthrow him in his own state and defy him. Thus passes the glory of leadership. In this fashion many another idol has fallen.

Perhaps in such a revelation of the vanity of human power and the fickleness of popular favor that other pampered child of fortune who holds court at Oyster Bay may find an impressive lesson.—New York World.

Mr. Bryan and Nebraska

While Mr. Bryan has, admittedly, been decisively worsted in his attempt to commit the democracy of Nebraska squarely to the cause of local option in the matter of the sale of intoxicants, we fail to see that any particular national significance necessarily attaches to the circumstance.

The truth of the matter is, local option, or home rule, is pretty fair democratic doctrine, we think; and Mr. Bryan indulged in no remarkable performance when he invoked it and indorsed it. The mere fact that the democracy of Nebraska has rejected it does not mean that the democracy of the other states will do like-

wise. Time and again the democracy of Georgia has incorporated local option in its platform; and the democracy of Alabama has only recently reaffirmed its allegiance to the same. Purely on the point of orthodoxy, the attitude of Georgia and Alabama would seem sufficient to offset Nebraska's defection. So far as democracy in its national aspect is concerned, Mr. Bryan's recent stand for local option will as likely strengthen him as weaken him, to say the least of it. Indeed, it is conceivable that Mr. Bryan might be willing to sacrifice the good opinion of Nebraska—even his home state—in order more surely to establish himself in the good graces of those rock-ribbed states that cling to local option as the truest of true democracy.

Curiously enough, the Nebraska situation is further complicated by the fact that the republicans will surely adopt a local option plank identical with that so long held to be democratic gospel in the south, and back to which the prohibition south is surely swinging. But that will not commit national republicanism to local option.

As we have said, however, we do not regard this Nebraska incident as anything more than a Nebraska incident. If Mr. Bryan is disqualified for further national leadership, it is not because of his stand on the local option issue in Nebraska. His disqualification must have been accomplished long before he assumed that position or undertook to commit the Nebraska democracy to it. The Nebraska tail can not wag the entire democratic dog—and a large portion of that dog is of local option persuasion.

While the effort to "get rid of Bryan" is in progress, it would be just as well, perhaps, if it were conducted along reasonably sensible lines.—Washington (D. C.) Herald.

Becoming Defeat

No defeat ever became Mr. Bryan better than the one he has just suffered in Nebraska. At the risk of his political life he stood for what he believed to be a moral issue—the county option system of controlling the liquor traffic—and the party which had for twenty years accepted his leadership in all his successive vagaries, now repudiates it. Mr. Bryan may be guilty of rhetorical exaggeration when he speaks of a "conspiracy" of the liquor interest to effect a "political burglary" in Nebraska, but it is impossible to refuse admiration to an act like his based on deep conviction. Of the effect on his political fortunes he was perfectly well aware yet he played the part of a man without flinching. What his immediate course in Nebraska should be is a question which it must be hard for him to decide. The republicans of that state have declared for county option, and if it is the supreme issue that Mr. Bryan pictures, he would seem to be in duty bound to abandon temporarily the party that has abandoned him. He would, however, have much difficulty in endorsing all that the Nebraska republicans endorsed in their platform. It contained a strong commendation of President Taft but an even stronger commendation of the insurgent republicans who have made life miserable for him.—New York Evening Post.

A GOOD SUGGESTION—ASK THEM

J. J. Wilkes, Belleville, Kan.—To answer Senator Owen's query, the people must take a hand. I would suggest that a list of questions be submitted to every candidate who offers himself for election to congress, and request him to answer yes or no to the following questions: Will you, if elected, support and vote for the initiative and referendum and recall? The election of senators by popular vote? For free sugar? For free iron and steel and the manufactures thereof? For free wool and cotton and the manufactures thereof? For free lumber and wood pulp? And will you vote to put upon the free list every article that is sold abroad at a less price than it is sold at home? This list could be lengthened, but it will do for a start. By this method the voters can select by elimination. For a candidate who will not pledge himself throws a doubt at once on his usefulness as a congressman in behalf of the people. If the electors in every congressional district will put the question to the candidates they can improve the tone of the next congress, and as the people have to pay the salaries they should get what they want. And perhaps a pledge required and given would be a support to a weak or mercenary member when temptation assailed him.