

the leader before them, and behind them, ready to spring, crouched the millions of democrats back home.

Marvelous triumph. Bryan has put an end to denunciation in generalities and for the first time in the history of conventions compelled a show-down on men—men as representative of policies.

That resolution was "loaded." It was part of a plan. It blotted from the list of presidential possibilities one or two promising candidates. It, too, was a stroke of political genius. It prepared the path for the triumph of progressive principles.

When the result of the roll call is announced there are a few derisive laughs.

"Only some meaningless words," they mutter. But as he leaves the platform Bryan, too, smiles—and some men tremble when Bryan smiles.

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In a room in the convention hall are gathered the brains of the party at work on the platform of principles. There are more than forty men there—nay there is one man there. There are forty men paying tribute to the genius and the democracy of one man. That man is Bryan. He practically dictates the platform. At Denver when he was a candidate he had to fight, through his representatives, for the platform he desired. At Baltimore his word is law.

And why?

Because he had the political genius to lose the first battle, to arouse the country, to gather behind his personal power the impetus of millions of democrats back home. Had he won his first battle he would have lost more vital battles. By losing himself, he found himself. By defeating him, they smoothed the way for his triumph.

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It is Friday afternoon and the monotonous roll call of states follow in dreary succession. Then arises a fat, sleek, smug man with little eyes peeping out from the rolls of fat that encircle them—his face blood red—and in a rasping voice announces—"Ninety votes for Clark."

It is Murphy, the grand high mogul of Tammany. One of the ninety votes is that of August Belmont.

It was Murphy who primarily challenged the progressives by insisting on Parker for temporary chairman. It was Clark's men lining up with Murphy that accomplished the progressive defeat. The Clark managers were probably unjust to Clark but the action of Murphy hinted of a coalition.

Then it was that the smile of Bryan that made men shiver, disclosed its meaning. He had forced the convention to declare against the nomination of a man who might be subject to the domination of the interests, and now, if he did not know who the interests favored, he knew who they opposed.

When Murphy and Belmont went one way, Bryan switched to Wilson. And that was the beginning to the end. He had forced the democratic party to issue an open declaration of war against Wall street. He had written into the platform the plan of campaign against Wall street. And now he named the general who was to lead the people against the enemy.

It was a complete victory. Never in the political history of the world—and I write it deliberately—had any political leader ever won a more sweeping victory.

IV.

A word now as to the methods of Roosevelt and Bryan.

In the days when Roosevelt sat about the council table with such astute leaders as Root, Taft, Bonaparte and others, and with their aid, planned his campaign, he seemed invincible. The world refused to admit that his apparent wisdom was the composite wisdom of his cabinet. It declined to credit the prestige of his exalted station with any of the glory of the triumph. It was Roosevelt. But the moment he found himself without his advisors and stripped of the prestige of power he began to blunder, and the climax of his blundering was reached at Chicago.

He faced at Chicago some of the same forces that Bryan faced at Baltimore, and he attempted to concentrate against his foes the same public sentiment outside the convention halls and failed. He failed because he fought with epithets. Every reverse threw him into a spasm of fury. He lost his head. He had no definite plan. But worst of all he could not subordinate his personal ambition for principle. He might have forced a progressive platform and could have named a progressive candidate, but he did not apparently care for the plat-

form, and he did not want a progressive nominee unless it should be Roosevelt.

His speeches at mass meetings were part sermons, part denunciations, full of sound and fury, leading nowhere. His abuse appalled, his selfishness finally repelled.

How different with Bryan. Doubtless he would have liked the nomination, but he subordinated that ambition, and therein lies his superiority. Roosevelt had but one thought—the nomination. Checked in that ambition, he had neither the patience, the desire, the generalship to fight the more vital battles. Here Bryan proved himself the greater leader—the biggest man. He fought every inch of the ground. He had the clear brain to plan ahead. His speeches were not sermons—nor mere abuse. They were inspiring, fighting speeches, having a definite purpose. Each speech had a motive, an immediate purpose. Every purpose dove-tailed. Thus did he win by degrees.

"He built the ladder with which to rise From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies."

It has often been said that eloquence no longer counts.

This is absurd. In any popular assembly, in any great popular movement eloquence is a part of the equipment of war.

The speeches of Bryan and Roosevelt at Baltimore and Chicago are interesting from this point of view. The speech delivered at the mass-meeting at Chicago on the Monday night before the convention, was not suited to its purpose. The first part was a dissertation on pure politics, and resembled a sermon on toleration delivered to a blood-thirsty army sacking a city; the second section was mere abuse calculated to cement the forces of opposition.

The speeches of Bryan were passionate, intense, concise, forcible, compelling, aimed at some definite weak spot in the breastworks of the enemy. Had they been theoretic sermons, no one would have cared. Had they been mere abuse they would have lost their potency in the country. In the midst of turmoil, in the face of hissing, hating men, he couched his appeals in language calculated to make a profound impression on the minds of the millions who are to vote at the polls. It was a realization of this fact on the part of his enemies that forced them to support him as they hissed.

Some one has said that after hearing Cicero the audience said, "How fine," and after listening to Demosthenes, "Let's march against Philipp." That is the difference between the speeches of Roosevelt and Bryan at Chicago and Baltimore. The country heard the former and said, "How true." They heard the latter and exclaimed, "Let's fight."

V.

Out of the turmoil, the seething, sweltering maddening mass at the two conventions the voice of reason spoke, and said: "In national conventions called for the performance of the noblest function of free people, the empty meaningless, bought-and-paid-for demonstrations of noise and fury must yield henceforth to dignified deliberation."

The disgraceful features of both conventions were the puerile attempts at stampedes. Cattle stampede. Men should not.

At Chicago the fusillade of vile epithets banded back and forth between the platform and floor and gallery mantled the national cheek with the blush of shame. The Bill Flinn playing the village rowdy were a melancholy spectacle and a sad commentary on our national life. At Baltimore the booing and hissing of men like Bryan and Bell were ineffably disgusting. In both conventions there were moments when the mob reigned.

The most amusing—and at the same time the most nauseating—sight at Baltimore were the mechanical efforts of the friends of the candidates to outshout the others. As one of the nominating speeches was being made my attention was attracted to a wild-eyed individual on the floor feverishly distributing flags and tin horns preparatory to an "impulsive demonstration" at the conclusion of the speech. It represented as great a fraud as when some four-flushing orator with an elaborately prepared discourse in his hip pocket rises "to make a few extemporaneous remarks."

It fooled no one. It amused some. It disgusted others.

Either one of two things will inevitably result from the disgraceful features of the two conventions—the mob spirit will be eliminated or presidential primaries will come.

The forthcoming campaign may be prolific of surprises, but as I write today it appears quite probable that the two picturesque figures of the

two conventions accomplished far-reaching results.

Theodore Roosevelt by fighting a losing battle wrought ruin for the party that long followed him with the zeal of a crusader.

William Jennings Bryan by fighting a winning battle has given his party a new birth.

The next few months may throw a new light on the situation.

THE SHAME OF NEW YORK

Baltimore News: Out of its own mouth the New York delegation stands condemned of all that Mr. Bryan said of it. The roll of its honorable members cited by Mr. Stanchfield is impressive. The public may not have realized that the delegation has here the governor and lieutenant-governor of the state; the democratic candidate for the presidency in 1904; an ex-justice of the supreme court of the state; lawyers of repute, business men, professional men in every walk and department of life. To quote Mr. Stanchfield's own words, it "is the most representative delegation that ever came to a national convention from the state of New York."

Personally, men like Senator O'Gorman, John B. Stanchfield and William G. McAdoo are not marionets. They are men whose open influence on the floor of the convention, whose open condemnation of Tammany methods, whose expressed opposition to the continuance of machine politics would have won for them the prominence and authority during the proceedings to which their natural attributes entitle them. In that case Mr. Bryan's attack on the New York delegation would not have been called forth; if made, it would have been utterly ridiculous.

But have these men exerted any influence in the convention? Is there any record to show that they have exerted it in their delegation caucuses? Is there the slightest indication that their connection with the delegation has altered the delegation's course in this convention?

A human puppet is a man who does another's bidding. That he doesn't want to be a puppet doesn't matter. The majority of the New York delegation controls its actions. The majority in this case does Mr. Murphy's bidding willingly. The minority does it willy nilly. Through twenty-six ballots the extent to which sentiment in the New York delegation was divided was utterly unknown. Through twenty-six ballots the progressive members, men who by virtue of their innate qualities might have assumed the leadership of the progressive forces, failed to raise their voice and continued to vote in opposition to their beliefs. They must continue so to vote. It was only by taking advantage of a technicality in parliamentary procedure that they could get their real sentiments officially recorded at all. If this is not puppetdom, in what does puppetdom consist?

CIRCULATE THE COMMONER

An old-time reader of The Commoner writes: "Wherever The Commoner is regularly read the democratic vote increases. One of the most effective methods of increasing Governor Wilson's vote would be by the circulation of The Commoner (particularly among men who have heretofore voted the republican ticket) in every state of the union. I suggest that you make a special rate for campaign purposes and I am sure there are many hard working democrats who will take advantage of that rate to put The Commoner regularly into the hands of their republican neighbors."

The Commoner will be sent to any one from now until the close of the 1912 campaign for the sum of 25c, or four subscriptions will be entered until the close of the campaign for \$1.00.

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