

TALKING OF MEN AND THINGS

"Harmon and Harmony" is reputed to be the watchword of the democracy of Douglas county. "Harmony, hell!" would be nearer the truth. Will Maupin's Weekly is not, as a newspaper, interested particularly in the controversy that has arisen between Richard L. Metcalfe and Hon. Mike Harrington. Possibly Mr. Metcalfe was unwise in his Bryan banquet speech; certainly Mr. Harrington was unwise in stirring up that controversy at this time. Doubtless after reading Mr. Metcalfe's rejoinder to his voluminous open letter Mr. Harrington fully realizes the unwisdom of his act.

As a matter of fact, neither Mr. Metcalfe's speech at the Bryan banquet, nor Mr. Harrington's letter cut much figure insofar as the present situation in democratic party circles is concerned. The trouble goes back further than that. It had its inception in the criminal foolishness of a coterie of Omaha politicians in shoving Dahlman into the gubernatorial race—a criminal bit of foolishness that was intensified by Dahlman himself. Some there may be who will say that Mr. Bryan started the trouble when he came out for county option. That is not true, although this newspaper holds now, as its editor held then, that the injection of county option into the political arena was unwise. But county option had become acute before Mr. Bryan spoke, and Dahlman had already announced his candidacy on an anti-option platform.

He who imagines for a moment that any party in Nebraska can elect candidates notoriously and openly in favor of practically unbridled license; who are known beyond all question to be backed by the interests that backed Dahlman—any man who imagines that such candidates can be elected to state office in Nebraska could submit his head to an augur without anything but boneshavings showing up as a result of the operation. Dahlman had no more chance of being elected than hell has of becoming a cold storage warehouse. Had he been opposed by Cady of St. Paul or Mockett of Lancaster, or Evans of Adams—or some other republican of equally good record—his defeat would have been far worse than it was, and heaven knows it was humiliating enough. The plain truth is that Aldrich was elected despite the fact that his candidacy did not appeal to protesting democrats or old line republicans. Shallenberger would have defeated Aldrich hands down.

As before mentioned, this unfortunate plight of the democracy of Nebraska is not due to Mr. Bryan's action, nor to Metcalfe's Bryan banquet speech. It is the direct result of the efforts of the most disreputable elements in Nebraska politics to cram their principles and their

candidates down the throats of the people.

The idea of Douglas county democrats denouncing Bryan as a traitor while endorsing Harmon of Ohio! It is to laugh. Harmon, the man who bolted Bryan in 1896 and 1900, and gave him paltering support in 1908 only because Harmon had a political bee and imagined that by being "regular" he could make up for his desertion in former Bryan campaigns! And scores of the delegates themselves bolters in 1896! And Dahlman talking about bolters when he himself openly and notoriously bolted the Grand Island platform and ran upon a platform of his own making—a platform so rotten and offensive that it was repudiated overwhelmingly.

The trouble with democracy is that it saves up its fool mistakes for the purpose of committing them at the time when they will do it the most harm. Just at the moment when it is possible for democracy to grasp success, up jumps a lot of plain, unornamented democratic jackasses to kick the whole business into smithereens. The mere fact that the democrats of Douglas county denounced Bryan is enough to make the rank and file of democracy outside of that county get closer to him. Let this great truth percolate through democratic skulls if it can: It may not be possible to elect a democratic president with Bryan's hearty support; it will be impossible to elect a democratic president in the face of Bryan's opposition.

Is a Nebraska man's democracy to be measured by the test of whether or not he voted for Dahlman? If so, why not measure an Ohio man's democracy by the test of whether or not he supported Bryan in that marvelous campaign of 1896. There are 30,000 democrats in Nebraska who can not stand the test; and by the same token Judson Harmon of Ohio will measure short.

Why all this rumpus about that "ditched" Metcalfe resolution? Shallenberger did not ditch it. Harrington had it during all the hours the resolutions committee of the Grand Island convention was in session. The man primarily responsible for side-tracking that resolution is United States Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock. It was the Hitchcock resolution, which bound and gagged the convention, that prevented anything but what the resolutions committee reported from coming before the convention. The resolutions committee refused to let Bryan submit the Metcalfe proposition as an alternative minority report, and Mr. Bryan naturally chose his own resolution in preference to Metcalfe's. Neither even had a chance of being adopt-

ed—no more chance than Dahlman ever had of being elected governor in 1910.

It is true Governor Shallenberger failed to deliver Metcalfe's resolution to Babcock, and doubtless true that he told Metcalfe to the contrary. That is easily explained. Governor Shallenberger was pretty busy and failed to see Babcock in time, but did give the resolution to another member of the committee with a hurried request that it be handed to Babcock. But the resolution was discussed in committee, and it was throttled by the Hitchcock resolution.

This Harrington-Metcalfe exchange of epistolary pleasantries reminds us of a story. A Tennessee man emerged from a saloon and throwing his hat in the air whooped that he could whip any man in town. No one paid the slightest attention. Then he danced a jig and declared he could whip any man in the county. Still no attention. He then declared he could whip any man in the state, and got no response. Then he swore loudly that he could whip any blankety blank son of blankety blank in the United States, and a man smote him on the jaw and knocked him across the street. When the man arose and wiped the blood from his face he remarked: "The trouble with me is that I took in too much territory the last time." The man who goes up against "Dick" Metcalfe in a newspaper controversy is taking in too much territory—a fact that Mr. Harrington is doubtless cogitating at this moment.

But isn't all this fuss and fury over a question that has no part in politics "nuts" for the republicans? It means the election of three republican supreme judges this fall and the entire republican state ticket in 1912. It means that Nebraska is as sure to give its electoral vote to Taft in 1912 as water is to flow down hill when let loose. And it means the election of a republican United States senator. And all because a lot of men who can differ on questions of democratic policy lose their heads and act like a lot of schoolboys when the everlasting and damnably foolish whisky question comes up.

Two things should be made clear to the minds of democrats: One is that all attempts to make a Sunday school organization of the party are foredoomed to ignominious failure. The other is that all attempts to shackle the party to a brewery and a distillery will result in failure equally disastrous. If democrats can forget this liquor question, which is not a political question but a moral one having no place in politics, and fight it out on the lines of genuine tariff reform it can win. The chances are that they will