

The People's Independent.

The Wealth Makers and Lincoln Independent Consolidated.

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NO. 6.

BRYAN'S GREAT SPEECH

Our Distinguished Citizen Sustains His Reputation as an Orator.

WILD CHEERS AT EVERY PERIOD

His Arguments for the Platform and How They Were Received.

A Remarkable Demonstration—The Wonderful Influence of Oratory.

"The Silver Knight of the West," William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, set the convention on fire with a speech which will be declaimed by the coming generation of schoolboy orators. It was followed by a demonstration which never will be forgotten by the 16,000 people who witnessed it and participated therein.

Up to this time the convention had not been dull for want of effective oratory. The tearful and pleading Colonel Fellows of New York, the fiery and impulsive Blackburn of Kentucky, the forceful and aggressive Altgeld of Illinois, and such famous orators as Hill, Russell, Waller and White had scored their triumph and added new leaves to their laurel wreaths. But when compared to the impassioned oratory of the "Black Eagle of Nebraska," newly named "The Silver Knight of the West," the efforts were tame.

A reputation as an orator may prove either an advantage or a handicap to its possessor. From such a man the listener expects much. Woe is in store for such an orator if his effort fails to meet the sanguine expectations of the auditor, and triumph is sure if he reaches the heralded heights which have been promised. Bryan established a reputation as an orator in the scattered hamlets on the Nebraska plains, and it waited him into congress. In one term he set a new mark for congressional eloquence. Now he has set another new mark.

Mr. Bryan's Oratorical Triumph. There was some applause when Mr. Bryan took the platform, but it did not equal in fervor the reception accorded Senator Hill. Senator Hill was given a storm of applause before he spoke and Bryan a cyclone of enthusiasm when he had concluded. The audience had not yet got the taste of Tillman out of its mouth and regarded the Nebraska orator with some suspicion. It must be understood that the great majority of the audience secured admission at the hands of the gold standard minority and was not in consonance with the sentiments uttered by Mr. Bryan. This makes his triumph all the more complete. When quiet had been restored by the chairman, Mr. Bryan spoke as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THIS CONVENTION: I would be presumptuous, indeed, to present myself against the distinguished gentleman to whom you have listened, if this were but a contest of ability, but this is not a contest of persons. The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error that they can bring. I come to speak to you in defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty, the cause of humanity. (Loud applause.)

When this debate is concluded, a motion will be made to lay upon the table a resolution offered in commendation of the administration, and also a resolution in condemnation of the money question. I shall object to bringing this question down to the level of persons. The individual is but an atom; he is born, he acts, he dies, but principles are eternal, and as has been a contest of principles. There has been a contest of principles in this country. There has been a contest of principles that through which we have just passed. Never before in the history of American politics has a great issue been fought out as has this issue by the voters themselves.

The Fight for Silver.

On the 4th of March, 1895, a few Democrats, most of them members of congress, issued an address to the Democrats of the nation, asserting the money question was the paramount issue of the hour; asserting also the right of the majority of the Democratic party to control the position of the party on this paramount issue, and concluding with the request that all believe in the principle of silver in the Democratic party should organize, take charge of and control the policy of the Democratic party. Three months later, at Memphis, an organization was perfected and silver Democrats went forth openly and boldly and courageously proclaiming their belief and declaring that if successful, they would crystallize in a platform the declaration which they had made, and then began the conflict with a zeal approaching the zeal which inspired the crusaders who followed Peter the Hermit. Our silver Democrats went forth from victory unto victory until they were assembling now, not to discuss, not to debate, but to enter upon the judgment rendered by the plain people of this country. (Applause.) In this contest, brother has been arrayed against brother, and father against son. The warmest ties of love and acquaintance and association have been disregarded. Old leaders have been cast aside when they refused to give expression to the sentiments of those whom they would lead, and new leaders have sprung up to give direction to this cause of truth. (Cheers.) Thus has the contest been waged, and we have assembled here under as binding and solemn instructions as were ever fastened upon representatives of a people.

Not a Question of Persons.

We do not come as individuals. We might have been glad to compliment the gentleman from New York (Senator Hill), but we know that the people for whom we speak would never be willing to put him in a position where he could thwart the will of the Democratic party. (Cheers.) I say it was not a question of person; it was a question of principle, and it is not with findings, my friends, that we find ourselves brought into conflict with those who are now arrayed on the other side.

Now gentlemen who just preceded me (Governor Russell), spoke of the old state of Massachusetts. Let me assure him that not one person in all this convention entertains the least hostility to the people of the state of Massachusetts. But we stand here representing people who are equals before the law of the largest citizens in the state of Massachusetts. When you come before us and tell us we shall disturb your business interests, we reply that you have disturbed our business interests by your course. (Great applause and cheering.) We say to you that you have made too limited in its application the definition of business man. The man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer. (Continued cheering.) The attorney in a country town is as much a business man as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis. The merchant at a cross-roads store is as much a business man as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and tills all day, begins in spring and ends in autumn, and by application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country, creates wealth, is as much a business man as the man who goes upon the board of trade and bets upon the price of grain.

The free silver delegates at this point broke forth in tremendous cheers, standing on chairs and waving their hats and banners frantically. Order was finally restored and Mr. Bryan continued:

The miners who go 1,000 feet into earth, or climb 2,000 feet upon cliffs and bring forth from their hiding place precious metals to be poured in the channels of trade, are as much business men as the few financial magnates who in a back room corner the money of the world.

Tremendous Enthusiasm.

The sentiments of the speaker were cheered again and again, and the galleries seemed to be a mass of white because of the handkerchiefs waving. The cheers were renewed again and again, and it was some minutes before Mr. Bryan could be heard. He proceeded as follows:

We come to speak for this broader class of business men. And, my friends, we say to you and against those who live upon the Atlantic coast, but those hardy pioneers who braved all the dangers of the wilderness, who have made the desert blossom as roses, those pioneers away out there, rearing their children near to nature's heart, where they have created school houses for educating their young and churches where they praise their Creator, and cemeteries where they sleep the ashes of their dead—are as deserving of the consideration of this party as any people in this country. (Great applause.) It is for these that we speak. We do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest. We are fighting in defense of our homes, our families and prosperity. (Loud applause.) We have petitioned and our entreaties have been disregarded. We have begged and they have mocked and our calamity came. We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more; we defy them.

The gentleman from Wisconsin has said he fears a Robespierre. My friend, in this land of the free you need fear no tyrant who will spring up from among the people.

Another Outburst.

The chairman rapped for order and a pause of considerable length ensued before the speaker could proceed:

What we need is an Andrew Jackson, to stand as Andrew Jackson stood against the national banks. We are told that our platform is made to catch votes. We reply to them that changed conditions make new issues. The principles on which Democracy rests are as everlasting as the sun and moon, and they must be applied to new conditions as they arise. New conditions have arisen, and we are attempting to meet them.

Income Tax a Just Law.

They tell us that income tax ought not be brought in here; that it is a new idea. They say we passed an unconstitutional law. I say to you that the income tax was not unconstitutional when it was passed. It was not unconstitutional when it went to the supreme court the first time. It did not become unconstitutional until one judge changed his mind, and we cannot be expected to know when a judge will change his mind. The income tax is a just law. It simply intends to put the burden of the government justly upon the backs of the people. I am in favor of an income tax. (Applause.)

When I find a man who is not willing to pay his share of the burdens of the government, who protects him, I find a man who is unworthy to enjoy the blessings of a government like ours. (Applause.)

He says that we are opposing a national bank currency. It is true, if you will read what Thomas Benton said, you will find that he was a great man. He was a man who paralleled to Andrew Jackson, that was Cicerone, who destroyed the conspiracy of Catalin and saved Rome. He did for Rome what Jackson did when he destroyed bank conspiracy and saved America. (Loud applause.) We say in our platform that we believe the right to coin money and issue money is a function of government. We believe it. We believe it is part of sovereignty, and can no more with safety be delegated to private individuals than we can afford to delegate to private individuals power to make penal statutes or levy laws for taxation.

Stands With Jefferson.

Mr. Jefferson, who was once regarded as good Democratic authority, seems to have had different opinions from gentlemen who have addressed us on the part of the minority. Those who are opposed to this proposition told us the issue of paper money is the function of banks and that the government ought to go out of the banking business. I stand with Jefferson, rather than with these, and tell them as he did, that the issue of money is a function of the government and that banks ought to go out of the government business.

They complain about that plank which declares against life tenure in office. They have tried to strain it to mean that which it does not mean. What we oppose in that plank is life tenure that is being built up at Washington, which excludes from participation in benefits the humble members of our society. I cannot dwell longer in my limited time. (Cries of go on, go on.) Let me call attention to two or three great things.

The gentleman from New York says he will propose an amendment, providing that this change in our law shall not affect the people. Let me tell you that I am sure that there is no intention of affecting those contracts, which, according to the present laws, are made payable in gold. But if he means to say we cannot change our monetary system without protecting those who have loaned money before the change was made, I want to ask him where, in law or in morals, he can find authority for not making such a change.

Now, my friends, let me come to the great paramount question. If they ask us here why it is we say more on the money question than we say upon the tariff question, I reply that if protection has slain its thousands, gold standard has slain its tens of thousands. If they ask us why we did not embody all these things in our platform which we believe, we reply to them when we have restored the money of the constitution, all other necessary reforms will be possible, and that until that is done, there is no reform that can be accomplished. (Cheering.) Why is it that within three months such a change has come over the sentiments of this country? Three months ago, when it was confidently asserted that these were the golden days, that would frame our platform and nominate our candidate. But note the change. Mr. McKinley was nominated at St. Louis upon a platform that declared for the gold standard until it should be changed into bimetalism by international agreement. Mr. McKinley was the most popular man among the Republican party, and everybody, three months ago, in the Republican party, prophesied his election.

How is it today. What about that man who used to boast that he looked like Napoleon. That man shudders today when he thinks that he was nominated on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. Not only that, but as he listens he can hear with ever increasing distinctness the sound of the waves as they beat upon the lonely shores of St. Helena. (Cheers.)

Why this change? Ah, my friends, is not a change evident to any one who will look at this matter? It is no private character, however pure; no personal popularity, however great, that can protect from the avenging wrath of an indignant people a man who will either declare he is in favor of fastening the gold standard upon this people, or who is willing to surrender the right of self government and place legislative control in the hands of foreign potentates. (Cheers.)

Confident of Victory.

The continued cheering made it impossible for the speaker to proceed; it was renewed as the chairman vainly rapped for order.

Finally Mr. Bryan, raising his hand, obtained silence long enough to say that he had only 10 minutes left, and asked the audience to let him occupy that time. He then resumed:

We go forth confident we shall win. Why? Because upon the paramount issue in this campaign there is not a spot of ground upon which the enemy will dare to challenge us. Why, if they tell us the gold standard is a good thing we point to their platform and tell them that their platform pledges the party to get rid of a gold standard and substitute bimetalism. (Applause.)

If the gold standard is a good thing, why try to get rid of it. (Laughter and continued applause.) If the gold standard, and I might call your attention to the fact that some of the very people who are in this convention today and who tell you that we ought to declare in favor of international bimetalism, and who reply to their platform and tell them that their platform pledges the party to get rid of a gold standard and substitute bimetalism. (Applause.)

The line of battle. Here is a line of battle. We are not upon which issue they force the fight. We are prepared to meet them on either issue or both. If the gold standard is the standard of civilization, we will stand by it. If the gold standard is the standard of civilization, we will stand by it. (Applause.)

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WHAT SHALL WE DO?

The Independent Takes a Referendum on Bryan's Candidacy.

POPS OVER THE STATE REPLY.

What They Think of the Present Situation.

Most of Them are For Billy Bryan for President.

The nomination of Mr. Bryan at Chicago so changed the whole political situation that the editor of the INDEPENDENT concluded he would take a referendum on the question as to the course the populists should pursue. Scores of postal cards were sent to prominent populists in all parts of the state asking them to express their views.

The Following Replies are Printed in the Order in Which they were Received:

Pawnee City, Neb., July 11.—My view of what position the populist party should take in regard to the Chicago nomination is: Nominate W. J. Bryan. The populists of Pawnee City are a unit for him for the presidency. Yours for victory.—T. J. Plummer.

O'Neill, Neb., July 11.—The populist party of Holt county, in convention assembled today, voted unanimously in endorsement of the Omaha platform and against endorsement of Bryan as a democratic nominee, but favor a union of all free silver forces if such can be honorably accomplished without losing or destroying our party organization or identity, such as all reform forces uniting on the same set of electors in each state.—Ham Kautzman.

Richland, Neb., July 11.—In reply to yours of this date I would say I want nothing to do with their funeral, not even to act as pall bearer. I am not willing to be turned over to the democratic party. I left the old rotten hulk years ago, and am not like a dog to return to its vomit.—O. Nelson.

Fremont, July 11.—Am in favor of the Nebraska original "16 to 1, without waiting for any other country" W. J. Bryan.—R. D. Kelly.

Minden, Neb., July 12.—Paddle our own canoe.—Conriss.

Neiligh, Neb., July 11.—Let the peoples independent party nominate a straight ticket. If Bryan should receive the most electoral votes give him our vote. If the independent party should receive the most, let them return the compliment.—J. D. Hatfield.

Fairbury, Neb., July 11.—We have been snubbed. The democrats refused any honorable compromise, and I feel both indignant and belligerent. Mr. Bryan is perhaps nearer a populist than any other man in their party, and their platform is stolen from ours. We cannot afford to defeat him. Two years more of Sherman and Clevelandism means too much suffering. Patriotism and humanity say endorse the ticket and turn out the class of men that has been controlling the country so long and are so competent in incompetency. Populists must sacrifice their pride for the good of their country.—Thad Williams.

Wabash, July 12.—The populist party should now stand as one man in favor of the endorsement of W. J. Bryan for president, thereby securing his election and victory for populist principles.—B. F. Allen.

Lincoln, Neb., July 11.—The populist party should not yield to the glamor of the burst of enthusiasm over the Chicago nomination. The populist national committee months ago invited the reform forces of all parties to meet with us in conference at St. Louis July 22d. This cordial and generous invitation has been spurned by the late nomination. The silver democrats having power to nominate had also power to adjourn to meet with us. By their precipitate nomination they have thrown down their ultimatum to us. The duty of the populists in their convention is to strengthen the Omaha platform in every detail and present it to the Chicago nominee. If he accepts it without reservation, nominate him; should he reject it, nominate a ticket of our own.—L. N. Leonard.

Grand Island, Neb., July 11.—There is but one plain, honest, and consistent thing for our party to do at the St. Louis convention and that is to nominate for our candidate for president that brave patriot and able defender of the people's cause, Hon. Wm. J. Bryan of Nebraska. The crisis is now on and it is the solemn duty of all who believe that the administration of this government should be wrested from the hands of the selfish money changers of New York City and London and again restored to the people, to rally as one man to the support of the Chicago ticket. In my opinion, the man or men who will now knowingly advise a contrary course are enemies to the cardinal principles of the populist faith, and should be classed with the gold bugs of the republican and democratic parties.—H. A. Edwards, state central committeeman for Hall county.

Hastings, Neb., July 11.—I say endorse the Chicago nominee, by all means.—Dr. J. T. Steele.

Benkelman, Neb., July 12.—With the opportunity to place such a man as Bryan in the presidential chair, one so near and dear to every lover of liberty and independence, one who has done so

much to reform a great political party and bring it to adopt our principles into its platform, there should be no hesitancy in approving him as our candidate at St. Louis.—Lewis E. Walker.

Lincoln, Neb., July 13.—If the populists are sincere in their desire to advance the cause of humanity, break the shackles of the money power that binds the industries of this country in its iron grasp, secure the honest money of all the people, advance the cause of honest labor, return prosperity to the business and producing classes of this nation and perpetuate this government to a free, united and contented people, we will nominate the Hon. W. J. Bryan, the champion of the common people, at the St. Louis convention.—C. W. Hoxie.

In an interview in the Sunday World-Herald Governor Holcomb says: "In my judgment the populist party will meet in national convention in St. Louis on the 22d inst. and proceed in the usual manner to the construction and adoption of a platform covering the essential features of their well-known demands as contained in their platform heretofore adopted, and to nominate candidates for president and vice president whom they can and will support unitedly and enthusiastically during the campaign and at the polls. The Hon. W. J. Bryan of Nebraska, the recent nominee of the democrats in their national convention held in Chicago, will, in my opinion, be a prominent candidate before our convention. We of Nebraska are proud of his many sterling qualities, his public record his high moral character, his honesty of purpose and his consistent devotion to the interests of the great mass of the people. His election to the presidency would be a signal victory along the line of financial reform."

Lincoln, Neb., July 13.—The plain duty of the St. Louis convention is to endorse W. J. Bryan. This means his election, which means the restoration of the silver dollar and the abolition of the national banks, as well as many other reforms asked for by the populist party. This is as much as we could expect in the next four years from the election of a professed populist, which is impossible for us to do this year. For twenty years I have been battling for financial reform and this is the first opportunity our party has had to throw its weight in the balance as a political power and secure a victory. The St. Louis convention must choose between McKinley and Bryan. By failing to endorse Mr. Bryan they virtually endorse Mr. McKinley. By all means place Bryan's name at the head of the ticket.—J. B. Romine.

Valparaiso, Neb., July 11.—I confess my mind is not yet fixed as to what the populist party should do in regard to the Chicago nominations, but there is one thing all agree on, viz, that the reform elements must unite or our beloved country is lost. Then are we all ready to place patriotism above party name? If so, will the silver democrats drop their name and all together take a new name (I care not what)? Then as they have swallowed our principles and we in turn swallow their man, we would all be one, and not know or care who that one is.—B. R. B. Weber.

Beatrice, July 12.—The republican machine convention at St. Louis stole the platform of the golden calf Groverite; the free silver democrats at Chicago stole the populist platform; I cannot see anything for us pops to do at St. Louis but to steal the next president of these United States. We know a pop among a thousand of democrats, and we know W. J. Bryan to be just the very man that the American people need in their business at the present time. Let us nominate him at St. Louis. Country first with me and party secondary. The Tribune is for the "brainty Bryan."—E. E. Ellis.

Aurora, Neb., July 13.—When men believing in the same basic principles unite for the advancement of a cause, it is right. No personal or party selfishness should influence patriotic citizens to divide forces and permit wrong to triumph. Let us meet at St. Louis, adopt a platform and name Bryan as our candidate. It is the duty of the hour; a sight draft on our manhood. Let us perform the duty; let us honor the obligation.—W. L. Stark.

Kimball, Neb., July 12.—My views on the situation are to unite on one set of electors for all silver parties. The highest number of votes in either of the silver parties gets the president, the next highest gets the vice president and the third highest the secretary. The cabinet to be chosen from the reform parties. I heartily urge this plan.—John Biggs, Chairman Kimball County Committee.

Ogallala, July 13.—The populists held their county convention at Ogallala and nominated a full county ticket. A standing vote was taken, all present endorsing W. J. Bryan for president.—I. M. Shultz.

Geneva, July 12.—Fillmore county in its convention yesterday expressed its confidence in W. J. Bryan, and instructed its delegates to vote for a union of reform forces if the same can be secured honorably and without a sacrifice of principle or party organization. My own sentiments are in and with the above.—J. J. Burke.

Fillet, Neb., July 13.—In reply to your inquiry as to the duty of the populist party in regard to the nomination of Mr. Bryan for president, I have no hesitation in saying that that party should make him its candidate. This is an opportunity to secure the triumph of a great principle which is a cardinal point in the populist platform, and the highest patriotism demands that the populists should avail themselves of it. I would regard the defeat of the money power of the world by the restoration of silver to the status of 1873 as the greatest vic-

tory of the people since the declaration of independence. This victory will be achieved by the election of Wm. J. Bryan as president.—J. Burrows.

that under the present circumstances I would prefer nominating Bryan.—J. S. Freeman.

Omaha, July 14.—I think the populist party should nominate Bryan. There are several reasons for this opinion.—D. Clem Deaver.

Lincoln, Neb., July 12, 1896.—Endorse W. J. Bryan. Our populist county convention elected thirteen out of fourteen delegates, pronounced W. J. Bryan men.—J. B. Morgan.

Don't think we should recognize the Chicago convention.—W. C. Reed.

Cowles, Neb., July 13, 1896.—The pop convention Saturday practically endorsed him, Bryan, and selected delegates to work for that end. The free silver element is strong for him here—populists, republicans and all. But we are not so excited as not to look anxiously toward the attitude of the south—a spirit that the silver forces must be united is above the pride in a man from our own state.—H. L. Hopkins.

Nelson, Neb., July 13, 1896.—Wisdom surely dictates the endorsement of W. J. Bryan at St. Louis on the 22d.—D. S. Dusenberry, Editor Nickolls County Herald.

Clay County, Neb., July 14, 1896.—My views are, that the populist party should do nothing that would divide the elements favorable to silver or delay its enactment into law. No action should be taken that will divide free silver vote among two or more presidential candidates. I am for the man that can defeat McKinley and lead us to victory in 1896. I think I am safe in saying that this is the general sentiment of our people.—George W. Negel.

Imperial, Neb., July 13, 1896.—Chase county delegation for Hon. W. J. Bryan, the "Moses of the Nineteenth century."—E. B. Sutton.

McCook, Neb., July 13, 1896.—My opinion is that they cannot do anything else but to nominate the Chicago ticket, Bryan and Sewall, and keep up both national and state organizations of the party. Not to do so would be bad politics, as they represent and stand for the principles we advocate. I deem it the duty of the independent party to avail themselves of the first opportunity to put them in force.—J. A. Sheridan.

Imperial, Neb., July 12, 1896.—Populists of Chase county met in convention yesterday. All express themselves as willing to vote for Bryan and hope our national convention would endorse him. Of course, nothing was said in the convention. I write this that you may know our sentiments. Yours for victory.—A. M. Brittell, Chairman.

Hebron, Neb., July 13, 1896.—The people's party should hold its own convention at St. Louis, adopt its own platform and nominate its own candidates. W. J. Bryan is a good enough populist to get my support, should he be nominated by our convention and accept such nomination. To support him as a democrat and against a populist, would not only be dangerous to the life of our party, but, in case of his defeat, we would be left in about the same condition as the gold-bug democrats in Nebraska, now kicked out of our own party and no home to shelter us. Should Mr. Bryan not be the nominee of our convention, I would favor naming the same state electors with the democrats upon the understanding that the whole electoral vote shall be cast for the free silver candidate who receives the largest popular vote.—F. S. Mickey.

Richfield, Sarpy County, Neb., July 13, 1896.—Personally, I regard Mr. Bryan as the logical presidential candidate for whom the populists should declare at St. Louis. Our people are all for him. Sarpy county has always been, is, and will in November next be, the banner Bryan county in the state. The new alignment of political parties will be properly defined during the coming campaign; its culmination will be effected at the election, which follows. Should Bryan fail of election, we may rest assured no other candidate could have succeeded. The men of the silver, corn and cotton states will rally to his standard and in every state of the union men who prefer American to British interests will shout the praises of the silver knight, Nebraska's favorite son, the Hon. W. J. Bryan.—George Becker, State Central Committee.

Neligh, Neb., July 13.—My opinion there is only one thing to do, and that is to unite the silver forces, otherwise it means certain defeat. And if the gold power is not broken by the election its shackles will be fastened on us permanently.—Herman Fresse.

Bassett, Neb., July 13.—You ask my views as to "what position the populist party should take in regard to Chicago nominations." Bryan and the platform on which he stands suits me. I care nothing for party name. Like Teller of Colorado, "principle before party" is my motto. Without union we cannot hope to accomplish anything, with Bryan as our leader, supported by all bi-metalists, we can sweep the country.—W. T. Phillips.

Ainsworth, Neb., July 12.—I would say that I am in favor of the St. Louis convention endorsing the Chicago nominees. We must strike effectively at the money power, and soon, or it will be too late.—Geo. A. Mills, State Com.

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