

TALKING OF MEN AND THINGS

There was something significant in the banquet tendered to Mr. Bryan last Monday night. Men may differ as to what that significance is, but none can deny that it once more refutes the claim that Mr. Bryan is a "dead one." Mr. Bryan has been buried his friends, the republicans, times without number. But his last interment was at the hands of his friends of his own party. But as in the case of republican burial, so in the case of democratic entombment. The corpse absolutely refuses to remain in the casket, but throwing aside the ceremonies step forth to cast consternation among those who came to smile while weeping tears of hypocritical grief.

"God does not require me to be a delegate to the democratic national convention," exclaimed Mr. Bryan. But God does require me to be a man every day of my life!" And the response to this sentiment was so instantaneous, so spontaneous and so hearty as to leave no doubt that the self-elected party managers are counting without their host if they figure on relegating William Jennings Bryan to the rear in the councils of the national democracy. Although for more than ten years the editor of Will Maupin's Weekly has been associated in a humble way with Mr. Bryan in an editorial capacity, we have not always agreed. This is due to a chronic inability of this editor to always agree even with himself. We had some difference on the policy of county option—not that we differed upon the rightfulness of that policy or upon its worth as a moral issue, but that we differed upon the wisdom of making it a party shibboleth. But this editor claims to be too thoroughly imbued with the spirit of real democracy, not the partisan brand, but the brand of principle, ever to make the difference of personal opinion big enough to obscure the real matters at issue. Men who profess to be able to read Mr. Bryan out of the democratic party have yet to learn the alphabet of democracy. Principles are eternal, men are transitory.

It is one thing to differ with a man on matters of policy, and quite another thing to "read out of the party" men who do not agree with us on non-essentials. And when democratic democrats like Champ Clark and Senator Owen and Senator Kern and Governor Shaffroth travel hundreds of miles to pay tribute to the sterling democracy and partiotic service of Bryan, it is to laugh to hear the pismires of politics "read him out of the democratic party." Old King Canute tackled a mighty easy job in trying to order the tides about compared with the job some men have assumed in relegating Bryan to the rear in democratic party affairs.

It is a matter of little concern whether Mr. Bryan is ever again a candidate for the presidency. It is a matter of vital concern whether the principles of government for which he has fought so long and so valiantly are wrought into the fundamental laws of this republic. Mr. Bryan's personal and political fortunes are matters of purely personal moment to him and to millions who love him. The triumph of the principles for which he stands and for which he fights mean the making or the marring of this republic. What matters it whether Mr. Bryan is elected to the presidency to guide the way to those triumphs? The triumph of the principles is as far above the triumph of the man as the stars are above

their reflection in the bosom of the placid waters.

And because men differed with Mr. Bryan on petty affairs of local import, we are asked to relegate to the rear the man who has blazed the way to those reforms that are bringing to the people the relief they so long sought, and in vain! Upon what meat are these local Cesar's feeding that they have grown so great? Because Will Maupin's Weekly was not in accord with Mr. Bryan on a local question, shall it refuse to follow his leadership in the battle waging for reforms that must come if this is to remain a free republic? Sixteen years ago the editor of Will Maupin's Weekly severed party ties that were twined about his very heartstrings and followed the flag—not of Bryan but of reforms absolutely necessary. But he refused to follow where Bryan led in 1904, exercising his American prerogative of doing as he pleased politically, and doing it as the result of his own thinking. That was a difference of opinion on policies, not a difference of opinion on principles. The same was true in the county option fight of last fall. But is Will Maupin's Weekly going to turn its back upon those reforms merely because its editor could not agree with Mr. Bryan on what is purely a moral question? God forbid!

What did that Bryan banquet Monday night portend? The answers are as numerous as the questioners. But upon these two answers most thoughtful men are agreed: It portends, as Kern said, that when democrats gather around the council table Bryan will be there, and where Bryan sits will be the head of the table." And it portends that men who pretend to possess the ability to "read out of the party" those who fail to agree with them are themselves reading vainly from the blank pages of a book.

Mr. Bryan did not make the principles which he has voiced so ably, for they have existed since man first aspired to freedom. Nor was he the first to voice them. They have been voiced since the days when the first aspiration of the human heart found men with the courage to voice them. But they found their ablest exponent in him, for he gathered to himself the experience and the blood-bought knowledge of the ages past, and by his matchless eloquence drew not only the attention of the world to them, but rallied men everywhere to the standard. It is not a personal triumph for Mr. Bryan that the reforms he has advocated have been written into law by opposition of men of his own party. It is merely the triumph of right. And when the future historian of this republic shall set about the task of writing of this generation's progress, his pen will write upon those living pages the name of Bryan in letters of fire.

When Senator Owen appeared before a Nebraska audience two years ago he made enduring his fame in the hearts of Nebraskans. But he added to that fame by

his masterly address Monday night. Little fear that the people's cause will ever lack for leadership when men of the Owen stamp are at hand. His eyes were lighted with almost holy zeal, and his sledgehammer arguments for the people's rule seared and blistered the ears of special privilege. Oklahoma, young and virile, has given us an example of popular government. It has given us inspiration along many lines, but not the least of all its gifts to this republic is the splendid young champion of human rights and human equality.—Owen.

Nor was there any evasion about Champ Clark, speaker to be and democratic democrat always. The man who doubted after hearing him, would not believe the evidences of his own eyes nor accept the verdict of all the ages. Toastmaster Hall intimated in introducing Clark that he might be presenting to the banqueters the next president of the United States. There are those of us who may be pardoned for expressing the wish that Toastmaster Hall was hitting almighty close to the truth.

Governor Shaffroth gave renewed evidence that he is a man of parts. A few years ago he was tendered a certificate of election to congress and refused it because it had been intimated that there was fraud in his election. That's the kind of men we need in public office. Shaffroth was a silver republican in 1896. About the only difference between the silver republicans of 1896 and the "republican insurgents" of 1911 is that the silver republicans "saw it first."

Not the least interested listeners at the banquet board were Governor Aldrich and Senator Brown. And as they listened to the tributes paid to the republican insurgents, and the praise paid republican leaders like LaFollette and Bristow and Beveridge, they might have pardoned for believing that they had wandered into a non-partisan meeting.

And not the least significant feature of that gathering was the evidences in plenty that party ties are sitting lightly these days, and that the old days of the party machine" are numbered among the things of the dead past. Party regularity is awfully hard to maintain among men who persist and insist in doing their own thinking. This habit of thinking is going to wreck every corrupt political machine that has cursed municipality, state and nation.

There are those who profess to be surprised that Richard L. Metcalfe should have had the courage—or the temerity—to spring the sensation he sprung at that banquet. He who was surprised simply does not know Metcalfe. And the editor of Will Maupin's Weekly, after being associated with him for upwards of fifteen years, opines that he knows the man. No democrat in the country has given his party more loyal and devoted service. Nor has it been given to many men to be of better service. But Metcalfe refuses to wear the collar of "regularity" at the price of a betrayed conscience, and he has the courage to express his convictions anywhere, at any time, before any gathering. Make no mistake about the brand of Metcalfe courage! Character readers need but to look into those steel-grey eyes and glimpse that square chin to understand that he is gazing upon a man who doesn't know what the word "fear" means. And this humble little newspaper is of the firm conviction

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