

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 2. No. 43.

Lincoln, Nebraska, Nov. 14, 1902.

Whole No. 95.

DAVID B. HILL'S BOOM

The editors are now construing the returns, and each one is able to show that his views have been vindicated at the polls.

For instance, the Evening Post of New York says that "David B. Hill has been demolished as a presidential candidate and that he will no longer be an important personage in politics." Other papers take an opposite view. The Kansas City Journal says in a special dispatch that the election makes Hill the logical candidate of the democratic party. The Commoner insists that the late election neither helps nor hinders Mr. Hill. He had no chance of nomination before and has none now. Those who talk of availability, as if the carrying of a state or the losing of it would decide a presidential nomination, reflect on the good sense of the democratic voters. They assume that the democrats of the south will vote for any man on any platform and that their wishes need not, therefore, be considered, and they also assume that the democrats of the rest of the country would favor the nomination of any one calling himself a democrat who had a reasonable prospect of carrying New York. These assumptions question the honesty of the democracy of the south and west. The democrats of the east do not vote the ticket unless both the platform and the nominations suit them; they boast of their convictions and of their willingness to follow their convictions even if they are thereby led to vote the republican ticket, but they take it for granted that the democrats in the rest of the country have no political convictions and are indifferent as to platform and men, provided the democratic tag is attached by a convention calling itself democratic.

Mr. Hill is not an available candidate, not because his state failed to go democratic this year, but because Mr. Hill himself has not gone democratic for several years. He is credited with the authorship of the phrase, "I am a democrat," but he borrowed it from Mr. Cleveland and neither one of them could prove title to it before an impartial jury. There is not a single issue upon which the party could make a fight under Mr. Hill's leadership. He made a record in the senate which would be a millstone about his neck in any race before the people. If he were a new man he might steal a march on the voters, but he has been before the public so long that his words and acts are familiar to all.

His failure to support the ticket in 1896 (for his vote made known two years later after he had conceived the notion of being a candidate himself cannot be called support) is not his greatest fault; his greatest fault is found in the fact that he is controlled by influences which kept him aloof from a contest between the money power and the common people. His very silence, coming after his fight in the convention, gave most eloquent support to the republican ticket. The republican party is dominated today by the same corporate interests that dominated it in 1896, and as Mr. Hill has undergone no change of heart or change of environment he can be silenced again by the influences that silenced him six years ago. He now talks tariff revision, but in 1894 he refused to support the only tariff reform bill passed since the civil war and he re-

fused, he said, because it contained an income tax. He talks against trusts and yet he dares not say a word against the money trust—the worst trust of all. He has never yet shown real devotion to a principle, a cause or a person and such a candidate could not inspire enthusiasm among those with whom democracy is a sort of religion—the brotherhood of man stated in governmental terms. The editor of The Commoner can discuss Mr. Hill's candidacy frankly because he is not a candidate himself and has no choice as between men who can be trusted to stand with the masses against the encroachments of organized wealth.

If democratic principles are worth holding, they are worth fighting for, and if they are worth fighting for they are too sacred to be entrusted to the keeping of one who instead of making a consistent and continuous fight for democratic doctrines seizes upon any circumstance that promises temporary advantage, like the spasmodic trader who buys a bankrupt stock at half price, sells it at auction and then waits until he can run across another bargain.

More than two years ago one of the great financial magnates suggested Mr. Hill as a suitable man to lead the democracy whenever the corporations decided to have a change of administration. He would be entirely satisfactory to the capital that is accumulated through governmental favoritism and that supports the candidates secretly pledged to obey the orders issued from Wall street, but he would not be acceptable to those who desire to make the party an effective instrument in the hands of the people for the enforcement of the Jeffersonian maxim of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

THE WINTER VACATION.

If any of the readers of The Commoner are contemplating a winter vacation the editor suggests that they consider the wisdom of a trip to Mexico. He took that trip five years ago and the memory of it lingers yet. The City of Mexico, the capital of the second largest republic on the western hemisphere, was once the home of the Aztec rulers and now presents an interesting commingling of the ancient Indian and the modern Spanish. The visitor will not find in Mexico the wealth and magnificence displayed in the European capitals, but from the time he crosses the Rio Grande until he again sets foot upon the soil of his native land he will be instructed as well as entertained. There are so many Americans in Mexico that one has no difficulty in travelling there, although it is convenient to know a few of the more common Spanish words. Those who are anticipating a trip will find it a great help to read Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico" and the late Senor Romero's book on Mexico. These will enable the visitor to better understand what he sees and will also point out the places of rarest interest.

Those who have already been to Europe will find in the land of the Montezumas a pleasing change of scene; those who have never traveled abroad will be the better prepared to cross the ocean after they have acquainted themselves with their own continent.

THE ELECTIONS OF 1902.

Those democrats whose enthusiasm ebbs and flows with the political tides will not be made jubilant by reading the election returns of last week. Later returns not only fail to strengthen democratic claims, but give further evidence of republican gains. In the south the usual majorities have been polled, but in the northern states Rhode Island and Nevada are the only ones that elected democratic governors. Senator Teller will probably be re-elected, but it is due to hold-over senators, the house being republican. The democrats lose Harris of Kansas, Turner of Washington, Rawlings of Utah and Helffeld of Idaho, and gain Lattimer in place of McLaurin in South Carolina and Newlands in place of Jones in Nevada. The democrats have gained a few congressmen and lost some, leaving the republicans in control.

Generally speaking, the democrats made gains in the cities and lost in the country, the explanation being, first, that the city organization is more complete, and, second, that present prices have brought more advantage to the farmers than to the wage-earners.

The result has been the same, too, whether the national platform of the party was indorsed or rejected. While the Kansas City platform was indorsed in Rhode Island and Nevada—the states that we carried—it was ignored in New York and California—states in which we made gains.

On the other hand, we were defeated in Wisconsin, Indiana, Massachusetts, Illinois, Iowa, Connecticut, New Jersey and Michigan, where they turned down the Kansas City platform as well as in Ohio, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Minnesota, Washington, and Idaho, where it was indorsed. Neither the regular democrats nor the reorganizers can point to the election as an evidence that their plan of dealing with the issues will insure success, but the Kansas City platform democrats can console themselves with the fact that they were fighting for principle and that they still have that while those who fought only for victory have nothing left.

The gain in California is doubtless due to the activity of the labor organizations and to the fact that the democratic party joined with them in the support of candidates especially satisfactory to the wage-earners.

In New York the gains were almost entirely in the city of New York where all factions were pulling together for Coler. It is difficult to locate the credit for all the gains made in the city or to locate the blame for the failure to make gains in the up-state counties. Coler was a very strong candidate and it is an open question whether he was aided or weakened by the fact that Mr. Hill controlled the convention which nominated him.

In Massachusetts the reorganizers had control and they nominated a man more acceptable to the corporations than the republican candidate, but he was beaten badly enough to show that even from the low standpoint of expediency nothing is to be gained by an attempt to republicanize the democratic party. Possibly it was just as well to make the experiment at this time rather than later. Mr. Williams said a year ago that he would remain out of politics as long as the party stood by its prin-