

Cleveland's second administration when he used the patronage of his office to induce enough democrats to join the republicans to carry through a republican financial policy indorsed by the democrats. (The Wilson bill which Mr. Cleveland forced through in the fall of 1893 was identical in purpose and almost identical in language with a bill introduced by Senator Sherman a year before.)

The statement that the democratic party was "compact, well organized and ably led" is a palpable mistake, because the defeat of 1894, suffered just after Mr. Cleveland had successfully carried through his financial policy, was a more sweeping defeat than the defeat of either 1896 or 1900. The defeat of 1894 came before the present reorganizing element had openly co-operated with the republicans; what would be the defeat now should the reorganizers, fresh from their alliance with the republicans, attempt to lead the democratic party back into the control of the financiers?

The democratic party has never done anything to alienate honest business interests, but it cannot afford to surrender to the commercialism that today controls the republican party and also dominates those who oppose the Chicago and Kansas City platforms. Even from the low standpoint of expediency the democratic party has everything to lose and nothing to gain by the abandonment of its principles; it can better afford to stand firm and continue its fight for the people's interests, awaiting a vindication of its principles.

### Polite Coercion.

The Winona (Minn.) Weekly Leader of recent date contains a letter written by Charles R. Knapp, general manager of the Winona Carriage company, to his employes just before the late election. The letter will be reproduced in full on another page. It is a fair sample of the tactics employed by many republican business men during recent campaigns, and attention is called to it for the purpose of suggesting the condition that would result if all the democrats carried their politics into their business as this man has done. Mr. Knapp would feel aggrieved if democrats refused to buy carriages of him because of his political views, and yet they would have as much reason to do so as he has to attempt to coerce his employes. His disclaimer in the beginning of the letter, instead of being intended to lessen the influence of his letter, is only an open confession that he is conscious of the impropriety of his action. He wants his employes to know that he recognizes their right to vote as they please, and yet he is even more anxious that they shall know that he, their employer, wants them to vote his way, and that he will have a much better opinion of the wisdom of those who follow his advice than of those who follow their own convictions.

It is not strange that a man with low ideals of citizenship and its responsibilities should attempt to coerce his employes; that is to be expected, but it is strange that republicans who have high ideals should be so slow to protest against the influences which are a virtual disfranchisement of voters.

If the republican leaders were half as solicitous about interference with the suffrage of white voters of the north as they are about qualifications placed upon the black voters of the south there would be fewer employers who would risk the public censure that would follow the writing of a letter like that issued by Mr. Knapp.

In this connection it may be remarked that the employers of labor are not the only people who have acted upon a principle that they would object to having applied to them. In 1896 some of the wholesale dealers took occasion to instruct

their patrons, but they would have resented it if their patrons had undertaken to instruct them. Likewise bankers sometimes refused to loan to men who were opposing their political views, but they would have been indignant if democrats had withdrawn their deposits from the banks that were taking an active part in the republican campaign.

If these prominent business men are right in using their business to advance their politics, then the democratic voters would be justified in dealing only with democratic merchants and manufacturers, thus refusing to supply sinews of war for political opponents. But the principle is abhorrent and cannot be indorsed by any intelligent republican who will take time to reflect.

The Commoner referred some months ago to an advertiser who refused to advertise in The Commoner because he was not willing to encourage a paper which advocated the principles The Commoner did. No principle can be defended which has not a universal application, and the business man who patronizes only members of his own party should not expect patronage from outsiders. But such conditions, instead of promoting good citizenship, would be destructive of it, because a business man who depends entirely upon his political associates for his business could not change his position on public questions without bankrupting himself. He would thus be bribed to stay with his party no matter how much his conscience or his judgment might protest.

There is but one sound theory of citizenship, and that is that every citizen should be free to follow his convictions and to give his country the benefit of his intelligence on every subject. He must also recognize his own liability to error and not only be willing to concede to others the right to think for themselves, but also concede the possibility of their being right.

Real freedom and intelligent citizenship are only possible where business and politics are kept separate.

### King Oscar's Ruling.

The opinion of King Oscar in the Samoan claims case, that was submitted to him for arbitration by the government of the United States, Great Britain and Germany, has been made public.

It will be remembered that Admiral Kautz co-operating with the British authorities engaged in bombardment and military operations for the purpose of enforcing the decision of the chief justice by which Malietoa was declared king.

In 1889 the United States, Great Britain and Germany entered into a treaty providing for the guarantee of the neutrality of the Samoan islands. By the terms of this treaty there was to be established a foreign court chosen by these three governments, a municipal council for the district of Apia, which is the chief town, together with a president of that council who was to be a foreigner and authorized to advise the king.

The question submitted to King Oscar was whether Great Britain and the United States should pay for the damages caused by the bombardment and military operations carried on under British and United States authority without Germany's consent.

King Oscar says that he found nothing in the treaty or any subsequent agreement which authorized one of the signatory powers or a majority of them to take action to enforce the conditions of the act or to make the decision of the chief justice binding on the powers. Intervention, then, in King Oscar's opinion, could be justified only on the ground that such action was necessary for the protection of lives or property. On this point he declares: "We have found nothing in the evidence before us to show that the general condition of affairs was such as to render

military action necessary for the protection of lives and property."

As a result of this decision, then, Great Britain and the United States, being responsible for the bombardment and military operations, are responsible to those who thereby suffered losses. The opinion seems to be a well considered one and the reasons advanced for the conclusion reached by the distinguished arbitrator make forcible appeal for the approval of thoughtful and fair-minded men.

King Oscar seems to have based his ruling upon a question of simple fact rather than upon any ingenious interpretation of intricate international law; and it is safe to say that his ruling will, very generally, be upheld.

### The Evils of Corporations.

Bishop Henry C. Potter of New York has caused to be republished in book form a number of his lectures. These are grouped under the title "The citizen in relation to the industrial situation." In one of these addresses Bishop Potter said:

"You may constitute a social order in which there shall be no rough angles, no unguarded pitfalls, no summons to privation or hardship; but when you have perfected it, where will you find the men to administer it? These are not made that way; and the automatic order remains yet to be discovered."

In another lecture the bishop said:

"The evil of the corporation is not in its mechanism or, in its bulk, but in its temper and in its morals.

"Corporations indeed have no souls, but those who compose them have consciences; and these they must bring to the standard of a divine righteousness, to be touched by its quickening hand, to be illumined by its spirit, and then to bear witness, in kings' palaces, at board meetings, at directors' meetings, not fearing the face of man, because they have heard the voice of God."

It is true that however carefully the people safeguard their social order it is important that men be found to administer and these should be honest and conscientious men. But it has been true in the past, and will doubtless be true in the future, that however carefully these men may have been chosen even honest and conscientious men are susceptible to blandishments; and where some would not yield to dishonest appeals they succumb to flattery or give their consent to unjust policies on the plea that those policies are essential to the "business interests" of the country.

If the evil of the corporation is, as Bishop Potter says it is, in its temper and its morals rather than its mechanism and its bulk, then the people have it in their power to modify the temper and to improve the morals. The reform is not to be accomplished entirely by placing better men in charge of the corporations, although to be sure improvement in every individual wielding a large influence would be advantageous to public interests. But if the people sit calmly by while their representatives vote from the people's pockets enormous subsidies to these corporations and give them in their tariff laws and in their currency and banking statutes undue advantages, it is not in the least surprising that the "morals" of these corporations are affected in the presence of the opportunity to profit at the expense of the great mass of the people. When these corporations have enjoyed these privileges year after year until their officers and promoters have grown enormously rich from public favors, it is not strange that their "temper" should be affected so as to make them promptly resent any suggestion that the advantages they enjoy be interfered with or that they be required to deal justly with the people whom they are expected to serve.

"Equal rights to all and special privileges to none" would go farther toward the removal of the evil of corporations than any philanthropic effort