

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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An Ex-Parte Statement

The Brooklyn Eagle, in launching the Cleveland boom, says: "He is today regarded as the only man who could beat Theodore Roosevelt. This reduces the case to those who would like to beat Mr. Roosevelt and those who would not. He can be beaten by Grover Cleveland, in our present opinion, but he might not be by any other democrat. Therefore, those who would not have Cleveland, may, by the support of any other democrat, fail to beat Mr. Roosevelt, and would thereby contribute to Mr. Roosevelt's re-election."

How pleasant it must be to be able to settle questions so easily. The Eagle first decides that Mr. Cleveland is the only man who could beat Mr. Roosevelt, and having settled that it proceeds to brand as men desiring the election of Mr. Roosevelt, all who oppose its decree. And this from a paper that helped to elect Mr. McKinley! The democrats who have been loyal to the party answer the Eagle in two ways: In the first place, they deny that Mr. Cleveland would be a strong candidate. In 1894, after two years of experience, the people repudiated his administration and elected a republican congress by an enormous majority. What reason have we to believe that they would treat him more kindly now? Two years later, in 1896, he left the democratic party and threw his support, nominally at least, to the Palmer and Buckner ticket, and that ticket not only failed to carry a single state or county, but actually carried but one precinct in the United States, and that was not a large precinct, but an obscure frontier precinct in western Kansas where there were but six voters in the precinct, and the Palmer and Buckner ticket only received three out of the six. What was there in the result of that contest to indicate that Mr. Cleveland would be popular today?

If it is said that Mr. Cleveland's friends voted the republican ticket instead of the Palmer and Buckner ticket, will that be urged as an evidence that he would become a popular democratic candidate? If Mr. Cleveland's friends voted the republican ticket in order to carry out his wishes, why don't they secure his nomination by the republican party? Why don't they boom Mr. Cleveland for the vice presidency on the Roosevelt ticket? Or, if that would not be acceptable, why don't they have Mr. Morgan arrange with Mr. Roosevelt to run for vice president with Mr. Cleveland as the republican candidate for the presidency?

They seem to be very much afraid that the business interests of the country will be disturbed by a real battle between the people and organized wealth. Surely a combination between the friends of Mr. Roosevelt and the friends of Cleveland ought to settle the matter entirely, if both are as popular as their friends say they are.

It is absurd in the extreme to mention in connection with the democratic nomination a man who, in the two last campaigns, did not support the ticket and any one would see it who had any knowledge of democratic voters or any sympathy with democratic principles.

A Lesson of History.

A reader of The Commoner suggests that since the reorganizers must know that their plan does not promise democratic victory, they must be interested in aiding the republicans. The reorganizers ought to understand this, if they can remember as far back as 1894, but some of them argue that the democrats of the south will vote the ticket anyhow, no matter who is nominated or what the platform is, and that the reorganizers

can carry enough votes in the east to give the necessary number of electoral votes. The leading papers among the reorganizers assume that there will be a large falling off in the democratic vote, but they argue that the falling off will be in states whose votes are not necessary. But if the reorganizers will look back to 1894 they will see that even in the eastern states the democratic vote fell off under the same leadership that is suggested now.

ORGANIZE

Organs of the reorganizers, newspapers that have habitually bolted democratic nominations, are proceeding with calm assurance to choose the democratic presidential candidate for 1904. These organs seem now to have settled upon Grover Cleveland, although they are no more enthusiastic concerning his availability than they were as to the availability of the several presidential candidates they have offered during the past six months.

It is significant that these men who have had so much to say concerning "harmony" and who have pretended that their great desire was to harmonize the democratic party, have chosen as their candidate a man who, although repeatedly honored by the party, deserted it during two presidential campaigns, even though he knew that the party was required to carry the burden of his political sins. It will occur to a great many democrats that these disciples of "harmony" have chosen a very strange olive branch.

Whatever may be said concerning the character of an effort to harmonize the party with Grover Cleveland as harmonizer-in-chief, it will, very generally, be admitted that if the reorganizers are to be permitted to control the democratic party, Grover Cleveland is their logical candidate. This is true because Mr. Cleveland represents the evils against which the democratic party has always been presumed to stand and toward which, during the campaigns of 1896 and 1900, the democratic party directed stern protest.

But although time will demonstrate to the satisfaction of these reorganizers that they cannot make progress with Mr. Cleveland as their preferred candidate, the man whom they finally choose for this honor will be one upon whom the same influences that dominated Mr. Cleveland's second administration may confidently depend for faithful protection of their special interests.

In the presence of this situation, then, every democrat who believes in the perpetuation of democratic principles and who desires that his party shall remain true to itself, must exert himself in order to prevent these influences from obtaining control of the party. The reorganizers are amply supplied with money and they will lose no opportunity to advance their cause. It will be the duty of democrats everywhere to organize for the protection of their party and for the defense of the principles with which the representatives of special interests are at war and upon which the success of popular government must depend.

The Commoner calls upon democrats to organize in every precinct throughout the United States. A democratic club in every precinct and pledged to the defense of democratic principles may do much to prevent the republicanism of the democratic party. These clubs may exert powerful influence in primary elections and if their members are watchful they may see to it that delegates chosen to democratic conventions are faithful to democratic doctrine.

The Commoner will furnish a form of constitution and membership blanks for the use of democratic clubs and as rapidly as these clubs are organized the fact should be reported to this office.

President's St. Louis Speech

The president's speech at the dedication of the St. Louis exposition is mainly important, first, because of his failure to emphasize Jefferson's connection with the purchase. He only referred to Jefferson once in the entire speech, and then only incidentally. In mentioning the trans-Mississippi country he speaks of "this great region acquired for our people under the presidency of Jefferson." One would suppose that so important an addition to our territory would have justified the president in giving some slight praise to the man whose foresight and statesmanship led him to see at an early date the importance of making the trans-Mississippi country a part of the American republic.

The second thing noticeable in the speech was his attempt to turn the occasion to partisan advantage. The whole burden of his speech was expansion, expansion, expansion. The entire speech was an effort to justify the Philippine policy of the United States without expressly mentioning it. He started in by declaring that the Louisiana purchase determined that we should be a "great, expanding nation, instead of relatively a small and stationary one." He said: "This work of expansion was by far the greatest work of our people during the years that intervened between the adoption of the constitution and the outbreak of the civil war;" that "our triumph in this process of expansion was indissolubly bound up with the success of our peculiar kind of federal government;" that "only the adventurous and far-seeing can be expected to welcome the process of expansion, for the nation that expands is a nation which is entering upon a great career, and with greatness there must of necessity come perils which daunt all save the most stout-hearted," etc.

He took occasion to discuss the different forms of colonization, condemning both the Greek and the Roman forms. Greece, he explained, formed colonies, but each colony as created became entirely independent of the mother state, and in after years often an enemy. "Local self-government, local independence," he said, "was secured, but only by the absolute sacrifice of everything representing national unity." "National power and greatness were completely sacrificed to local liberty." Rome, he asserted, did exactly the opposite. "The imperial city rose to absolute dominion over all the peoples of Italy, and then expanded her rule over the entire civilized world by a process which kept the nation strong and united, but gave no room whatever for local liberty and self-government. All other cities and countries were subject to Rome. In consequence this great masterful race of warriors, rulers, road-builders and administrators stamped their indelible impress upon the after-life of our race, and yet let an overcentralization eat out the vitals of their empire until it became an empty shell, so that when the barbarians came they destroyed only what had become worthless to the world."

He then explained the American plan of making each acquisition a component part of the whole. "We," he said, "expanded by carving the wilderness into territories, and out of these territories building new states when once they had received as permanent settlers a sufficient number of our own people. Being a practical nation we have never tried to force on any section of our new territory an unsuitable form of government merely because it was suitable to another section under different conditions. Of the territory covered by the Louisiana purchase a portion