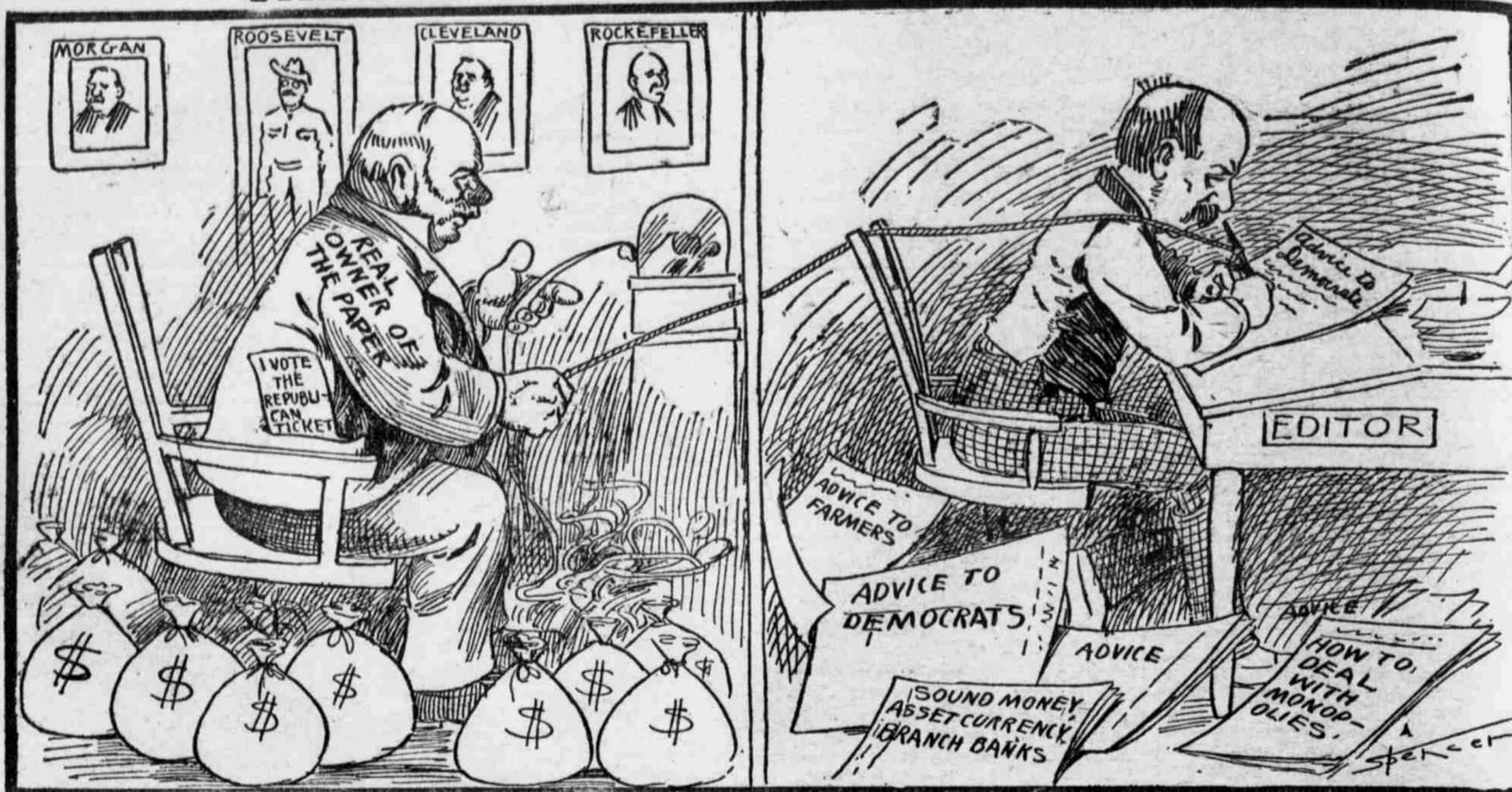


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THE TOUCHSTONE OF DEMOCRACY

The question of the democratic leadership for 1904 seems to vex the souls of many men who have not the slightest idea of supporting the party's candidate, whoever he may be. These meddlers and marplots are of two kinds—republicans who begin to fear that Roosevelt is a reincarnation of Bryan, and pseudo-democrats who believe, or affect to believe, that wisdom will die with their idol.

We need hardly say that the choice will not lie with these officious patriots who, by their own account, enacted the role of Brutus in the elections of 1896 and 1900. It is the merest dream to imagine that sackcloth and ashes will be the garb of the six millions who voted for the Nebraskan in both those memorable contests. Rather is it to be supposed that this great electorate will think and act for itself. If history has any lesson on such points, we must infer that the republican party will become more republican, and that the democratic party will become more democratic, as the years roll on.

As a matter of fact, the differences between the rival organizations are congenital, and pierce to the very marrow of their being. A fanatical lover of the Hub once declared that Boston is not a place, but a state of mind. It may likewise be affirmed that republicanism and democracy are not mere badges to be worn or discarded at pleasure, but are habits of thought which draw thinkers in opposite directions, just as the centripetal and centrifugal forces draw material things toward or away from the earth's center. This view of the case is exceedingly well put by Mr. Bryan in a letter which he has recently addressed to the New York Independent: "The difference upon the money question, among those who understood it, was not so much a difference of opinion as a difference of sympathies, and that difference exists today as it did then." This is

but another way of saying that a leopard is to be recognized by his unchangeable spots.

It is indeed perfectly true that the silver question, terribly important in itself, was but one item of a long program; for the demonetization of the white metal, stripped of all technicalities, simply stood for the capitalist's eternal hunger after the unearned increment. So, too, advocates of a prohibitive tariff seek an unfair advantage, and lovers of government by injunction would prostitute public powers to private ends. Between these believers in utterly opposite creeds there can be neither compromise nor reconciliation. The great gulf is fixed in human nature and will endure to the last syllable of recorded time. The struggle of 1904 will turn upon the old issues, though they be modified as to outward form.

For our own part, we care little about the personality of the democratic nominee, provided only that he represents the principles for which the party must fight, if it is to have the slightest claim to the suffrages of the American people. At the council-board of the first president there sat two masterful men who embodied ideas which are coeval with the race itself. Hamilton's name is synonymous with privilege and centralized administration, while Jefferson's renown rests upon his defense of the many against the few. If those pre-eminent statesmen should return to the land of the living, they would find no difficulty in aligning themselves on the controversies of this generation.

The trimmer may perform a useful function in periods of dead calm—when the ship of state is in the doldrums and therefore needs no resolute helmsman. It is not so when the huge craft is in the straits, menaced by breakers and storm-clouds. In that event, there is supreme need for a navigator whose vision is keen, whose nerves are of steel and whose knowl-

edge of the chart is without a flaw. No fresh water sailor is to be accepted as a pilot now, nor will we have a captain who would take us to sea under sealed orders. The democratic party has made one voyage of that kind, and has no stomach for another. If the country prefers republican policies, the reins of power should be entrusted to republican hands; if democratic remedies are desired, a truly democratic doctor should be called in. Let us have no more of the quacks who give bread pills and poison by turns, without thought of the patient's disease. The practitioner of this kidney is but the undertaker's advance agent.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Too Precipitate.

The report of the postoffice inspector who investigated that attack upon the negro rural free delivery carrier in Tennessee must have been something of a shock to the postmaster general. Instead of being a wholesale insurrection against the postal system calling for either suppression by the troops or suspension of service it turns out to have been the act of two individuals who had not even the sympathetic support of the community. The ensuing suspension of the service, punishing the whole district for an assault in which it had no concern, is thus made to appear as a most humiliating instance of failure to ascertain the facts before acting. But precipitancy seems to be a characteristic trait of the present post-office administration. Tulloch's charges were waved aside before they were filed. The investigation which has led to the resignation of one official and the suspension of another was pooh-poohed at the outset. After the mistake of suspending the rural delivery service at Gallatin is corrected it might be well if the department officials devoted a few hours to the consideration of the folly of being too previous.—Pittsburg Dispatch.