

Mr. Bryan on the Democratic Party

Mr. Bryan has written for the Encyclopedia Americana, now being published by the Americana company of New York, an article on the democratic party. This article gives in condensed form the history of the democratic party, together with a discussion of some of the more important issues advocated by that organization, and will be reproduced in The Commoner by courtesy of the publishers. Papers quoting from this article will please give credit to the Encyclopedia Americana.

It is not convenient to publish the entire article in one issue. The second chapter is presented in this issue and other chapters will follow until the entire article has been reproduced.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

Andrew Jackson (q.v.) of Tennessee, the hero of the war of 1812, had grown in fame and popularity from the day of his victory over the English at New Orleans. In 1824 he became the nominee of his party, and in the election following received 155,872 votes, as against 105,321 cast for John Quincy Adams; 44,282 cast for Crawford; and 46,587 cast for Henry Clay. In the electoral college, Jackson received 99 votes, Adams 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37. As no one of the candidates had a majority of the electoral college the election of the president devolved upon the house of representatives; and by a coalition between the friends of Adams and the friends of Clay, the former received the votes of 13 states, while Jackson received but 7 and Crawford 4.

The defeat of Jackson after he had secured a large plurality of the popular vote, and a considerable plurality in the electoral college, aroused great partisan feeling, and from that time until 1828, Jackson was the candidate of the party, his campaign growing in strength as the years preceded until when election day arrived he had a popular majority of nearly 140,000, and a majority of nearly 100 in the electoral college. Calhoun was chosen vice president at the same time.

The chief features of Jackson's administration were his treatment of the nullification act of the South Carolina legislature, and his veto of the act for the rechartering of the United States bank. He took vigorous steps to enforce the

federal authority and, in an elaborate message, presented the arguments against the right of secession with a force and clearness never since surpassed. His action in this matter resulted in the alienation of John C. Calhoun, who up to that time had been a staunch political friend.

The fight over the bank charter not only occupied a large part of the time of his administration, but resulted in a controversy that permeated other issues. The senate passed a resolution censuring him for removing the deposits from the bank, and this became an issue. Under the leadership of Thomas A. Benton, of Missouri, the democrats began a fight for the reversal of the action of the senate, and finally secured a majority of that body and expunged the resolution.

While Jackson's military achievements were the foundation for his early popularity, his great political fame was due to championing the cause of the masses, as against the concentrated power of wealth. In his message vetoing the bank charter he presented with emphasis and accuracy the democratic view of the sphere of government. He said:

"Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth, cannot be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue every man is equally entitled to protection by law. But when the laws undertake to add to those natural and just advantages artificial distinctions—to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges—to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful—the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and the laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors for themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their government."

Jackson's position on the bank charter represented the views of his party adherents. His veto was sent to congress on July 10, 1831, and it was the main issue of the campaign of 1832, when with Henry Clay as his opponent he secured a popular plurality of 157,000. In the electoral college he had 219 votes as against 49 cast for Clay. His secretary of state, Martin Van Buren, succeeded him as the democratic candidate, and was

elected, having both a popular majority and a majority in the electoral college. Van Buren defeated William Henry Harrison in that year, and was defeated by him in the following campaign. In the earlier campaigns the nominations were made by a congressional caucus, or by the various states, but Jackson's renomination in 1832 was made by a national convention held at Baltimore, and Van Buren was nominated by a convention held at the same place four years later.

In 1840 the democratic convention was again held at Baltimore, Van Buren was renominated and a lengthy platform was adopted. As this platform was the basis of all platforms adopted from that time to the breaking out of the civil war it is worthy of reproduction. It was as follows:

"1. Resolved, That the federal government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the constitution, and the grants of powers shown therein ought to be strictly construed by all the departments and agents of the government, and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.

"2. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements.

"3. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer authority upon the federal government directly or indirectly, to assume the debts of the several states, contracted for local internal improvements or other state purposes; nor would such assumption be just or expedient.

"4. Resolved, That justice and sound policy forbid the federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of another, or to cherish the interests of one portion to the injury of another portion of our common country—that every citizen and every section of the country has a right to demand and insist upon an equality of rights and privileges, and to complete an ample protection of persons and property from domestic violence or foreign aggression.

"5. Resolved, That it is the duty of every branch of the government to enforce and practice the most rigid economy in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be

(Continued on Page 14.)

"WELCOME" DOES NOT MEAN SURRENDER

Recently the Jacksonian club, a democratic organization in the city of Omaha, adopted a resolution introduced by Mr. Edward E. Howell, which resolution was as follows:

"Whereas, Time makes a great many changes in the thoughts and ideas of mankind, and more particularly in the conditions and creeds of political parties, and,

"Whereas, Some five or six years ago a wave of fusion swept over this nation, and more particularly over the state of Nebraska, which made the democratic party of the nation tremble as to the ultimate result, and gave rise to honest differences among democrats, who were equally loyal to the cardinal principles of the party, equally proud of its record and devoted to its traditions, and,

"Whereas, Some few years ago this club, over the protest of some of its members, saw fit to pass a resolution of expulsion affecting certain members whose names are embodied in this resolution, who had been and are now loyal democrats, and,

"Whereas, This organization being of 'simon-pure democracy,' the good faith of the party demands that it be broad enough, and intelligent enough in its scope and ideas, to become the resting place of all democrats, therefore, be it,

"Resolved, That the following named gentlemen, to wit: . . . be reinstated as members of this club, in good standing, with dues paid in full to January 1, 1904, and that the secretary be instructed to furnish each one of the persons named a copy of this resolution."

The adoption of this resolution by a democratic club at once attracted the attention of newspapers of the country and in response to telegraphic inquiries, addressed to some of the gentlemen who had been "reinstated," the opinion was very generally and forcibly expressed to the effect that this action on the part of the Jacksonian club meant not only a desire to induce the wanderers to return, but meant also a willingness on the part of the democrats who had been faithful to the party to surrender their opinions, to acknowledge that in their position in 1896 and in

1900 they were wrong, while those who had deserted the party were right.

The gentleman who introduced this resolution in the Jacksonian club went so far as to say that "reparation" was due the men who had deserted the party, and for several days in the light of the expression of sentiments of this character, some might have entertained the notion that the democrats had completely surrendered their convictions.

In the Omaha World-Herald of Monday, December 28, there appeared an article signed by Richard L. Metcalfe, the editor of that newspaper. In the beginning, Mr. Metcalfe said that any club had the right to admit or to expel men at its pleasure, and that whatever such an organization might do could not be the concern of outsiders. Mr. Metcalfe's letter, however, deals with the subject as it interests democrats generally and Commoner readers may be interested in reading the protest made by a democrat who has not found it necessary to be "reinstated."

Referring to the resolution heretofore reproduced, Mr. Metcalfe said:

"So far as the democratic party is concerned no resolution of reinstatement is necessary. The party's lathstring hangs without; the light in the window is never extinguished; and 'while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return.' All he needs to do is to abandon his republican idols and give his support to democratic principles and democratic candidates.

"Parenthetically, it may be said that, being for harmony, he should not bear concealed weapons. Things of that character should be cast aside, because they are not conducive to harmony and there are within the democratic temple many discerning eyes that cannot fail to detect a hip pocket bulge.

"When Mr. Edward E. Howell said that he introduced his resolution in the hope of winning to the party former recalcitrants, so that they might return determined to work for the party's good, willing to forget the differences of the past, and, shoulder to shoulder with the democrats and, labor for the great principles who did not stray, labor for the great principles of a party upon whose success depends the per-

petuity of popular government on constitutional lines—when Mr. Howell said that, he voiced the sentiments of democrats generally.

"But referring to the 'reinstated,' Mr. Howell also said: 'It has been a great injustice to those men who have been barred from the deliberations of their party for so long a time and it was due time that reparation be made.' When Mr. Howell said that he caused many democrats to inquire: 'What injustice has been done to men who could have returned at any time and against whom the democratic party's doors have not been barred?' Also, 'What injustice has been done to men who, of their own accord, turned their backs upon the party with whose principles they had professed sympathy and gave aid and encouragement to a political organization with whose principles no well grounded democrat can possibly sympathize?' Also, 'By what manner of reasoning may a statesman reach the conclusion that 6,000,000 democrats who remained true to their party and supported for the presidency an able, faithful and honest man, to whom they have ever been and are now proud to pay tribute, owe anything in the form of "reparation" to men whose democracy was not strong enough to keep them from supporting the republican ticket during two national campaigns?' On the 'reparation' theory, Mr. Howell spoke for himself. He did not represent any considerable number of democrats who, having remained true to their party, are not prepared to admit that those who were faithful were wrong, while those who deserted were right.

"Some of the statements made by the gentlemen to whom the olive branch was extended are decidedly interesting. One of these gentlemen says that the action shows that democrats of Nebraska 'are now willing to accept the eastern idea of democracy' and to 'recognize the hopelessness of Bryanism, and that the salvation of the party lies in the east.' Another says that 'truth is mighty and will prevail,' and congratulates the democratic party that 'the official organism of the party has come to its own after eight years amalgam with the paternal vagaries of populism.' This same gentleman interprets the resolution as

(Continued on Page 11.)