

BANQUET OF NEBRASKA DEMOCRACY

On January 18, 1904, 700 Democrats from all parts of Nebraska banqueted at the Lindell hotel in Lincoln, the banquet having been arranged as a reception to Mr. Bryan upon his return home from his European tour. All the details of the banquet and reception had been arranged by a local committee under the chairmanship of Dr. P. L. Hall and the hundreds of guests were loud in their praises of the completeness of every arrangement. In point of numbers it was the largest banquet ever served in the middle west, 700 democrats being seated at the tables. The dining room of the Lindell was handsomely decorated with bunting, and pictures of Jefferson, Jackson, Washington and Lincoln were prominently displayed. Local democrats were seated at tables in the convention hall of the hotel in order that the visiting democrats might have seats at the tables in the dining room. When the menu had been properly discussed the tables were removed from the dining room and the upstairs banquetters were admitted before the speaking began.

James Manahan of Lincoln officiated as toastmaster. His "badge of authority" was a blackthorn stick which Mr. Bryan brought from Ireland. Mr. Manahan's introductions were witty and eloquent and added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. He conducted the banquet in a novel manner, treating the guest of honor as a distinguished foreign envoy who had newly landed among the people of Nebraska and as each speaker finished, the toastmaster in a neat speech interpreted the address to the visitor who was for the moment regarded as a man of another country. In this way humorous and pointed remarks were made that captured the banquetters.

In his introductory remarks Toastmaster Manahan, after calling the assembly to order with his blackthorn, said in part:

"Fellow Citizens: We have with us tonight, as guest, a distinguished man from Europe. He comes in a manner, as envoy extraordinary of the czar of Russia, the emperor of Germany, the pope of Rome, and the king of Ireland.

"As special representative of the last named he has presented to me as baton of my authority this blackthorn shillelah from the auld sod, cut from the bog where Bryan Borou fought the battle of Clontarf.

"We are honored in the opportunity of entertaining him to whom clings the homage and the incense of the old world.

"It is my agreeable duty to act as master of ceremonies, and to do what I can to make his excellency feel as much at home as possible in this strange company. As general interpreter, I will endeavor to explain to him the meaning of this occasion, and interpret the speeches that are delivered at him as the evening progresses.

"Let it be understood, Monseigneur Bryan, that while these walls are not decorated like a Parisian cafe, and while this dinner is not served in courses and the water we drink does not sparkle like champagne at Sherry's, we offer no apology. Emerson said: 'The brave soul rates itself too highly to value itself by the splendors of its tables and draperies. It gives what it hath, and all it hath, but its own majesty can lend a better grace to bannocks and fair water than belong to city feasts.'

"This affair is democratic. You had

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heard, doubtless, before you left Europe, of the democratic party. No man can read the history of the republic and not learn that its very brightest pages tell the story of the people's love for the principles of democracy. You see before you the democracy of Nebraska; more—you see the patriotic democracy of the west; more, more—you see the very soul and conscience of the untainted democracy of this nation. You have feasted in sumptuous banquet halls, you have talked with czars and kings and emperors and popes; you have stood in the presence of this earth's highest monarchs, but you have never stood among better, braver men than you do tonight in Nebraska. From among these very men, at a time when democracy's sky was dark, there came a splendid spirit of right; and a heroic man of might with a noble purpose to fight for the holy cause of humanity.

"It requires courage to defy intimidation; a higher form of courage to resist temptation; it requires the very bravest soul to do both right in a storm or vituperation. And that is the kind of courage that ennobles the democracy of Nebraska today.

"These veterans here know the meaning of loyalty to party, they are reasonable, but determined; they are charitable, but just; they are resting now, but not asleep. They are not hero worshippers, but they are the kind of men on whom a leader may rely with confidence, feeling sure that all the time while he maintains the truth and his own integrity, he can in the fiercest fight and darkest night feel their arms about him, and their heart's beat in sympathy and support."

The toasts and responses upon the program were as follows:

"We Have Kept the Faith," W. H. Thompson, Grand Island.

"Principles, Not Men," W. D. Oldham, Kearney.

"Just Democrats—That's All," H. B. Fleharty, South Omaha.

"Signs of the Times," A. C. Shallenberger, Alma.

"Fusion, Good and Bad," C. J. Smyth, Omaha.

"The Salt of the Earth," G. W. Berge, Lincoln.

"The Moral Issue," Mr. Bryan.

MR. THOMPSON.

The toastmaster introduced Mr. Thompson as "one of the ablest," who has fought long and constantly for democratic principles. Mr. Thompson said in part:

"The word 'democracy' thrills and inspires. It speaks of home and the land we love. The mission of the democratic party is to recognize, uphold and defend these homes against the encroachment of organized wealth on one side, as represented by the republican party, leading to a control by the few of every artery of the nation's resource, sapping and despoiling the sacred rights of the many that bounties may be scattered to those who 'toil not, neither do they spin;' and on the other side the destruction of independent thought and action as taught by extreme socialism.

"The despoiler of our nation's honor must be driven out. He who would rob and steal must feel the keen enforcement of the criminal statute. They who have grown rich through the people's bounty, then concentrating their wealth, contrary to the statute, to the people's injury, should no longer be sheltered, but should be met with the confiscation of property and punished for their crime, and the removal of the law that shelters and protects.

"It was on these lines and for these purposes that the Chicago platform was written. It was for these purposes that the Kansas City platform

was adopted. It must be for these purposes that the St. Louis platform will be written. True democratic doctrine and a candidate selected who has been loyal in the past and will falter not in the future. This is demanded not only on lines of consistency, but also on those of practicality. If a minority party would win it must hold what it has and draw unto it others. For these reasons we are in favor of bimetalism and government issue of money and opposed to asset currency. We are opposed to a trust fostering tariff and in favor of an income tax. We are opposed to the importation of foreign pauper labor and for the elevation of that which we have. We are opposed to the acquisition of foreign territory by force and in favor of the strict enforcement of the Monroe doctrine. In favor of the enforcement of the law as to irrigation, that independent homes may be had by our people. We are in favor of enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce commission, that just rates of transportation may be had. Desire that criminals may be prosecuted and dishonest men turned out of office, regardless of political affiliation. We are opposed to using the military, either national or state, as a menace to labor, and in favor of a board of arbitration for the adjustment of differences between capital and labor.

"The condition of national politics is such as to awaken an ever increasing desire for the coming conflict on the part of democrats."

W. D. OLDHAM.

Mr. Oldham, a member of the supreme court commission, declared that principles were above men; that while men come and go, the fundamental principles of democracy go on forever. What democrats need is continued devotion to the principles upon which the fathers of the republic builded; strict following of the path trod by them; adherence to the landmarks of the founders of democracy. He recalled that during the last campaign in Nebraska democrats made a plea for a non-partisan judiciary, and although their plea was not heeded, democrats were so consistent that he himself, being a member of the court, felt a hesitancy in his political speech. Notwithstanding, however, he was ready to give a reason for his democratic faith, and promised that when time removed his political stammer he would be found ready.

MR. FLEHARTY.

Mr. Fleharty was introduced as a "young minister from Kansas who was so gentle and kindly spoken that he moved up to South Omaha and entered upon the practice of law." He said in part:

"It is because of exaggerated reports and of the intentional misrepresentation of the attitude of the democracy of Nebraska that I propose the toast 'Just Democrats; That's All.'

"We are not blind to the fact that in the campaign of 1896 many democrats did not agree with the platform adopted by the national convention and refused to support the party in that campaign. Those who refused because of honest convictions have my sincere respect. I cannot help but admire a man whose loyalty to his conviction is strong enough to compel him to abandon the associations and friendships of a lifetime. Such men owe no apologies to anyone and are as welcome in the councils of the party now as ever. Those who refused the party their support from selfish motives are at least entitled to that charitable sympathy that Lord Lytton makes Cardinal Richelieu bestow on all the world when he says 'our sins are those of circumstances, that all pervading atmosphere wherein our

spirits like the unsteady lizard partake of hues that tint and food that nurtures.' While those who refused their support for financial considerations or from feelings of disappointment and motives of revenge—well they may be democrats still, but we insist that they be mighty still."

Referring to Mr. Bryan the speaker said:

"Let the democracy of Nebraska say to him that we are 'just democrats, that's all.' That we who have admired him as a statesman and loved him as a friend, are not alarmed by gloomy prospects. It is always darkest just before the day, but the dawn dissi-

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