

MR. BRYAN ON "THE MORAL ISSUE."

At the banquet tendered to him by the democrats of Nebraska at Lincoln, January 18, upon his return home from his trip abroad, Mr. Bryan took for his subject, "The Moral Issue." In response to the introduction of the toastmaster, Mr. James Manahan, Mr. Bryan paid a tribute to his old friend, General Victor Vifquain, and then acknowledging the hearty welcome and generous compliments said he felt like the homely girl who, when her sweetheart called her beautiful, retired to her closet and thanked God that love is blind. The following is a brief abstract of Mr. Bryan's address:

Instead of talking of concessions and compromises, it is time for honest and aggressive action. We are confronted with a condition that may well alarm the thoughtful and patriotic. We find corruption everywhere. Voters are bought at so much per head, representatives in our city governments are profiting by their positions, and even federal officials are selling their influence. What is the cause? The commercial spirit that puts a price on everything and resolves every question into "Will it pay?" This commercialism has given popularity to that theory of government which permits the granting of privileges to a favored few and defends the theory by an attempt to show that the money thus given directly finds its way back indirectly into the pockets of the taxpayers.

We see this theory in operation on every side. The protective tariff schedules illustrate it; our financial system rests upon it; the trusts hide themselves behind it, and imperialists are substituting this theory for the constitution. Is it strange that money is used to carry elections? If a party makes certain classes rich by law, will it not naturally turn to those classes for contributions during the campaign? If congress votes

millions of dollars annually to tariff barons, money magnates and monopolists, is it not natural that aldermen should traffic in the smaller legislation of a city council? And if officials high and low use the government as if it were a private asset, is it surprising that many individuals who are without official position yield to the temptation to sell the only political influence they have, namely—the ballot? What is the remedy? There is but one remedy: an appeal to the moral sense of the country; an awakening of the public conscience.

And how can this appeal be made? Not by showing a greater desire for the spoils of office than for reforms, but by turning a deaf ear to the contemptible cry of "Anything to win" and by announcing an honest and straightforward position on every public question. If we would appeal to sincere men, we must ourselves be sincere, and our sincerity can be shown only by a willingness to suffer defeat rather than abandon the cause of good government.

Shall we accept imperialism as an accomplished fact in order to please those who are willing to indorse "government without the consent of the governed?" There can be no thought of such a surrender, for who would trust us to deal with other questions if we prove false to the fundamental principles of self-government?

Shall we change our position on the trust question in order to secure the support of the trust magnates? Not for a moment can we consider it. We want the trust magnates against us, not for us. Their opposition is proof of our party's fidelity; their support would cast suspicion upon us.

Shall we abandon our advocacy of bimetallism in order to conciliate those who defeated the party in recent campaigns? Never. Some phase of the

money question is always before congress, and no one can predict when the coinage phase of the money question will again become acute. No reform of any kind would be possible with the money changers in control of the party.

Shall we change our position on the tariff question in order to win over democrats who are enjoying the benefits of protection? It is absurd to suggest it, for the same vicious principle runs through all of the abuses from which the people suffer. And so with the party's position on the labor question, on the election of senators by the people, on watered stock, control of corporations and on other issues.

The Kansas City platform is sound in every plank, and the first act of the next democratic convention should be to reaffirm it in its entirety, and its next act should be the addition of new planks in harmony with it and covering such new questions as demand consideration.

Then, the convention should select candidates who believe in the platform—candidates whose democracy will not be an issue in the campaign and whose fidelity to democratic principles will not be doubted after election. And then the committee should announce that it will neither ask nor receive campaign contributions from those who are entrenched behind the bulwarks which we are attacking. And then, let us defend our position not upon the low ground of dollars and cents, but by showing how republican policies violate moral principles and invite the punishment that sooner or later overtakes the wrong-doer.

Will such a course insure victory? The best that our party can do is to deserve victory, and an appeal to the conscience of the American people is sure to win ultimately and offers the best promise of immediate success.

decision not to be a candidate was unalterable, he did not mean it. One may fairly infer from the Eagle's statement that Mr. Cleveland was acquainted in advance with the character of the Olney speech, and that in the light of the fact that his boomlet was to be again offered, Mr. Cleveland decided that "he should not, and, therefore, would not, be present." According to the Eagle, Mr. Cleveland is to maintain "a dignified abstention from political gatherings away from where he lives." If the statements quoted from the Eagle do not mean that Mr. Cleveland is laying awake nights indulging in the hope that the party which as an official he betrayed, the party which he deserted during two presidential campaigns, will honor him by a nomination to the presidency, then it would be difficult to understand plain English.

The Trust Lottery.

The following editorial, from the New York Mail and Express, is a sample of the arguments now being circulated through republican papers in defense of the trusts:

Three years ago a New York and a Nebraska democrat made the simultaneous announcement that in the modern industrial combinations the young man does not "get a chance." The discovery was of equal validity with the accompanying discoveries that "the gold bugs" were wasting our substance and "the empire" was coming swiftly down the pike. All three contentions have been woefully battered by the event, none more so than the presumed disadvantage of the young man in an industrial world where the trust idea is rife.

The final coup, it may almost be said, is administered by the appearance of another young man to relieve a young man of the active duties of leadership in the greatest "trust" in the world. W. E. Corey, who has been designated to perform those managerial functions because of the continued ill health of Charles M. Schwab, is 36 years old. When Mr. Schwab was made president of the United States steel corporation, about three years ago, he was 38 years old. The other most active figure in the trust, Mr. George W. Perkins, has turned 41.

Here are three men who when they came to the top of the corporation were still "youths," according to the Roman definition. With all their exceptional qualifications, they would be plodding along during these years with small returns and a limited outlook in almost any profession they could have chosen,

looking ahead to the years that lie on the shady side of 40 for the full measure of opportunity and recognition. Their youth and the circumstance that they began, each in his own way, quite at the bottom, and worked up from grade to grade, have not handicapped them.

Rather, they have helped them. The higher the organization and the broader the scope of a business enterprise, the keener must be its search for energy and ability, wherever they may be found; the more absolute must be its divorce from favor or family influence, or the mere routine processes of selection that give the elder man the preference because he is the elder. A "trust" run by a family, as certain conservative and retrograding businesses are in England, or carried along with no other momentum than the experience of the veteran, would not keep its vast operations together, much less meet the competition of rivals.

Here are three young men drawing large salaries from a trust, but what about the men who were at the head of the Independent companies before the consolidation? It is true that the trust enlarges the salaries and the opportunities of a few men at the top, but it does so by crushing the hopes and destroying the independence of a much larger number. As well defend an unlimited monarchy on the ground that it gives great power and a huge income to one man, regardless of the fact that it makes subjects of all the rest.

The trust is an industrial monarchy; it rules with an iron rod and sacrifices the multitude for the advancement of a small minority.

The trust may also be likened to a lottery in which a few draw large prizes, while the vast majority draw blanks. And it is not a fair lottery either, because the drawing is manipulated for the profit of the ones in charge. The article above quoted is in line with the policy of the republican papers. They are trying to prepare the public mind to acquiesce in the do nothing policy of the administration. They occupy their time, now asserting that the republican party will kill the trusts, now praising the trust as a beneficent institution. How long can the people be deceived by such double dealing?

Radically Different.

A dispatch to the Lincoln (Neb.) Star under date of Washington, January 21, quotes a reorganizer as saying that the reorganizers will capture the democratic national convention. Refer-

ring to Mr. Bryan, this particular reorganizer said: "If he stays with us, he will get a platform that will be radically different from anything he has ever had before, and which will insure the return to the polls of the old conservatives whom he drove out of the party. We hope to have a nominee of the same sort."

"Radically different from anything ever had before" may serve to open the eyes of some democrats who have been blind to the purpose of the reorganizers. That means, briefly stated, the republicanism of the democratic party; and "a nominee of the same sort" means a nominee who, in the event of election, will serve the representatives of special interests just as faithfully as those interests have been served by the republican party, just as faithfully as those interests were served during the second administration of Grover Cleveland.

Thoroughly appreciating the dangers to the democratic party and to the country involved in this plan of reorganization, The Commoner intends to do its part to protect the party from the hands of those who would destroy its principles, thus making the party organization ineffective as an instrument operating in behalf of public interests.

Commoner readers are therefore invited to co-operate in the effort to increase The Commoner's circulation and thereby widen its sphere of influence. The special subscription offer provides means for this co-operation. This offer is similar to the lots of five plan adopted last year. Cards, each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner, will be furnished in lots of five at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

Any one ordering the cards may sell them for \$1 each, thus earning a commission of \$2 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the effort to widen The Commoner's sphere of influence.

These cards may be paid for when ordered or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold.

A coupon is printed on the cards for the convenience of those who are willing to assist in the coming contest.

A Slow Traveler.

A republican exchange says Mr. Knox has made more progress in bursting the trusts than any of his predecessors. But even this is not a compliment to Knox. At his present rate of progress Mr. Knox would not get far enough in a thousand years to be out of reaching distance of his starting point.