

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 4. No. 16.

Lincoln, Nebraska, May 6, 1904.

Whole No. 172.

Far-Fetched Excuses.

The Nashville Banner, in trying to explain the disastrous defeat of 1894—a defeat which the democratic party suffered when Mr. Cleveland was president and while the party organization was in the absolute control of his friends—says that the defeat was due to the refusal of the democratic majority in congress to comply with Mr. Cleveland's wishes. If the Banner will take the trouble to examine the record, it will find, first, that the bill recommended by Mr. Cleveland was identical with a bill introduced by Senator John Sherman a year before. Was Senator Sherman in the habit of introducing democratic measures?

Second, a larger percentage of republicans than democrats voted to support Mr. Cleveland's recommendation. Are the republicans in the habit of furnishing votes for democratic measures?

Third, when Mr. Cleveland's policies were submitted to the democratic voters two-thirds of them repudiated his actions. Are the democrats in the habit of repudiating the administration of a man elected by them without grave provocation?

It is certain that Mr. Cleveland represented the minority of the party—quite a small minority, in fact—in his financial policy. By what right, measured by democratic principles, does the Banner complain of the refusal of a majority to be led by a minority? The fight against Mr. Cleveland was made at the primaries. The advocates of bimetallism presented their platform and asked for instructions.

Mr. Cleveland and his friends never make that kind of a fight, even where they have a majority. They never present a clear, well defined and honest issue. Like the republicans, they attempt to deceive the public in their platforms, and like the republicans they resort to every species of unfairness at the polls. The republicans understood Mr. Cleveland when they gave his administration such a cordial support on the money question, and Mr. Cleveland understood the republicans when he gave them a cordial support during the campaign. There seems to be a very clear understanding between Mr. Cleveland and his friends on his side and the republicans on the other side. They work together harmoniously whenever the interests of the money magnates are at stake.

The Banner ought to try again and see if it cannot furnish a better explanation of the disaster that overtook the democratic party in 1894. The reason for that defeat is very obvious. Mr. Cleveland betrayed the party into the hands of Wall street and the democrats were so disgusted that a large number of them did not go to the polls at all. Even Missouri went republican. The Banner says: "It was the democratic members of this congress (the 53rd) who failed of re-election and their defeat did not argue the unpopularity of Mr. Cleveland and of his policy." While it is true that a great many silver democrats went down to defeat in 1894 the record will show that a larger proportion of the democrats who supported Mr. Cleveland were defeated than of those who opposed him—in fact, leaving out Missouri, there were only a handful of democrats north of the Mason and Dixon line.

Labor Bills Postponed.

A week ago the house committee postponed consideration of the bill to abolish government by injunction and now another committee has post-

poned consideration of the eight-hour bill. Of course they were postponed and one of the corporation papers exultantly declares that postponement is equivalent to rejection.

The republican party is completely controlled by the corporations and labor can hope for nothing at its hands. The reorganizers are even more hostile to labor's interests than the republican leaders. How long will it take the laboring men to learn to secure justice at the polls? In 1896 a great many laboring men were coerced into voting the republican ticket; in 1900 many were deceived by the full dinner pail argument, but they now find that the republican party, after using them to secure a victory, spurns their requests and disregards their interests.

The Chicago and Kansas City platforms pledged the democratic party to the measures then advocated by the laboring men. Had the laboring men supported those platforms with any decree of unanimity they would not now find their petitions rejected.

///

THE LESSON OF 1894.

On another page will be found an editorial reproduced from The Public. It is in line with an editorial entitled "The Lesson of 1894" published in The Commoner some months ago. Those who are confidently predicting victory under the leadership of Cleveland, Hill and Belmont, ought not to forget that we had an election under the same leadership in 1894. Mr. Hill was a candidate for governor that year. Ask him about the enormous majority against him. We lost New Jersey that year, and Connecticut, as well as New York, Indiana and Illinois. It was a more disastrous defeat than the party suffered either in 1896 or in 1900, but the reorganizers conveniently forgot the lesson of 1894. If the defeat was so overwhelming before the leading reorganizers bolted, what reason have we to believe that they can lead us to victory after their long sojourn among the ranks of the enemy?

///

Afraid of Their Record.

Referring to the resolution introduced by Congressman Cockran providing for an investigation of the charge that he was paid money for his services for the republican party in 1896, Walter Wellman, the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald, republican, said: "No one imagines the republicans will permit an investigating committee to be appointed. They could hardly afford to go digging into the secrets of the first McKinley campaign. Tomorrow the speaker will probably hold that no question of personal privilege is presented and that will be the end of the matter."

Mr. Wellman sent this dispatch under date of April 26. On the following day, true to Mr. Wellman's prediction, the speaker held that no question of personal privilege was presented.

But it may develop that Mr. Wellman is not a thorough prophet in the claim that "that will be the end of the matter." The republicans have shown, in the language of Mr. Wellman, that "they could hardly afford to go digging into the secrets of the first McKinley campaign," and they are very likely to hear considerable of the Cockran resolution for several months to come.

Some Little Straws.

The New York World says that the omission from the New York platform of a declaration of "the historic democratic principle of sound money" was a great mistake. The World says that all doubt on this subject must be removed from the minds of the people by the national platform and explains that the question is sure to be raised in the campaign "Is the democratic party in favor of honest money, as now defined and maintained by law, or is it still tainted with the heresies and delusions proclaimed in 1896 and reaffirmed in 1900?"

Of course, the single gold standard is the New York World's idea of "honest money," and there is little reason to doubt that if the World and its followers have their way, the democratic party will confess that in 1896 and 1900 it made a mistake in advocating the money of the constitution and will contend that the only honest money system is the one that may be readily controlled by the financiers.

The Brooklyn Eagle says that the making of a platform will be a very important work, and declaring that the nation has decided for the gold standard, the Eagle insists that the democratic party must take its stand on that line.

But the Eagle will not be content when it shall have switched the democratic party from bimetallism to the single gold standard. It insists that the party shall abandon its position on the question of imperialism. According to the Eagle, "the republican position on the Philippine question is merely imitation and extension of democratic policy."

But even though the Eagle persuade the democratic party to adopt the republican position on the question of imperialism, the Eagle will not be content, for it says:

"Nor is the democratic party—nor can it be—ignorant of or hostile to scientific and inevitable business facts. The trust idea, as it is commonly called, stands in the same relation to business that electricity does to the transmission of intelligence or steam to navigation. It is the resultant of thought and of experience, with the wisdom which comes from both, when applied to business propositions. It can no more be turned about or changed than could a full grown chicken be forced back into the shell, or the course of rivers, which make their bed and find their way in nature, be arrested or reversed."

Then, referring to the trusts, the Eagle says: "They have come and they have come to stay;" it admits that their regulation is a legal and constitutional duty; but intimates that whatever is done on this line must be done very carefully.

But it is worthy of note that in dealing with the labor unions, the Eagle does not display that sensitiveness shown in the discussion of the trusts. The trust, according to the Eagle, has come and it has come to stay; but that is not necessarily the fact with the labor union; and while the democratic party must apologize for and even uphold the trust system, it must show no mercy in dealing with the labor union.

The Chicago Chronicle has repeatedly insisted that the democratic party declare for the single gold standard; and in a recent issue, the Chronicle undertakes to lead the party from its position on the trust question. The Chronicle says that what has been known as the trust era is simply "a period of unification and concentration in every branch of human activity," and that the trust system is "not a trick of the capitalists, nor