

THE LESSON OF 1904

The Commoner has pointed out the necessity for faithful adherence to the principles of the democratic party. It has insisted that a victory which would betray the people, as they were betrayed by the victory of 1892, would be more disastrous to the party than defeat, because without accomplishing anything for the country it would leave the party weaker for future contests. It has shown that a party must desire something more important than the distribution of patronage to be entitled to public confidence. The last time patronage was dispensed among democrats it corrupted and led out of the party a large proportion of those who received the patronage—the party can well pray to be spared from another distribution of that kind. But the reorganizers are constantly asserting that to win is the important thing to be considered, and that they, the reorganizers, hold the key to success. While this is a low plane upon which to discuss a question, The Commoner is prepared to meet them, even upon this plane, and to show by experience—bitter experience—that the Clevelandizing of the democratic party would mean complete disaster rather than victory. Let us review this experience.

In 1892 Mr. Cleveland carried twenty-two states, as follows: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin, and received eight electoral votes out of nine from California, five out of fourteen from Michigan, one out of three from North Dakota, and one out of twenty-three from Ohio. He had a popular plurality over the republican candidate of 400,000. He went into the office on the 4th of March, 1893, and immediately surrounded himself with a gold standard cabinet, largely selected by the great corporations, and began his system of proscription against the democrats who represented their constituents upon the money question. He refused to call congress together in extraordinary session to consider the tariff question—the issue that had been paramount in the campaign—but at the request of the financiers called congress together in August to consider a bill framed by John Sherman a year before—a bill indorsed by Wall street and supported by a larger percentage of the republican party than of the democratic party. To secure the passage of this bill he used promises of patronage, and rewarded with official position those who deliberately betrayed their constituents on this issue.

By this subserviency to Wall street and by his scandalous contracts and negotiations with syndicates, he made the money question the paramount issue, and there is much reason for believing that he advised that attempt at the coercion of borrowers which, carried too far, resulted in the panic of 1893.

In the fall of 1894 we had a congressional election throughout the Union and a state election in most of the states. Mr. Cleveland's administration was the issue in that campaign, and

his financial policy was the most important item of his administration. The Wilson bill had been passed (it became a law without his signature) during the summer, but it had not been in operation long enough to become the paramount issue in that campaign. What was the result of the election in 1894? Mr. Cleveland was president; his influence was dominant in the party, in both senate and house, and he had control of the national committee through which he distributed his patronage.

Below will be found the states with the majorities given at that election. The figures are taken from the New York World Almanac of 1895.

State—	Dem.	Rep.
Alabama	27,582	.....
Arkansas	48,724	.....
California	1,206	.....
Colorado	.....	7,368
Connecticut	.....	17,688
Delaware	.....	1,221
Florida	25,300	.....
Georgia	21,164	.....
Idaho	.....	2,375
Illinois	.....	123,427
Indiana	.....	44,673
Iowa	.....	79,396
Kansas	.....	30,368
Kentucky	.....	*1,047
Louisiana	*42,082	.....
Maine	.....	38,978
Maryland	.....	*2,696
Massachusetts	.....	65,377
Michigan	.....	106,392
Minnesota	.....	60,013
Mississippi	*15,561	.....
Missouri	.....	3,044
Montana	.....	*12,771
New Jersey	.....	*48,728
New Hampshire	.....	12,532
New York	.....	159,108
North Carolina	.....	*20,751
North Dakota	.....	14,369
Ohio	.....	137,087
Oregon	.....	15,001
Pennsylvania	.....	241,397
Rhode Island	.....	6,307
South Carolina	22,229	.....
South Dakota	.....	13,833
Tennessee	.....	748
Texas	.....	53,427
Utah	.....	1,821
Vermont	.....	28,521
Virginia	.....	39,726
Washington	.....	*18,995
West Virginia	.....	*13,359
Wisconsin	.....	53,900
Wyoming	.....	3,184
Nebraska (fusion)	3,202	.....
Nevada (fusion-silver)	1,362	.....

*On congressional vote.

**Populist and republican fusion.

In eight states where no state election was held the vote on the congressional ticket is taken. From this table it will be seen that only eleven states out of the forty-five—Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia—were carried by the democrats, and of the eleven only one, California was a northern state, and the democratic majority there was only 1,206. Missouri went republican for the first time since the war; Kentucky, represented in the cabinet by John G. Carlyle, went republican by 1,047 on the congressional vote, and elected five republican congressmen out of eleven. Maryland went republican on the congressional vote. Illinois went republican by a larger majority than it did in 1900. Michigan went republican by over a hundred thousand, and Ohio went republican by a majority of 137,000. Connecticut, the home of Mr. Cleveland's friend, Benedict, went republican by 17,000. New Jersey, Mr. Cleveland's present home, went republican on the congressional vote by 48,000. New York, with Mr. Hill as the candidate for governor, went republican

by 159,000, and Pennsylvania gave a republican majority of 241,000. Iowa gave a republican majority of 79,000, Massachusetts of 65,000, Minnesota of 60,000, Wisconsin of 53,000, Indiana of 44,000 and Maine of 38,000.

The sum of all the majorities cast for the democratic ticket in the eleven states only amounted to 300,744, while the majorities cast for the republican ticket in thirty-two states amounted to 1,383,277. The net republican majority was, therefore, 1,082,533; this was nearly twice as large a popular majority as the republican ticket had in 1896, when Mr. Cleveland helped the republicans, and was about 20 per cent larger than the popular majority of the republicans in 1900.

The crushing character of this defeat can be realized when we remember that it was a change from nearly 400,000 in 1892 to 1,082,533 in 1894.

The fusion majority of 3,202 in Nebraska can not be considered a Cleveland majority, because the Cleveland democrats ran a ticket of their own against the fusion ticket. Neither can the silver majority of 1,362 in Nevada be counted as a Cleveland victory, for it was antagonistic to Mr. Cleveland. The republican majority in North Carolina was secured by a fusion between the republicans and the populists, but both of them opposed Mr. Cleveland. So much for the majorities cast in the states.

According to the World Almanac above referred to, the congress elected in 1892 stood 219 democrats to 127 republicans, a majority of 92. The congress elected in 1894 contained only 104 democrats, a falling off of 115, or more than half, while the republicans had 244 members, nearly double what they had in the congress before. There were twenty-four states which did not elect a single democratic representative to congress: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. In fact, outside of the southern states, there were, all told, only eighteen democrats elected to congress (Missouri being counted with the northern states—she elected five democratic members to congress out of fifteen) and of these one came from California, two from Illinois, one from Massachusetts, five from New York, five from Missouri, two from Ohio and two from Pennsylvania.

The reorganizers think that their cause is popular in New England, New York and New Jersey, and yet when the people had a chance to express themselves on Cleveland's policy the democrats only elected six congressmen (five in New York and one in Massachusetts) in all that territory. If it is thought that Cleveland is popular in the states between the Ohio river and the Missouri, let it be remembered that the democratic party did not carry a single state in that section in 1894, and excluding Missouri, sent only four members to congress, although in 1892 he carried Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, and secured one electoral vote in Ohio and five in Michigan.

These figures show the demoralization of the party under Mr. Cleveland's leadership in 1894 and what has been since done to make him popular? If the reorganizers insist that tariff reform is the issue now, why did not tariff reform save the party in 1894? If the people have such a pronounced reverence for Mr. Cleveland, why did they not show it in 1894? If he is popular now because he helped the

republican ticket in 1896, how can that act be expected to make him popular with both republicans and democrats? Why would the republicans support Mr. Cleveland in preference to a republican who agrees with them on every question? And why would the democrats feel more kindly to Mr. Cleveland now, since he has openly helped the republican party, than they did in '94 when they opposed his principles, but still recognized him as a member of the party? If the trust question is to be the issue, how can the reorganizers expect to hold the votes of both the friends and the opponents of the trusts? And if imperialism is to be the issue, how can they expect to poll more votes with a gold bug anti-imperialist who was silent in 1900 than with a silver anti-imperialist who fought imperialism in 1900? How can they expect to come nearer to victory with a man who is in harmony with the democratic position on a few questions than with one in harmony with the democratic position on all the questions?

The reorganizers are always talking about the independent vote, but it must be remembered that the independent vote is of no value unless it is added to the democratic vote. The election of 1894 shows (and it was Mr. Cleveland's last appearance as a democrat) that he could not get enough independents to make up for the democrats who were alienated.

The democrats who think more of "success" than they do of democratic principles can find food for thought in the history above reviewed. If they want victory, let them learn from the failures of the past that right is, after all, expedient. The democratic party was defeated, it is true, in 1896, yet after four years of defeat it was

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