

For and Against The Commoner Editor

Baltimore Sun: "Even the presidential office would not add to the stature of Mr. Bryan," wrote Mayor Gaynor, of New York, on the occasion of the Nebraskan's birthday anniversary, March 19, last. "He is the greatest teacher this country has."

Henry Clay said he would "rather be right than president," and Mr. Bryan has had the satisfaction of knowing that millions who voted against him for president now acknowledge that he was right in many policies for which he was condemned sixteen years ago. It was Mr. Bryan's eloquence that caught the attention of the country, but he has held it by his firm adherence to principle, his continual advocacy of what he believes to be right. He has lived to see numerous reforms he urged adopted by both parties and enacted into law; and he is just now reaching his prime with the reasonable hope of many more years of usefulness before him.

Mr. Bryan has been heard probably by more persons than any other living American. He has been in the public eye for nearly twenty years and has spoken in every state and city in the union; but thousands still hear him gladly. In fact, he has the whole American people for his audience.

Caldwell (Idaho) News: The activity of the opponents of William J. Bryan to discredit him in the eyes of the people by continually holding up to ridicule the point that he has repeatedly been a candidate for the presidency and might again accept the candidacy if the people should insist that he do so, is as amusing as it is despicable. There can be no other motive in the insinuations against Bryan on account of his repeated candidacy except an endeavor to prejudice the people against him.

Fortunately he is too big in every characteristic that constitutes a man and a statesman to be overcome by the scurrilous insinuations that are heaped against him by his opponents.

Los Angeles Democrat: That William J. Bryan is more popular today than ever before is evident by the attention he is receiving in all parts of the country. That he is still the beloved leader of 95 per cent of the democrats of this state is an indisputable fact. Whenever the name of Bryan is mentioned, either in the Wilson or Clark meetings in this city, a tremendous ovation always follows. And this is the more noticeable since he has not held a public office in twenty years. Notwithstanding he has been defeated for the presidency three times his followers have not decreased in numbers but on the contrary have increased.

Kansas City Times: The older Mr. William J. Bryan becomes—and his birthday recently marks him still a comparatively young man—the more he stamps himself upon the country as a remarkable personage. An accident might give a man temporary prominence. But for one to hold the conspicuous place Mr. Bryan has held is not accidental.

San Francisco Star: The courageous, stubborn, unyielding fight of William J. Bryan against the agents and jockeys of privilege and corruption in the democratic party endears him to the hearts of all true democrats.

He is still the fearless and the peerless leader of the real democracy of this country.

The rank and file of the party look to him and trust him as they look to and trust no other man. They are not interested in the nominal success of the party under monopoly leadership; their interest is wholly centered in the triumph of the principles for which the party is supposed to stand and of which Bryan is the greatest living exponent.

New Philadelphia (Ohio) Times: The seeds of progressive ideas sown by Mr. Bryan fifteen years ago have taken root and their influence is today a potent factor in both the democratic and republican parties. It must be understood that William J. Bryan is the pioneer progressive of this nation and is recognized as a world leader of progressive ideas. He has stood in the front rank with his face turned toward the enemies of representative government fearlessly and bravely fighting for the interests of the common people. Of all the great statesmen and leaders among living men today, Bryan towers above them all. We wish to take this opportunity to say, Bryan and Bryanism are not dead.

Bristol (Tenn.) Herald and Courier: The enemies of William J. Bryan in the democratic party are hard to please. No matter what he may do or say, or what attitude he may assume during a political campaign or between campaigns, his enemies pick a flaw, or find a fault, or enter an objection. The Nebraskan can not even deliver a lecture on the "Prince of Peace" or "The Price of a Soul" without displeasing some of the newspapers and politicians.

Just now Mr. Bryan is being attacked because he does not unqualifiedly indorse and signify his determination to support some one of the aspirants for the democratic presidential nomination. He has let it be known that he does not favor Mr. Underwood. His opposition to Governor Harmon is well known. He has said that either Wilson or Clark, whom he recognizes as progressives, would be satisfactory to him, but his enemies see a sinister significance in the fact that he has not indicated which of these men he prefers and will support for the nomination—that he has not, in fact, come out boldly and unreservedly for one of them. In other words, Mr. Bryan's enemies are dreaming terrible dreams and seeing horrible visions of him as the next democratic candidate for president.

BRYAN AS A PATH BLAZER

Editorial in St. Louis Globe-Democrat: The decision by the house democrats to pass a bill revising the iron and steel schedule before they give any attention to the president's recommendation for an overhauling of the wool duties is called an "acceptance of Mr. Bryan's challenge." It is really an acknowledgement that the Nebraskan is still the leader of their party. Two other measures, both of which have been urged by Mr. Bryan, are on the house democratic programme in advance of the bill which the republican members of the ways and means committee are framing to carry out the suggestions by the tariff board and by Mr. Taft on the wool schedule. They will push measures transforming the chemical and sugar sections of the tariff. It is known that Mr. Bryan urged this very course during the extra session of 1911. Strong opposition to this plan was shown by many of the democrats at first, but they have come over to the Nebraskan's side on this matter of detail, which shows that he is the most vital force in the democratic party of the country today.

Everybody remembers the attack which Bryan made upon Underwood last summer for putting wool ahead of iron and steel in the pop-gun revision programme. He accused Underwood, who resides in the iron and steel district of Alabama, of being influenced by locality interests which were hostile to the true democratic free-trade theory. Underwood made an angry response, which seemed to please himself, for the moment. Nevertheless, the Alabama man was placed in the list of democrats who are "in the pay of Wall street," and thus he lost all his chances for getting the support of the old legitimists who compose the inner circle of Bryan's friends. Underwood now is as obnoxious to Bryan as is Harmon, or as Parker was in 1904. The man who received a presidential nomination three times by the democrats seems to be still the biggest personage in their party. In the round-up of democratic chieftains of the country which opened at Fargo, N. D., tomorrow, Bryan holds the place of honor. Governor Harmon is also to be there, unless at the last moment, he backs down in the face of the threatened attack by the Nebraskan on what he styles the democratic "reactionaries." It is expected that Bryan will do some plain talking at Fargo on the course which the democratic house must pursue in the present session in order to give their party an opportunity to make an aggressive canvass. Governor Wilson is not to be there, and, of course, Chairman Underwood will find it to his interest to be absent, as he was at the Jackson day gathering last week at Washington. The Nebraskan has a high opinion of the democratic rank and file of the house of representatives, but he has no regard at all for their leader. More than once he has said this.

Nevertheless, Mr. Bryan compels that leader, Underwood, to carry out the Bryan programme of a complete reshaping of the iron and steel schedule, so far as the house can do this. Presumably he is aware that no iron and steel bill framed on democratic lines can elude the president's veto, but he does not care for this detail. He is endeavoring to turn the local sentiment of

the Birmingham region against its representative, or misrepresentative, in congress, and incidentally to force the tariff to the front in his party campaign. He committed his party to silverism and the 50-cent dollar in 1896, and he did this with a thoroughness which prevented the party from getting away from that issue for eight years, or until Candidate Parker, in 1904, sent his "gold telegram" to the St. Louis convention. Mr. Bryan foretold the fate of Judge Parker at that time, and he did it with such fidelity that he was immediately reinstated into the leadership of the party, a position which he has held ever since. The democrat who has polled 6,500,000 of the popular vote in 1908, after having been beaten twice previously, and who compelled the republicans to get out their full strength in order to retain power, is a personage of large consequence to his party. Probably he will not be nominated in 1912. He says he is not seeking the nomination, and not expecting it, and very likely he is correct in this assertion. But he will be a commanding personage in the convention. The man who wins his enmity will have a poor chance to gain the candidacy. Or, if he gains it, it will be as useless to him as it was to Parker eight years ago. It was Bryan who first suggested the investigation of the so-called money trust, the shipping combine and the International Harvester amalgamation, which the house democrats are about to carry out. That "dead hand at the throat of the democratic party," which some of the anti-Bryanite papers were denouncing a few months ago, is there still, and the grip seems to be as strong as it was in 1896, 1900 and 1908.

OHIO AND THE SPECIAL INTERESTS

Editorial in Cincinnati Enquirer: Ohio democrats have had no federal administration by their party for nearly 20 years.

They revolted in 1896 against special interest influence at Washington, and were then deserted by those whose attachment to those interests was more powerful than their desire to represent or stand by the interests of the masses of the people.

Those who left the democratic party then so as to be loyal to the interests of their clients, to be faithful to the men they represent, and by their leaving aided in defeat of the democratic party, surely should be satisfied with their work then, and not again seek to serve their clients, the special interests, once more by betraying the democratic party.

They defeated it in 1896 and they have attempted to capture it in 1912, to serve the same interests that they served in 1896.

While republicans have revolted this year, as against the same influences as did the democrats in 1896, while republican candidates for the presidency are appealing to their voters to believe they are not close friends of these unpopular interests, making excited denials of approval of their methods, their practices and their projects, a few servitors of those same interests would have the democrats of Ohio declare for the nomination of the ex-attorney-general who considered the anti-trust law a dead letter.

It was the money and the work of these same special interests that prevented a democratic victory in 1896, and they kept the democratic party from a victory in 1904 through the cash they furnished to the republican campaign manager at that time.

The democrats of Ohio can have no alliance with those agencies who twice betrayed them and aided the republican forces, ~~and~~ now only come with soft words and false graciousness to seek control of the democracy, because every republican candidate repudiates them, and the republican party is casting them out as Jonahs from their sinking ship.

The republican party, after three years of successive defeat, is appreciating the force of public opinion, realizing that it either has to unload these influences or perish.

It is no time for the democratic party to place any of these Jonahs upon the deck of its vessel.

These men have kept the democratic party out of federal power for 20 years, and it will reward none of them or any of their agents with a nomination for the presidency.

If Ohio democrats desire a democratic administration, they must send men opposed to reactionaries first, last and all the time.

The democrats of Ohio have no antagonism to business affairs legally conducted; such are entitled to care and protection. Business of that class has nothing to fear from a progressive democratic administration.