

The Independent.

Vol. XIV.

LINCOLN, NEB., JAN. 1, 1903.

No. 32.

POPULIST NOMINATIONS

Congressman Stark Urges the Peoples Party to Practice What it Preaches

Editor Independent: Responding to the many requests I have received I beg leave to respectfully suggest to you a thought relative to the function of the citizen in politics. Let us see if our departure from old time methods has any probable connection with present conditions.

In the early days the people met in town meetings and discussed matters pertaining to the common good. Political action was spontaneous, flowing from the collective citizenship, they being the prime movers thereof. In latter day politics the primary election system comes nearest to the attainment of the objects sought in the old time town meeting; and the convention system is its antithesis. Is it not possible that we have blamed the existing parties for many things that they could not avoid under their form of organization and their method of operation? Cannot the boss-ridden conditions of politics in many states be directly traced to the convention system that organizes and operates from the center out instead of from the circumference in?

We have to face this question, "Is the citizen the unit in political action, or is the convention the unit and the citizen an infinitesimal fraction thereof?" Another question that we should try to answer, is, can we hope to succeed in the promulgation of pure political principles and practically work out the ideals of the founders of this government when we make use of the same methods and machinery by which those ideals have been well nigh obliterated? Why is it that a party whose platform declares for reforms of various kinds elects men who never give a serious thought to the performance of those duties to which they are pledged? Simply because the method of selecting candidates is in direct opposition to the accomplishment of the declared purposes; results flow from actions, not from declarations. The best illustration of attempts to work out the accomplishment of our declarations under the convention method and system would be to seat a man on a horse backward and have him vociferously declare that he is traveling northward when the horse is going south. Our principles may be very good, but if our methods of operation are radically wrong our declaration of principles will avail nothing. If we believe that our government is by the people and not an outward flow from some centralized power, then we should seek some method of political operation which will secure and retain the power to select men and declare measures in the hands of the individual elector. Especially is the selection of men all important, because the right stamp of man will do right and strive to preserve our liberties without any platform, if need be. Many men will not do these things, no matter how strongly bound by platforms. This can most effectually be done by the primary election system. As its name implies the first or primary political action rests with the individual electors of the state and is exercised and absolutely controlled in the meetings of these electors in their respective election precincts instead of being authorized by some "boss" who holds the power of political action by virtue of his retainers and henchmen.

The people's independent party has been a school master in politics to the republican party. It taught the quantitative theory of money value and President McKinley made use of the lesson. While his party was declaring that prices did not depend on the quantity of money in circulation, he was wise enough to avoid a monetary stringency by coining large amounts of silver although his party had made gold the standard.

The people's independent party has a splendid platform and the Chicago and Kansas City platforms of the democratic party are both excellent; but in our state we have the spectacle of reformers who declare in their platform for the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people and then deny their own party the privilege of selecting any nominee by direct vote. I do not say these things

by way of fault finding, but simply to point out that if we expect to accomplish reforms we declare for we must abandon the methods and expedients

by which the people's rights have been withheld from them. Our teaching has been right and has done much (Continued on Page 2.)

Money and the Taxing Power

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CHAPTER I.

A new theory born into the world is like a new born plant or animal, and must struggle to establish and develop itself, by destroying and devouring everything adverse to it. New theories overcome ignorance much more easily than they overcome prejudice. The masses of accepted tradition which sway mankind, gather around them a sort of sanctity which makes them strong. It is this reverence for things that have established themselves that holds society together. Men cling to ancient forms and theories in spite of the evils and sufferings they entail, and never abandon them until forced to do so. Most of our traditions and theories rest upon assumptions that have never been verified. Many of these assumptions are incapable of verification. These traditions and our disposition to cling to them, are a mixture of good and evil.

In propounding the theory herein-after advanced, I am not blind to the fact that it comes in collision with many of these accepted assumptions and must destroy them to make for itself a place to be.

In all the heated discussions between the one-metallists and the two-metallists, no inquiries have been made in to the correctness of fundamental assumptions common to both sides; but the minds of men have been warped under a white heat, and made to fit notions that have come down to us from an ignorant past, which notions have no conformity to truth.

It is far easier to implant a new theory in a mind entirely ignorant, than in one already occupied by theories that have been sanctified by time, and made holy by having been avouched by great names like Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Prof. Jevons, and others, who have been ornaments to the race.

In the investigations and discussions which are to follow, what I have a right to ask of honest people is that nothing that does not rest on facts shall be permitted to stand in the way of that which does rest on facts. I have the right to demand that each demonstrable truth shall be accepted and that the resulting conclusions, warranted by logical reasoning, be accepted along with those truths.

That those who so deeply reverence the current theories of economics may at once get a glimpse of its sandy foundation, attention is here called to the fact that while the subject of political economy is "wealth," yet, as Mr. Henry George has already pointed out, unlike any other known science no definition of that subject has ever been attempted. So vague, then, has been this so-called science, it has proceeded without a definite subject.

To one who has never found himself in the depths of a tropical forest, the enormous profusion and luxuriance with which the myriad forms of life crowd upon each other there is inconceivable. Let us place ourselves in one of these and look around for a moment. Here are immense forest trees of different species commingled together, and crowding each other in all directions. Around them an inconceivable mass of smaller trees, reeds, vines, and briars—with rank grasses—make it impossible to go through it, except by cutting tunnels to make a pathway. On the trunks and branches of all the trees, innumerable parasitic plants have fastened themselves; and twining everywhere and around and over the tops in tangled masses are countless species of vines, whose blossoms succeeding each other like the color of the forest

from day to day.

Each individual life-center here struggles for space and means to develop the form appropriate to its own species. But life also manifests itself everywhere around us under the form of animals in great profusion. Here, too, each individual form of animal life battles to obtain room and the means for its own development. We cannot free ourselves, while looking at all these forms, from the idea that each one of these individual life-centers, obeying a native impulse, is actually seeking by every means within its power to take possession of space and to obtain dominion over forces and materials which it may compel to serve it in accomplishing its seeming purpose to create and maintain the form appropriate to its species.

In this struggle between the individual life-centers, remorseless battle is incessantly waged between them.

Here are the perfect Ishmaelites. Observe now that this struggle among these individuals is just as bitter and relentless between individuals of the same species, as between those of different genera. These are the low forms of life. When we ascend to the higher forms of animal life we find the deer and even the parrots and monkeys have ceased from cannibalism. They even put forth some portion of their efforts to aid other individuals of their own species.

All this turmoil and battle between individual life-centers is a struggle on the part of each to extend its dominion over and to obtain exclusive individual possession of certain things capable of serving it by supplying the needs of its nature. It is those things endowed with this capacity to be made to serve beneficially, which among men have become what we call "wealth."

Because the supply of those things is insufficient to meet the demand created by this struggle, the battle becomes fierce and destructive. There is no arm of power outstretched among the lowly forms of life to protect the weak individual from aggression by the strong, and in the hurly-burly the mightiest devour the less mighty, and so the "fittest" individuals survive.

It is this individualization of life, this effort of each separate life-center to acquire exclusive possession of certain things for its individual behoof, and thereby to deprive all other individuals of dominion over these things, which generates this deadly struggle. The sum total of all the life that is manifested in that tropical forest, if united in one, would be the same and the needful elements there found would support and maintain the same quantity of life thus united, and the battle between the individuals would be eliminated.

Upward progress is along the line of eliminating this fierce battle.

The plants perform those acts from which the propagation of their species result, and take no further care or supervision of the germ of a new life thus thrust into the world. As we ascend the scale all this is changed. Among the higher forms of life "the mothers nurse and the sires defend" their young.

In our own species not only does parental love guard and preserve the young, but brother and sister protect each other, and children provide for helpless parents. And the higher man has attained in the scale of real civilization, the less exclusive does the individual life-center become; the wider is the circle of its sympathy, and the more does it tend toward the recognition of a right of common possession, not by a denial of the right of exclusive individual possession, but by a voluntary relaxation of each individual in the enforcement of that right.

(To be continued next week.)

AN ERA OF LYING

Mr. Van Vorhis Deprecates the Prevalence of False Swearing and Misleading Statistics

Editor Independent: There is the best evidence for believing that already eighty per cent of the wealth of this country is held by less than one-third of one per cent of its population; that is, that about 250,000 people out of 76,000,000 hold eighty per cent of the wealth. With the immortal Lincoln, from the very depth of my heart I must say, "Before God, I fear more for my country now than when in the midst of the war."

When these corporations were created, it was hardly expected that they would so soon claim to be the masters of the power that created them; but today the nation is struggling with them for the control of its own affairs. I know there are those who, in one way and another, are interested in a small way in the results of such schemes, who are ready, when attention is called to this awful condition to scoff at it and pretend to believe that all such informations are but "morbid suspicions" of a "disordered mind." If I am subject to such criticism, then the same disease has attacked members of the United States supreme court. On May 11, 1899, Mr. Justice Brown of that court in an address on Chief Justice Marshall before the Richmond bar association said:

"There are disturbing elements in our present social system which are calculated to excite the apprehension of patriotic men. . . . The ghost of monopoly has risen from its grave and stalks abroad, defiant of the law, in the shape of combinations and trusts. The necessities of life are gradually being absorbed by them, and the time is not far distant when everything we eat, drink and wear may have to be purchased through the agency of a single corporation controlling the product. When this is accomplished the freedom of the individual is at an end. Already combinations have destroyed individual enterprise in the most important branches of trade, and the small producer has already gone to the wall. I believe I voice the almost universal sentiment of the country in saying that there is no prejudice against proper nor against wealth honestly acquired. The whole theory of our civilization is built upon the sanctity of private property and the natural rights of man, by superior ability, industry and skill to rise above his fellows. . . . If, by combination with other great operators, he is able to monopolize the products of the whole country in a particular article, he becomes a national menace."

And yet we go on creating such combinations. We turn over to them not only our own franchises, but the money in our treasury, and that without interest. By law we put them in a situation where they are able not only to do what Justice Brown says they have done and will do, but a great deal more than that. Not only do they shut the door to individual enterprise and crush the individual producer, but throw obstacles in the way of public information and education. They create conditions and necessities before which honesty of purpose and truthfulness of utterance go down.

At the last annual meeting of the New York bar association, President Whittaker delivered an address on the prevalence of perjuries in the courts. He said:

"Men standing high in community apparently think nothing of swearing falsely to pleadings in order to delay or to defeat justice."

He was of the opinion that the crime was increasing, and the association seems to have agreed with him. The editor of Law Notes, in commenting on this address, very sensibly remarks:

"The magnitude of the stakes involved in many modern law suits puts the rectitude of men to tests hitherto unknown. If perjuries are more numerous, so are the objects to be gained by perjury more alluring. Likewise, if defaulters multiply, so do funds exposed to defalcations swell to fortunes 'beyond the dreams of avarice.' If there is more corruption among