

NEW YORK FOREBODINGS

The Plutocrats Say: "We can Hire One-half the People to Shoot the Other Half When It is Necessary"

New York, Jan. 25, 1904.—(Editorial Correspondence.)—I spent an evening last week with New York's most wonderful young octogenarian minister, Rev. Robert Collier. Years ago he opened his church in Chicago to Bishop Clarkson, Bright Eyes and myself to attack the old Indian ring. His interest in current events is just as keen as then. In an interview for publication he said:

"My only foreboding is that the casting out of national devils of corruption will take a violent form. The people may not be able to contain themselves once they have the whole thing thought out with startling clearness. In that event their vengeance upon their betrayers will be as terrible as it was under the leadership of Lincoln, a man who had a God-given truth in his heart and was guided by it in all his acts."

A good many here, as well as Dr. Collier, are having forebodings. The pressure grows heavier every day. The wages of "non-productive laborers," as Carl Marx calls clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers and all those who do not actually produce wealth by the toil of their hands, have scarcely been increased at all, and there are hundreds of thousands of them in these eastern states. Meantime the cost of living has enormously increased. I have made somewhat of an investigation of that subject during the last few days. Housekeepers in New York and Brooklyn declare that the increase in cost of living has been not less than 33 per cent.

A woman here who makes house-keeping a strictly professional affair, has a complete record of household expenses for ten years past. In her household, which is conducted upon strictly economic principles, the cost of food per week in 1899 ranged from \$19 to \$22. Now with the same number in the family it costs from \$45 to \$50 per week. The only difference in the family is that the three children are four years older and may eat a little more.

From an examination of those accounts it appears that the cost of lamb in 1899 was 12 cents a pound. Now it is 16 cents. Turkeys then were 15 cents, now they are 25 cents. Tenderloin pork four years ago was 10 cents. Now it is 25. Veal cutlets are now 25 cents. Four years ago they were 16 cents. Canned goods show the same increase in price. All vegetables have gone up in price. Butter has advanced 10 cents a pound. Flour that cost \$3.90 per barrel in 1899, now costs \$5.20. Kerosene has advanced 5 cents a gallon. This is a tax on the very poorest people, those who are so poor that they cannot afford gas and use kerosene both for light and cooking.

But the greatest increase in anything is in rents. The result of the rise in rents is that fairly prosperous people are slowly being driven from respectable neighborhoods toward the slums where many thousands of them will finally land if there is not a change for the better.

The "building boom" that has been in full swing for the last four years has resulted in the construction of thousands of fine, steel framed apartment houses, where the flats were expected to rent from \$50 to \$500 per month. That millions invested in these buildings will be lost, or at least produce no revenue for years, is just being perceived. So there is hard times ahead for investors as well as for the "non-productive laborers" and ordinary wage-workers.

The passing of the payment of the quarterly dividend on the common stock of the United States steel cor-

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poration and the shrinkage of values of both the common and the preferred stock has brought distress upon another class of cave dwellers. In fact all classes, except the very few, who watered stock and swindled wholesale and retail, have "forebodings." These pirates and robbers have gathered to themselves millions. They are all, without exception, for Mark Hanna, and the mullet heads who have had the very hides peeled off them will continue to "vote 'er straight." These are the "people who will not be able to contain themselves," when the crash comes. As for the robbers, they say: "We can hire half of the people to shoot the other half whenever it becomes necessary; and there are swift steamers plying between here and Europe."—T.

PLUTOCRACY IN A FRENZY

Its Editors Rave for a Week and Then Satisfy Themselves with the Certainty of Controlling the Democratic Convention

New York, Jan. 26, 1904.—(Editorial Correspondence.)—It will be hardly possible for the west to understand what an uproar there was in the New York dailies and among her politicians over the little conference held by the editor of The Independent with certain liberal democrats in an up-town hotel and the subsequent reports from the west concerning Mr. Bryan's speech in Lincoln. A wild frenzy seemed to seize the whole town. Even the staid and stately Times talked after this fashion:

"The voters will never raise to the presidency a candidate who shares Mr. Bryan's belief about free silver, free riot, and organized assault upon the organized business of the country."

In the first expression of their madness, the dailies berated the gold democrats for not making a fiercer fight against Bryan, declared that nothing was being done to suppress this anarchist from the west and that populism was sweeping over the country with no resistance being made. It was only in their madness that they did this, for they all knew that for months everything had been done that the ingenuity of the sharpest intellects could conceive to capture the coming democratic national convention. They knew that paid agents had been at work in nearly every county in the United States for months, laying plans to secure the control of that convention. The news that even though they controlled the convention, there would be a bolt, and one so large as to threaten the very existence of their gold democratic organization, carried them clear off their feet and so crazed them that there was much writing of the same sort as that quoted above. In the place of Bryan, they saw looming up in the dim distance the overwhelming truths of populism. The sight drove them mad and for fully a week they did not get back enough courage to renew their attack along the old lines.

The Herald was the first to shake off its fright. It sent telegrams to leading democrats all over the country asking them what they were going to do about indorsing the Kansas City platform. Its first appeal was to members of the house and senate in Washington. The returns showed 162 democratic members and senators against Bryan, and only seven for him. Among the prominent ones against Bryan were Morgan of Alabama, Daniels of Virginia, and McCreery of Kentucky.

The World went after the democratic national committee and chairmen of the state committees. The returns showed 61 against Bryan and 12 for him.

A careful examination of the southern papers was made and it was found that most of them were against Bryan.

After all this work, the plutocratic editors here became more calm and frenzied shrieking stopped. The announcement was made by all of them in the same issues of their papers that—

"The St. Louis convention will not be controlled by Mr. Bryan. He will not even control one-third of its members. The party is tired of him, sick of him."

That is what The Independent said a year ago. That is why the Denver conference was called. That is the reason for the organization of the Old Guard.

The phrase, "the party is tired of him," used in the above quotation, means of course that those who have obtained control of the party organization are "tired of him." It is very probable that right here in New York a majority of the voters of the democratic party, if a secret ballot were

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taken, would vote for Bryan as against Cleveland.

It is the settled conviction here that the gold democrats will have an overwhelming majority in the democratic national convention and—there will be a bolt.

From what I can learn, the Hanna men are working for his nomination actively and persistently. They are using the same methods that have proved so efficient with the gold democrats. They have paid agents in every state "secretly" operating to obtain Hanna delegates. A friend who knows as much of the inside work of that gang as any man in the United States said to me yesterday that Hanna has already at his back every southern delegation. That indicates that the situation will be: Hanna on one side and a gold democrat on the other.

Organize the Old Guard.—T.

CORNERING AIR AND LIGHT

Plutocracy Getting Into Position to Say to the Common Man, "Serve or Get Off the Earth"

New York, Jan. 28, 1904.—(Editorial Correspondence.)—It was often said in the beginning of the farmers' alliance movement that "everything but air and light has been cornered and pretty soon plutocracy and the courts will find a way to do that." The prediction has come true in this part of the country. The courts have refused to apply the English doctrine of "ancient lights" and a corporation can come and utterly ruin the real estate of the owner of a moderately high six or ten-story building. A corporation here owned two adjoining lots. On one it built an eighteen-story building and all the flats were rented. On the other it began the construction of a twenty-six story building. The tenants in the first building immediately gave notice that they would remove if the adjoining building was run up to twenty-six stories and cut off their air and light. Then the corporation went to figuring in the percent way, and discovered that the running of the building up to twenty-six stories would result in a loss if the tenants in the old building vacated it, so the directors cut off the new one at six stories and stopped. If the adjoining lot had belonged to another owner, his property would have been ruined and there would have been no redress. The owners of the new building would have cornered the air and light in that region and the owner of the other lot would have had to get off the earth, or that part of it at least that was near the new sky scraper.

Here again is where the ordinary man, though considered wealthy, has no chance at all when he comes in contact with a great accumulation of

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wealth. Many hundreds of men in New York have been practically ruined by rivals cornering air and light. So this prediction of the old farmers of the west, though they hardly believed it themselves, has been fulfilled. Steadily the march of plutocracy goes on. If unresisted it will not be many decades before not only steel and oil will be cornered, but air and light and the very earth itself. Then the old song we used to sing, "Get off the earth," will be a precise statement of the power of the plutocrat.

Organize the Old Guard.—T.

R. W. Savage, Grant, Neb.: "I continue to appreciate your valued paper, and trust you may be enabled to continue in the good work and keep the paper up fully to the standard."