

THE SEED AND THE CROP

Mr. Bartley Gets in a Reminiscent Mood After Reading "Old Guard Letters"

Editor Independent: The Independent is the most thought stimulating journal that reaches my office. It is like the known forum of old where citizens of conflicting views gathered to debate every important measure.

Though "The Philosophy of Freedom" page is nearest my heart, I am none the less interested in your "Department of Exchange," and the answers from the Old Guard, as you call the roll, are enough to thaw the dried up blood in an Egyptian mummy. They are an heroic lot, these old-timers, and I love to read their reminiscences.

I fought with the first of them, too. I will remember old Solon Chase and "them steers," and find from reference to an old scrap-book that I was writing greenback arguments way back in 1879. Then the first vote I ever cast was for that sturdy old hero, James B. Weaver, in 1880. I ran for the state senate on the national greenback ticket later on, and have followed the flag (the principles we represent) at every national election since, except in 1892, when believing in the sincerity of the high sounding, fatherly utterances of Grover Cleveland I sought to forward the single tax by urging his election.

But when Cleveland called that extra session and betrayed both his party and his country by suddenly subordinating the issue upon which he was elected and by using his executive powers to coerce the representatives of his party into completing for Morgan & Co. in 1893 the job begun for Belmont & Co. in 1873—and held up by the Bland act of 1878—I realized that Cleveland had been to school in Wall street between his terms, and had determined to use his position in the service of his teachers. Then when John G. Carlisle, as secretary of the treasury, performed the same double back somersault which Sherman performed under similar temptation, I went around behind the block and kicked myself. Reorganizing our flag I, of course, voted joyously for Bryan in 1896 and 1900.

We planted the corn in the former years that showed a crop of nearly six and a half million votes in the latter. Never a seed was lost, never a vote thrown away, and few mistakes were made. We may have been unwittingly used occasionally to help along the schemes of big politicians older and perhaps wiser than ourselves, but we did our duty just the same, and never an effort was wasted.

Look at this relic from the Peter Cooper campaign, which I dig out of that scrap-book and send to you; then review the work from that date to this, and see if there is anything undivided by experience that we contended for. The record shows we were right in every instance; and where we have changed it has only been to refine and improve our methods and measures, as we saw our way clearer. What we saw at first darkly we see now clearly, and what we struggled then to express in understandable phrase we state now easily with force and precision.

Briefly this was and is our whole case.

1. Money good enough to pay the bayonet-holder was quite good enough to pay any bondholder—foreign or domestic; and the man who risked his life deserved at least as fair treatment as the man who risked his money.

2. The exception on the back of the money paid the soldiers was put there at the bidding of men always eager to make money out of the wars of all countries; to give them virtual control of the nation's treasury and the national finances, and the power to depreciate our paper currency whenever that suited their purpose, regardless of the fortunes of war. The records of the gold boom they afterward established prove that this is true. It shows that it enabled them to buy bonds at 50 cents on the dollar and to force down the gold purchasing power of the greenback whenever gold was needed to pay interest and demanded on their bonds.

The bond record shows that not satisfied with thus doubling their money they successfully schemed to have these bonds, that were payable in legal tender money or coin, refunded into bonds payable in coin; and that afterward they came again to have them virtually refunded from coin bonds—payable in gold or silver—into gold bonds payable in gold alone, by procuring the degradation of silver from its old position as standard coin. They did all this under the cloak and pretense of "national honor," and a burning desire that this

country should have only "honest money."

We denounced the whole process as hypocrisy and robbery.

They also hypocritically declared that a chief purpose of the last change was to maintain parity between the two metals.

The result shows that it destroyed the parity, just as it was intended to do.

4. On resumption, or the restoration of even parity between greenbacks and gold:

They claimed that to resume it was necessary to contract, necessary to call in the millions of non-interest-bearing currency—for every dollar of which value had been given, either originally or at last—and replace it with interest-bearing bonds of denominations too large to use as currency.

We knew it was not necessary to contract in order to resume. We knew it was only necessary for our government, then, when peace was restored, to remove the disabilities it had itself put upon its own currency, and it would come to par with gold; or to replace it by full legal tender currency of equal volume.

They knew it, too, but they pretended not; because they knew that the contraction they contemplated would again double the purchasing power of every dollar of their bonds and of the bonds they wanted issued, and help them to substitute a double interest-bearing bank currency for the non-interest-bearing currency.

We protested against such a gigantic scheme of robbery, chiefly because it would depreciate the selling value of every home and farm, injure our manufacturers and ruin the majority of our business men.

That is, we protested as soon as we could be organized and be heard. We said that the treacherous move to demonetize silver was being had with a view of forcing the country to resume, not specie payment, but gold payment, and that the plea that national honor demanded it was adding monumental hypocrisy to highway robbery.

The results proved we were right. They had to let the treasury order that greenbacks be received as gold for custom duties. But the ruin that was predicted also followed, and no relief came until our policy was again temporarily substituted for theirs, and silver partially restored.

5. We held then, as we hold now, more definitely, that the law of supply and demand determines the purchasing power of money as it does the price of wheat; that we can't diminish it—either relatively or absolutely—without increasing its commercial or exchangeable value; that we cannot increase it, relative to the work it has to do, without lessening its purchasing power; and that when we contract its volume either absolutely or relatively, and thus compel the producer to really give two hundred dollars' worth of product to get one hundred dollars in money, the one hundred in money will pay no more of debt, or interest on debts, than it did before. We thereby rob both the producer and the debtor to enrich an already rich class of big bondholders.

6. No intelligent man today, who is sincere, questions this, our main and really our original, position. Only those do who are ignorant or interested.

Of course we also held, and hold now, that issuing or coining money or currency is no more a proper or necessary part of banking business than it is of knitting business; that we might as well allow banks to mint and issue coin, as to stamp or issue currency; and that either the government should issue all our coin and currency and regulate the volume of it or else abdicate that government function entirely and give it to the banks, in addition to the immense deposits of government money which it now gives them the use of for nothing.

There is your roll, and here is the gospel of the Old Guard and the new; and there's that fine noble, fearless face of old Alexander Del Mar—the master of finance, the world's best known and best trusted authority on money and coinage and statistics; the unshakable, unpurchaseable and unconquerable defender of financial truth, looking down the lines of the Old Guard—and up at the half million score for Bryan, with an approving, satisfied smile which seems to say: "There are the sowers; and here is the harvest!"

JAMES BARTLEY,
Amsterdam, N. Y.

James H. Davis, Grapevine, Tex.: "I hope the Old Guard will respond to this voting process. I am for direct nominations. I trust the two committees will do the right thing at St. Louis. I am proud of the noble work you are doing to get the Old Guard in

line—it is the surest way to get our party together again. Long live the noble editors who are waging such warfare for humanity. I am with you to the last ditch." (The votes thus far are so numerous that I wouldn't undertake to say how many there are. As every one must be checked against the regular enrollment card list, there is considerable work about receiving them. Where one is not enrolled, he is sent blanks and an invitation to enroll—if he doesn't respond to this, his vote will not be counted. We expect to count none but populist votes—and a man who refuses to enroll is not very strong in the faith. At any rate we have started out with that idea, and will stick to it in this preferential vote.—Associate Editor.)

C. Allen White, Nicholasville, Ky.: "I took your paper early in the year a short time. I must have it again because I think it is a splendid paper. Am a socialist; take the Appeal to Reason and The Commoner. I like The Independent quite as well, if not better than either."

Call for Meeting of National Committee.

Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 12, 1904.—To the Members of the National Committee of the People's Party of the United States, Greeting: The call hereinafter is made in compliance with a resolution passed by said committee at Denver, Colo., July 29, 1903, that the committee shall be called to meet at St. Louis, Mo., on February 22, 1904, for the purpose of fixing time and place of holding the national convention of the people's party, which convention, when convened, shall place in nomination members of its own party as candidates for president and vice president of the United States, and transact such other business as may come before it.

As vice chairman of the national committee of the people's party, I was empowered by a resolution passed by the national committee of the people's party at Kansas City, in regular session of the same, to call meetings and to transact any other business of the committee that the chairman by virtue of his office would be empowered to perform.

Therefore I do hereby call on all committeemen of the people's party to convene at St. Louis, Feb. 22, 1904, for the purpose aforesaid. And in addition to the committee, would respectfully invite all members of the party who can conveniently attend such meeting to do so.

It is to be hoped that at this meeting a full recognition of the efforts made at Denver last July will be indorsed by a united people's party of the nation. And that the influences for reform as found in the people's party may be no longer throttled by misunderstandings, for it is the only party that can and will uncover wrong doing and corruption wherever found.

We hope that this meeting will be well attended and be fruitful of great good. Reform papers please copy.

J. H. EDMISTEN,
Vice Chairman National Committee
People's Party.
J. A. EDGERTON, Secretary.

CALL FOR MEETING OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

Memphis, Tenn., Dec. 10, 1903.—The national executive committee of the people's party of the United States, in session at Memphis, Tenn., this 10th day of December, 1903, begs leave to congratulate the earnest reform voters of the United States on the rapid spread of those great principles of human government enunciated in the Omaha platform of 1892, and for which our organization has steadfastly contended, since the beginning.

The political history of the past few years has only served to strengthen our position, and to draw the attention of patriotic voters to the principles involved in our political creed, until it is today a generally accepted theory that government ownership of monopolies is better than monopoly ownership of government, although through the manipulation of political machines by the monopolies now controlling the public utilities of the country, there has been but little legislation looking to public ownership.

The political history of the past few years has taught several invaluable lessons to those who would reform existing abuses, the most important of which is that fusion or cooperation with either of the old parties is a failure, destined to spread confusion among reformers and to destroy our organization. It has also taught that a divided reform movement can accomplish but little. While in the past honest differences of opinion have divided our ranks, and lent consolation to our enemies and the despoilers of the people, we recommend as the future policy of our party that reformers of all factions bury

their minor differences and unite on the essential principles that will restore to the people the power to conduct the government free from the dictation of an oligarchy of the "idle holders of idle capital."

To this end we hereby call the national central committee of the allied people's party to meet at the New St. James hotel, in St. Louis, Mo., February 22, at 10 o'clock a. m., to fix a time and place for a national convention to nominate candidates for president and vice president of the United States, and we invite the committees of other reform parties to meet at the same time and place, looking to a practical union of the reform forces of the country in the approaching national campaign. We especially invite the representatives of organized labor, as it is the policy of the people's party to support the worthy efforts of organized labor in its struggles against organized capital, and believing that the final relief of labor rests solely in an intelligent and well directed ballot, we urge the co-operation of the labor forces in our conventions and at the polls.

We indorse the action of the recent Denver conference in looking to reunion of the people's party on the old lines, and extend our hands in fraternal greeting to our co-laborers of the great northwest who have in the past been misled by false promises, only to now be offered as a sacrifice to Mammon.

There is widespread dissatisfaction in the republican party; the democratic party has abandoned the west and is now engaged in concluding an alliance with the capitalistic forces of the east. The way is now clear for the patriotic men and women of all parties to unite on those essential principles of human liberty, and to this end we pledge our earnest endeavors.
JO A. PARKER, Chairman.
Louisville, Ky.
(Reform papers please copy.)

A Possible Recruit

Editor Independent: I am not one of the Old Guard, but from present indications I am liable to become a recruit. If Cleveland, or any of his following, be nominated by the democrats I shall have to refuse to vote the ticket. I still have a hope that the Bryan element has not given up the fight, for as long as there is life there is hope.

In case our party fails to make nominations as a reform party, I shall vote with the "pops." So, in the premises, if you can accept my vote in the choice of a candidate for president, you will find it enclosed. As your list contains so many names that I know so little, or nothing, about, to vote intelligently I shall have to substitute others.

Seeing the great need of reform, I am willing, providing we can't get it through the democratic party, to accept it at the hands of some other party. It requires resolution to give up the old party. I love the very name of it, but I can't hold to it as long as it is controlled by such men as Cleveland & Co.

Dew, Tex.
C. C. RAWLS.

(Although the vote now being taken has no element of formality or officiality, but is simply an experiment with the Hare system as applied to a referendum vote taken by mail, yet at the same time it was stated at the outset that votes would be considered from enrolled members on the Old Guard of Populism only, and, therefore, it is deemed best to adhere to that rule. Mr. Rawls' ballot however, looks for all the world like votes being cast by the Old Guard. Perhaps after July 6, he may be entitled to vote a "sure enough" referendum ballot for populist nominees.—Associate Editor.)

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