

**WATSON AND HEARST**

Thomas E. Watson, the populist nominee for vice president in 1896, after his seven years of retirement from politics—seven years of hard literary work, by the way, the results of which are causing the plutocratic critics no end of worry—has been giving his many admirers a series of surprises recently.

Under date of February 23, in answer to a letter from Judge Samuel W. Williams, Mr. Watson caused thousands of populist hearts to beat faster as they read these ringing words:

"There never was a time more favorable for a straight, fearless fight on both the old parties. By all means make the effort.

"Personally, I can stand loyally to the faith and wield my pen. I have made too many enemies. My name would be a burden to any new movement.

"Choose some younger man, who has made no enemies, and make an aggressive contest, and in my judgment the old parties will have cause to tremble for the results."

Six days later Mr. Watson, in an open letter to the Atlanta (Ga.) News, declared that if he were in politics (leaving the inference that he is not) he would be found supporting William Randolph Hearst. The letter is too long for publication in full this week, but the following excerpts will suffice to show its tone:

"I would support Mr. Hearst because he is a young leader inspired by the old spirit of equal rights to all and special privileges to none; because he favors the rights of the many rather than the greed of the few; because he does not represent sectionalism of any sort, but stands for the common people of the entire republic.

"I would support him because he is young enough to cherish a generous enthusiasm for the public good, at the same time that he has demonstrated a capacity to succeed in the most trying affairs of practical life.

"I would support him because he wears no man's collar, and because he is not the craven tool of any ring, syndicate, corporation, trust, or interest."

"I would support him because he has brains enough to realize what this republic needs, and pluck enough to do battle for his convictions."

This last letter, to quote from a private communication to the editor, "is, and will remain a stunner to his many admirers and worshippers, until some elucidation of an equally extraordinary character makes clear the intent of the author." Another correspondent, however, regards the Hearst indorsement as an exceedingly wise political move, for, as he says, "the Old Guard need not fear Watson. Hearst has no chance, but will cause trouble at St. Louis and should we nominate Watson, Hearst is at liberty to support him or not. Watson's let-

ter is in existence and Hearst men can read it."

The Southern Mercury seems well pleased with Watson's indorsement of Hearst. It has for some time shown symptoms of a fondness for the millionaire editor, which, were the cases reversed, would be considered rank treason on the part of The Independent. The people's party in 1896 and 1900 went outside its own membership for a presidential candidate and The Independent not only supported the candidate, but defended the course. Among its bitterest critics was the Southern Mercury.

Whatever the merits of the action of 1896 and 1900, it became evident that a continuance of such a course meant absolute dissolution of the people's party, and The Independent, feeling that developments in the democratic party rendered the existence of the people's party imperative, determined to lend its influence to bring about a unification of the people's party for a "straight, fearless fight on both the old parties," as Mr. Watson puts it.

Both The Independent and the Southern Mercury took part in the Denver conference which had for its object a union of the two wings of the people's party and "independent national political action." Now the Mercury seems willing to accept Mr. Hearst as our candidate for president. Is Mr. Hearst any better populist than Mr. Bryan?

It is pleasing to note that Paul Dixon of the Missouri World is not carried away by the Watson indorsement of Hearst. He has the old-time admiration for Watson, but declines to be bound by Watson's judgment as to proper presidential timber. To this The Independent gives hearty assent.

However, there is no need for any worry over the matter. Mr. Watson himself is the choice of many thousand admiring—almost worshipping—populists. They have great respect for his opinions, for his honesty and integrity. But admirers of Watson will not become enthusiastic Hearst supporters, simply because Mr. Watson avers that if he were in politics he would be for Hearst. Transfers of political preferences are not made that way.

Again, what Tom Watson might do if he were a democrat and in democratic politics (which he is not) may be quite different from what Tom Watson will do as a populist if he again enters the political arena.

**PRIMOGENITURE**

The great capitalists of this country are seeking by means of the corporations to accomplish what primogeniture accomplished in the old world and what Jefferson thought he had made impossible in the new. If something is not done it will not be

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many years before this whole country will be owned by a few great families, and the serfs will be afraid to even vote to make themselves free. That is practically the case in New York now.

The Vanderbilts undertook to maintain the family name and tradition by successful inheritances, so that the great bulk of the Vanderbilt properties could pass by bequest from one generation to another. That undoubtedly was what the late Jay Gould had in mind when he perfected the greatest of family trusts, which makes it impossible for the Gould properties to be scattered, a method undoubtedly to be followed not only when the present generation managing these Gould properties shall have had their day, but their children after them.

Those men know that they must die, but they want to make of their families "institutions" that will never die.

**HARBINGERS OF TYRANNY**

Secretary Taft recently delivered an address in Ohio and some who had no fear of Roosevelt before his eyes had printed and circulated in the audience the following words of Lincoln:

"Jefferson and the men with him who, in the pressure of a struggle for national independence, had the coolness and forecast to introduce into a merely revolutionary document a great truth, 'applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there that today and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression.'"

Secretary Taft replied to it as follows:

"I deny that the Declaration of Independence, when construed under the circumstances under which that instrument was signed, bears any such construction when applied to circumstances so different from those which prevailed at the time of our revolution. That instrument itself was signed by men who themselves made the exception of minors, of insane persons, of women, and of slaves. That instrument was itself signed by men who upheld the property

qualification in many of the states that did not permit a majority of the citizens to vote and consent to a government in those states."

The Independent does not bring a charge of plagiarism against Secretary Taft, but his reply is in almost the exact words of the speech delivered by Senator William Pinkney of Maryland, delivered 85 years ago in the defense of slavery. Mr. Pinkney said:

"But if a republican form of government is that in which all the men have a share in the public power, the slave-owning states will not alone retire from the Union. The constitutions of some of the other states do not sanction universal suffrage or universal eligibility. They require citizenship, and age, and a certain amount of property to give a title or vote or be voted for; and they who have not those qualifications are just as much disfranchised, with regard to the government and its power, as if they were slaves. They have civil rights, indeed (and so have slaves in a less degree), but they have no share in the government. . . . That civil rights may be qualified as well as political is proved by a thousand examples. Minors, resident aliens who are in course of naturalization, the other sex, whether maids or wives or widows, furnish sufficient practical proofs of this."

All that The Independent wishes to say is that these words of Lincoln will continue to live and be revered by mankind when Taft and Pinkney, if not forgotten, will be remembered, as the defenders of tyranny.

The Maryland legislature has passed and the governor has signed a "Jim Crow" bill, that is, a bill requiring railroads to run separate cars and provide separate accommodations for blacks and whites. It is announced that the Maryland negroes ordered a boycott on the man who introduced the bill and as all the waiters and cooks about Annapolis are blacks, Kerbin, the man who introduced the bill, could not get anything to eat and had to go to Baltimore to get a meal. No waiter and no cook would serve him. If this spreads among the negroes, the Jim Crow bill, without which Maryland has got along very well, may cause a good deal of trouble.

**People's Party to Organize**

**National Convention  
at Springfield, Ill.,  
July 4th.**

To all members of the people's party and those in sympathy with its principles throughout the country:

You are hereby requested to begin at once preparations for holding state and county conventions for the purpose of selecting delegates to the national convention to be held at Springfield, Ill., July 4.

To make the national convention a grand success requires the energetic effort of every committeeman from the precincts to the national committee. Each one has his work to do, each must feel the responsibility resting upon him and perform his whole duty.

New life, new energy and new inspiration has come from the uniting of the party. The people's party is going to reorganize from one end of the country to the other.

The outlook confronting us is flattering. The republican party and the democratic party are both divided, each having a strong membership in opposition to the trusts who are ready to go with that party that will take a decided stand against the trusts. The people's party has done that.

This appeal is to every voter in the country who stands for reform.

Much hard work must be done between now and the holding of the convention, July 4, and considerable expense will be involved. We are willing to do the work without compensation, but are unable to bear all the expenses. We therefore call upon those who want to see this work progress to help us financially. We ask our friends to send money at once to pay the expenses of this work.

This work cannot be pushed until we receive financial assistance. We confidently expect your assistance to again organize and build up the people's party.

We have reason to believe that the progress of our cause in this national contest will prove a great surprise to the enemies of human liberty.

All reform papers are requested to please copy and lend assistance in raising funds. **J. H. EDMISTEN,**

Vice Chairman People's Party,  
Lincoln, Neb.

**J. A. EDGERTON,**  
Sec. National Committee.