

THE VALENTINE DEMOCRAT.

VOLUME XXIII

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NUMBER 20

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Valentine = Nebraska

THE REAL BRYAN

What is the Explanation of Bryan?

Introduction to "THE REAL BRYAN," a
new book compiled by Richard L. Mc-
cafee and being published by Personal
Help Publishing Co., Des Moines, Iowa.

"Will some one please stand up
and explain this man Bryan—the
Phoenix who arises from the ashes
of defeat stronger, better loved
than ever?" This question was
asked by a Pittsburg, Pa., man in
a letter printed in the Christian
Union Herald. This man had seen
(to use his own language) "a won-
derful thing come to pass." He
had seen William J. Bryan "flout-
ed by us easterners as a wild-eyed
disturber of the peace" entering
Pittsburg, "a city which gave the
biggest comparative majority
against him of all cities in the na-
tion and greeted by an enormous
crowd with an attention and en-
thusiasm that passeth description,
holding them under spell of his
marvelous eloquence for more than
two long mortal hours and sending
them away cheering—and think-
ing."

"All this, mark you," said the
Pittsburg man, "in the city of
Pittsburg—intensely republican,
'conservative,' tariff-loving Pitts-
burg!—the stronghold and center
alike of his democratic and repub-
lican enemies! If this can occur
in Pittsburg, what must be his
hold upon the people in communi-
ties where the what-is-is-right doc-
trine is not revered as here!"

From these scenes the Pittsburg
turned and in utter perplexity
asked, "What is the explanation
of Bryan?"

"What is the explanation of
Bryan?" asked the Pittsburg man
and then added: "A magazine
writer attempted recently to ex-
plain him, but when the article
was finished all he had proved was
that Bryan had made a few honest
dollars out of his political career,
though the writer did not sufficient-
ly emphasize the phenomenon that
a political career has at last result-
ed in an honest if comparatively
small fortune. Bigger fortunes
than Bryan's have been made
through political careers before
now, but we are never tempted to
describe them as 'honest.'"

"What is the explanation of
Bryan?" asked the Pittsburg man.
"Is it honesty? There are many
honest men in the nation who have
not his wonderful hold on the
hearts of the people. Is it his in-
tellect? His is not the most pow-
erful intellect in the nation,
strong though it is.

"Is it his eloquence! We are
still under the spell of his incom-
parable voice, cutting wit and
forceful sentences, but we know
that his eloquence does not ex-
plain him.

"Is it the romantic quality of the
career that began when the editor,
just returned from reporting the
convention which nominated his
opponent, seizing the dramatic,
critical moment, thrilled several
hundred men into nominating an
obscure lawyer and writer to the
highest office in the land? Hardly!"

Nor in the opinion of this Pitts-
burger is the explanation to be
found in the combination of all
four of the suggested explanations
—honesty, intellect, eloquence and
the romantic quality career. For,
in the opinion of this writer, "The
combination could never have
brought about the event described
above in Scotch-Irish, conserva-
tive Pittsburg. We have watched
and studied Pittsburg's political
audiences for several years and
we have never seen the like of
that which greeted Bryan. No
rabble, but a fine body of repre-
sentative, thoughtful men; not
merely curious, but attentive, with

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an earnest attention that was not
disturbed by the magnetic attrac-
tion of his personality. They list-
ened as men listen who have con-
fidence in their speaker, in his
sincerity and in his knowledge and
in his truthfulness."

Sometimes the things for which
we dig are to be found upon the
surface. When the Pittsburg
man said that his neighbors listen-
ed to Mr. Bryan "as men listen
who have confidence in their speak-
er, in his sincerity and in his
knowledge and in his truthfulness,"
he may have given answer to
his own question.

If, however, the Pittsburg writ-
er yet finds it difficult to under-
stand "what is the explanation of
Bryan," he might approach the
solution of the problem with high-
er hopes for results if he freed
himself from some of the newspa-
per-made misconceptions concern-
ing Mr. Bryan's career. It is
hardly fair to say that when Mr.
Bryan was nominated for the
presidency in 1896, he was "an
obscure lawyer and writer." Six
years before his nomination for
the presidency he had been nomi-
nated by the democrats as a candi-
date for congress in what seemed
to be a hopelessly republican dis-
trict. In 1888 the republican can-
didate had carried that district by
a large plurality. In 1890 Mr.
Bryan carried that district by
6,700 plurality, although he had a
populist opponent who received
13,096 votes. I think it is admit-
ted in Nebraska that this result
was largely due to the fact that
Mr. Bryan and his opponent en-
gaged in a joint debate. While
the republican candidate was an
able and resourceful lawyer and
had committed himself to some of
the reforms then growing in popu-
lar favor, Mr. Bryan plainly won
the honors in a debate noted alike
for its vigor and humor.

In 1892 Mr. Bryan was re-elec-
ted, although his congressional dis-
trict had been rearranged leaving
it composed largely of republican
counties.

During his first term—on March
16, 1892—Mr. Bryan made his
great tariff speech in the House of
Representatives. And on that oc-
casion—as will hereafter be shown
by witnesses that may not be said
to be partisans of the Nebraskan—he
became a national figure. Those
who had the privilege of hearing
that speech will not forget it; nor
will they fail to remember the
stirring scenes enacted at its close.
Bryan began his address at 2:30
o'clock in the afternoon and closed
at 5:30.

Over the report of that speech
the New York World carried the
(Concluded on last page.)

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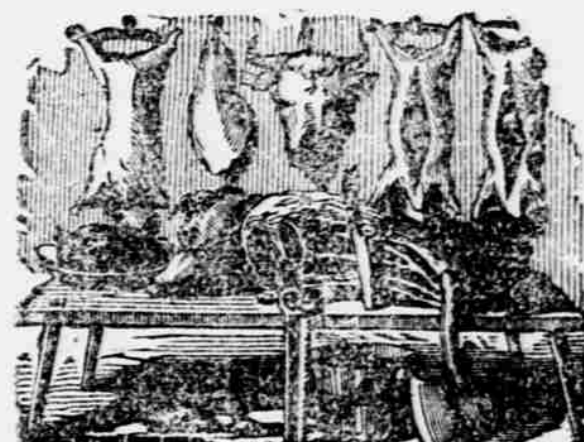
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