

PARTISAN  
ETHICS.

Many good citizens of the United States and some in the state of Nebraska seemingly forget that offices, from the president, cabinet officers, senators, congressmen and governors of states down to county and township positions, were originally created for public utility and "to promote the general welfare." On the contrary places in the service of the public are, quite generally, regarded as creations for the honor and emolument of those ambitious citizens who may by trick, trade or merit achieve them. But offices do not honor a man, though a man may honor an office. All offices were instituted primarily for the promotion of the public welfare.

Now however the ethics of partisan politics in the United States ignore the fundamental thought that all public positions are instituted and established for the benefit of the people collectively. Party morals hold that offices are existing merely for the purpose of personal preferment, individual profit and for the liquidation of obligations for party services rendered either to organizations or individuals. Offices are openly and avowedly claimed because of alleged services to presidents, parties, or prominent persons belonging to the dominant political organization of the republic.

Not often for more than a generation have the ethics of partyism in this republic recognized services to the country at large, however meritorious, as good reasons for electing a citizen to the presidency. And no man—with the exception of Grover Cleveland—during the last forty years, has been elected to the presidency of the United States merely because in subordinate civil official life he had with honesty, fidelity and ability done a patriotic service. In the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884 we saw the first revolt against the ethics of partyism in this country. Mr. Cleveland was elected by the rebels—the insurgents against the morals of the party which named James G. Blaine its candidate. And Mr. Cleveland was nominated because he had served the people of New York faithfully and efficiently as a sheriff, a mayor and as governor. And in those places he made such a record and gave such a service that he attracted to his support thousands of the best of the republican party when his candidature for the presidency was announced.

During his first term of four years as chief executive of this republic Mr. Cleveland proved himself a broad-minded, far-seeing patriot and statesman. He ignored many partisan practices. He stood firmly for all that seemed right and just. Thus many leaders who—like Gorman of Maryland—had been evolved from the party bossism of city politics, and were in reality only a larger and ranker growth of ward-healers and precinct managers antagonized President Cleveland. His

straightforward, honest ways were not their ways and his political morals were not like the morals they practised. Particularly were the small-bore statesmen disgusted with the honesty and courage of Mr. Cleveland upon the question of a protective tariff.

Because of his renunciation of the ethics of his party and its principal manipulators

In 1888 and 1892. Grover Cleveland was defeated for the presidency, in 1888. But after four years of the Harrison administration, in which President Harrison himself rebelled against the dictation and morals of bossism—separating himself from Blaine and others of similarly lax views—the renomination of President Cleveland was accomplished in 1892, at Chicago, in spite of a united delegation against him from the state of New York. Here again, for the third time, Mr. Cleveland was named for the highest office of the republic because he had bravely and stubbornly antagonized the ethics of partyism as represented by certain sachers of Tammany. And for the second time he was inaugurated president on the fourth day of March, 1893.

At the beginning of his second administration President Cleveland found a depleted treasury. Already an order for the printing of United States bonds for the purpose of protecting the one hundred millions of dollars gold reserve had been issued by the retiring secretary of the treasury, Charles Foster of Ohio. That treasury which on March 4, 1889, was plethoric with a surplus was on March 4, 1893, virtually bankrupt and the entire country was quaking with premonitions of a commercial panic. The industrial and financial prostration which followed was cunningly charged to the re-election of that president who four years before—after an honest and economical administration—had retired from office leaving a surplus in the federal treasury of many millions of dollars.

The primary cause of the panic of 1893 was the operation of the Bland-Allison

The Bland-  
Allison Act.

act which provided for the coinage of not less than two, nor more than four millions of silver dollars each month out of bullion purchased by the United States in the open market. This act was passed to aid in keeping up the price of silver. It failed to accomplish the purpose, therefore, of the friends of that measure who had passed it by a two-thirds vote over the veto of President Hayes, William McKinley being recorded, as a congressman, among the said two-thirds. But the promoters of silver mines and silver bullion interests who had provided in the third section of the Bland-Allison act for the issuance of silver certificates

to represent 412½ grain dollars of that metal and that: "Said certificates shall be receivable for customs, taxes and all public dues, and when so received may be reissued;" failed to, in that way, exalt silver to the level of gold. Not long after this law came into vigor everybody realized that a depreciated metallic currency was just as bad as a depreciated paper circulation.

In his veto message President Hayes appealed to the morality of congress saying: "The silver

An Appeal to  
Party Conscience.

dollar authorized by this bill is worth 8 to 10 per cent less than it purports to be worth and is made a legal-tender for debts contracted when the law did not recognize such coins as lawful money." But his appeal was vain. And even his admonition as to abolishing the only means which the government had for obtaining gold contained in the following wise and honest statement was unheeded.

"The right to pay duties in silver or in certificates for silver deposits, will, when they are issued in sufficient amount to circulate, put an end to the receipt of revenue in gold, and thus compel the payment of silver for both principal and interest of the public debt."

Nevertheless the ethics of politics urged the passage of the bill over the veto by a vote of forty-six for it and nineteen against it in the senate and one hundred and ninety-six for and only seventy-three against it in the house of representatives. Among the majority is the name of William McKinley whose conscience seemed not to have been reached by the appeal of Hayes nor by the possibility which Hayes foresaw and denounced, that the act would eventually "compel the payment of silver for both principal and interest of the public debt!"

Under that infamous legislation the United States bought two hundred and ninety-one million ounces of silver bullion at a cost of more than three hundred and eight millions of dollars. This Bland-Allison law came into operation February 28, 1878. It was the first indication of a lack of good morals in American legislation.

In 1893 when the panic came there were more than four hundred and nineteen millions of Bland-Allison dollars in circulation or represented in circulation by silver certificates. They had pushed out of circulation in the United States that much gold coin, under the operation of the inexorable Gresham law.

However the most ardent supporters of the Bland-Allison act became doubtful as to the benefits from their legislation which they had so zealously prophesied as early as 1890. Therefore a new device for putting an artificial value on silver was invented, and it

In 1890.