

PLUCKY BUT PUSILLANIMOUS.

Judge McConnell, of Chicago, not long ago, took occasion to make announcement at a public dinner of his opposition to the silver issue as presented by the architects of repudiation and dishonor in the national convention of ninety-six. Judge McConnell is an active and influential man and a recognized force in the political life of Illinois. The gentleman was so strong in the democratic leadership that his statement that he could not longer support the silver proposition made in such a public manner caused something resembling a cyclonic movement among the guests at the dinner. Judge McConnell was instantly assailed for his apparent defection from the "great principle" of paying honest debts in dishonest money, and he showed commendable pluck by standing his ground and pleading against such a proposed wrong upon the country. But Judge McConnell became the next thing to pusillanimous when, under pressure, or rather, from craven fear of losing the pewter jewel of regularity, he soon afterwards stepped down to a dead level by saying that he should support the party whatever might be the lower deep of degradation it might be dragged into by designing and ambitious men.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

A classified service is disciplined merit. Disciplined merit renders a steady and efficient service, and steady and efficient service is economy.

Good government is the chief conservator of the welfare of all legitimate business and gainful undertakings. It must, therefore, if it is to be made better and perpetuated, be itself administered in harmony with business principles and methods. Just government is economical—not wasteful; frugal, and not extravagant. An ounce of economy in executive affairs is worth more than a pound of revenue. More economy, through a judiciously organized and efficiently directed departmental service, will bestow upon this government and American citizenship far greater benefits than more revenue.

By the aid of a completely classified service to which there is no ingress, save through competitive examinations by the United States civil service commission, the department of agriculture—the smallest and youngest of the executive departments—has demonstrated the truth that the civil service law, regulations and rules, vigorously carried out, are the best forces for economy yet tested in this form of government. In four years' trial, from March 6, 1893, to March 6, 1897, of the merit system more than two millions of dollars were saved to cover back into the treasury out of appropriations made during that period for that department. And as employees become more skillful, more expert and adept from experience in the service, the

labor-cost of administration will continue to decline. Thus it will be easy to continue, proportionally with the growth of the department of agriculture, a reduction of expenditures and an enhancement of the value of its work in behalf of that advanced and successful agriculture upon which all other callings depend for existence.

Sneeringly the practical politician denounces civil service reform as an illusion of doctrinaires, theorists and schoolmen—a theory from Utopia. But what great movement for the elevation and improvement of humanity ever came from any other than a scholarly or thoughtful source? And can there be a more sincere tribute to the merit system in the public service than its vituperation by those who have no merit? Only those political pirates who by retrospection, introspection and prospection are convinced that with a firmly established merit system in the civil service of municipal, state and federal government their calling as plunderers of the public has been abolished, now openly denounce the reform. Therefore, it will win its way to greater victories for honesty, economy and efficiency and its triumphs will be equally enjoyed by all good citizens upon whom rest the responsibilities and burdens of maintaining for this republic a government which "will sell to no man" and "will not deny to any man, either justice or right."

WATERED STOCK AGAIN.

"J. Sterling Morton criticizes the populists and communists because of their attitude toward the stock watering habit of railroads and other corporations, and contends that it is right for railroads to water stock because farmers place a higher value on their farms than they did when they bought the land at \$1.25 per acre. Mr. Morton is in the business as an apologist for corporate greed and makes an ingenious plea that will possibly pass for sound argument with some people, but his attempt at adroitness will possibly lead many to believe that he really has the qualifications for a juror instead of an editor. As the farmer's land increases in actual value, he fixes the price at just exactly what it will bring and has nothing to induce him to place a fictitious value, and don't fix the price of his products at a certain per cent at watered stock prices. The roads of necessity water their stock so that their earnings may appear but a small per cent of capital invested."—The Granger.

The law says that for assessment the land shall be valued at "just exactly what it will bring."

And The Granger remarks that the farmer "has nothing to induce him to place a fictitious value." From this **THE CONSERVATIVE** concludes that the

land values returned for taxation are not "fictitious" in Nebraska.

A list of the roads in Nebraska which have watered their stocks for the purpose set forth by The Granger ought to be published. The people would be enlightened by such accurate information. The Granger will confer a great favor by giving, at its earliest possible convenience, the name of every road in Nebraska which has issued stock representing no value, or only "water," "so that their earnings may appear but a small per cent on capital invested."

After this adept in the knowledge of railway stocks and railway management shall have given this desirable information **THE CONSERVATIVE** will again, in the light of the new knowledge which is to be flashed upon the inner methods of railroading, take up "watered stock" for discussion.

THE MONEY POWER.

Coin Harvey reports that he is receiving contributions from faithful silver people at the rate of about \$800 a day. This will not pile up so many millions for a campaign fund for 1900 as was promised, but the rake-off will keep Mr. Harvey in comfort while the stream continues to pour in. He is as confident as ever that silver will be the dominant issue in the next national contest, in spite of the jeers and cuffs it is receiving from all sides just at present.—State Journal.

The receipts of the Hon. Coin Harvey are now, according to the above statement, about twenty-four thousand dollars a month. The parties who assigned the alleged democratic invoices of principles and lackings of principles will be encouraged to think that Mr. Harvey will have accumulated before the next presidential election in November 1900, if his present income continues for twenty-one months, five hundred and odd thousands of dollars.

"The money power" seems sought after by the assignee of Messrs. Jones, Allen and Teller. It is strange that those who deride, scorn, scarify, denounce and damn money and its diabolical influence should seek it with such importunate solicitings. It is likewise singular that the money is sought for the avowed purpose of placing it where it will accomplish the most in securing votes for a policy which will debase the money and destroy the credit of the United States!

THE MOST ANCIENT STEAM ENGINE IN THE WORLD.

"Engineering has the following interesting note on the most ancient steam engine in existence. The oldest engine in the world is in possession of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, this engine having been constructed by Boulton and Watt in the year 1777. The order is entered in the firm's books in that year as a single-acting beam engine,