

IS OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT PERMANENT?

PITTSBURG, Pa., April 27, 1899.
EDITOR CONSERVATIVE,
Nebraska City, Neb.

DEAR SIR: I have received the two packages of THE CONSERVATIVE of issue of April 13, having previously received several numbers of other dates—which I read with interest. The general make-up of your paper, the style in which you present the readable matter along with the clean-cut statements of facts and logical conclusions presented to the readers very clearly establish that the aim and object of the publisher (as is indicated by the name of the publication) is to conserve good political morals in and under our political system.

I most fully concur with your statements of the history and records of political parties, especially as regards the origin and sequel of the republican party. Your tribute to Grover Cleveland I also in good part agree with; although he failed to arise to the demands of the hour and failed to redeem his own and party pledges to repeal and wipe out the corrupt salary-grab acts of the infamous, corrupt congress which passed the "back-pay steal and salary-grab act of 1873," because of which every democratic paper and convention up to Cleveland's election, howled for the impeachment of President Grant for signing it. Grover Cleveland, during his first campaign, in a letter to the writer said if he was elected that he would recommend the repeal of the salary-grab act of 1873. This pledge he failed to keep and the result is, we see today, the corrupt extravagance prevailing in all of our municipal, state and national governments, along with the bankrupt condition of the same; and political bosses like Richard Croker and M. S. Quay, Tom Platt et al. treating our public franchises and offices as legitimate spoils, in which pot-house politicians revel with impunity. I hold no other result is possible under our state and national government paternalism. This damnable delusion under our system of government places the industrial classes at the mercy of political knaves and thieves; and the most deplorable fact of all is, "My people love to have it so."

Our Public Officials.

I appreciate your ardent desire to avert the inevitable fate that awaits our American experiment at manhood suffrage in the near future; but with our public schools and public press inculcating the damnable, pusillanimous sentiment that their governments should support the people and not the people support their governments, no other result than an ignominious failure is possible. This corrupt degenerate education has resulted in producing two prominent traits of character among the American people, either of which is at variance with good government or true demo-

cracy. The first is, that it does not matter what the government pays for a service, it costs the people nothing. This has resulted in filling all of our public offices, from the lowest county office to the president of the United States, with notorious incompetents—men who have been noted failures in every business they ever undertook requiring business sagacity, energy and tact. It has come to this: If a man fails in any legitimate business in competition with other men, he immediately betakes himself to the public offices. I noticed in my short lifetime this disposition on the part of the American people to elevate the most notorious failures in private life to the highest places of trust and responsibility in public life. Again, the disposition to make heroes out of the political demagogues that fasten upon our various civil governments. The hero worship of the American people is another insuperable bar to self-government. They transcend any other people on earth in this pusillanimous spirit opposed to true democracy. We boast of our American democracy, but to an intelligent man who contemplates this disposition to hero worship on the part of the masses of the people it is no wonder that political mountebanks can discount their intelligence at even less than 16 to 1.

This I think must convince you that the prospect for forming a new party in patriotism and integrity in public office is not a very promising enterprise with the American people. Political platforms, nor yet legislative enactments, never produce patriots or honest public officials, and nothing more clearly demonstrates the fact that no one can bring a clean thing out of an unclean than the American people's first century's experiment at self-government, unless it is the history of the republican party. Take that party composed as it professed to be of the majority of the moral element predominating in our nation—the high-toned religious people—originated as it was upon a platform of religious principles as sacred as the tenets of our holy Christianity. And yet the history of the civilized world does not furnish a parallel of unbridled corruption from its very first entrance upon the political stage of its existence to the present day. Political knavery and corruptions crown its every page.

Republican Party's Birth.

Having helped usher this party into power, the writer being in the convention held in old Lafayette Hall, Pittsburg, in 1856, that crystalized its first party platform, being a young man and a novice in political methods, I was very greatly surprised at the evidences of the lack of real integrity I saw manifested in that convention on the part of some of the men who had done the most to create the abolition sentiment. Horace Greeley, who perhaps more than any other one man in the United States, had

helped to fire the heart of the Northern people, used all his influence to try to prevent the convention from organizing a party on the platform of freedom to the slaves at that time. I was the more deeply impressed from the fact that the reasons he assigned for not organizing a party were almost the opposite from the teachings of his newspaper—that slavery was the sum of all villainies. Mr. Greeley's course impressed me in that convention that Horace Greeley's political ambition and not a high-toned patriotic desire to place the government of the American republic upon the lofty plane of the declaration of independence "that all men have the inalienable right of life, liberty and happiness," actuated the man; and not only Mr. Greeley but also with many other politicians this was the leading motive.

Lincoln and His Cabinets.

I became more firmly convinced of this fact when I saw Abraham Lincoln form his first cabinet, some of them noted political knaves, who had done as much to corrupt the democratic party as the most corrupt political knaves that party ever produced. An experience of a few months in the war department at Washington City, where I was daily brought into contact with President Lincoln and leading members of his cabinets, confirmed me in this opinion: that no matter how great were the moral issues that were involved in the conflict over slavery and the rebellion of the Southern states in the minds of the people, they had but little to do with the administration of our general government and its public offices. Even Abraham Lincoln very soon discovered that he had surrounded himself with politicians whose slogan was "to the victors belong the spoils," and that the civil war afforded them an unprecedented opportunity to enrich themselves and friends. Just as the Spanish and Philippine war affords the same unscrupulous class who today are disgracing the American people with such scandals as the medicated beef outrage is doing. The Pennsylvania contribution to the Lincoln cabinet was the "Winnebago Chief." He dubbed all patriotic men (who dared to raise their voices against such prostitution of our government to the avarice and greed of pothouse politicians) as "literary fellers." Lincoln soon found out that if he would save his administration from a dismal failure and the national government from destruction he must make a change in his political advisers and he exiled the "Winnebago Chief" and called to his aid the man who more than all others prevented the success of treason. But such was the lack of true patriotism and so predominant was the spirit of strategy, treason and spoils with the political mountebanks controlling the two great parties; and so pusillanimous are the American people, that the iron-nerved,