

SALARIES. It seems likely that a bill for largely increasing the salaries of judges of the federal courts will be passed during the present session of congress. Since as a rule lawyers of character and ability are, under the appointive system, chosen for federal judges, and they give their exclusive attention for life to their official duties, it is possible that the proposed increase in their compensation is proper. In general, however, the salaries of public officers are already too high. The chief test of the amount of the salary they should get is the value of the services rendered by the men who are actually chosen to fill public offices; and in general the salaries are at least 33 per cent larger than the value of the men who get them, rated in the open labor market. There is much contention that the salaries of judges of our supreme court are much too low; but this contention will not stand our practical test. The lawyers who are chosen for judges cheerfully abandon their "large and lucrative practice" to draw the "meager salary" of the judicial office. This alone is strong evidence that they are paid all they are worth; and this test is well supported by experience and observation. No one will dispute that we ought to have a stronger bench in this state, but the increased salary would be generally thrown away in the attempt to secure it under the present partisan elective system of choosing judges. Present compensation would bring better judges than we now have if we knew the way to let them in. Until we find the way the true public policy is to save the extra salary.

Just as competent men as now fill them would be found for other public offices under much lower salaries, and by a proper adjustment of official salaries according to market or competitive values, the present contentious clamor for these offices would cease, the tenure of the officer would be longer, and the public would have the benefit of the resulting greater experience and skill.

STRONG IN DEATH.

The so-called democracy; the boa constrictor in whose sinuous folds the populist steer has been crushed out of all semblance to his former greatness, having squeezed its bellowing prey into a pulpy mass, prepares to gorge the salivous morsel, when from out that shapeless mass of bones, flesh, intestines and—yes, *some* brains, comes a voice—for in this animal the voice dies last—a weak, small voice, yet capable of conveying a protest; the voice of ex-Senator Allen, of the Madison Mail, who says:

"Aside from Mr. Bryan and Mr.

Cleveland, the democratic party is without competent leadership, and, so far as we can observe, stands for no substantial reform which the populist party does not better represent, and there is no more reason why populists should desert their ranks and muster under the banner of democracy than become republicans and lose their identity, and there is no reason for either."

And even as the slimy mass disappears down the maw of the hungry reptile, we hear that same plaintive voice saying:

"The populist and democratic parties differ radically and irreconcilably on certain well known issues; for instance, on government ownership of telegraphs, telephones, railways and other natural monopolies, and it is the height of folly for democrats to undertake to dissolve the populist party and absorb its membership."

Doesn't that strike you as being rather rich? "Undertake to dissolve and absorb." As though the dissolution was not complete, and the absorption all but over. Why such a crushed, lacerated, maimed relic should wish to live, a hopeless cripple, a burden to itself and an eye-sore to the other animals, does not appear. Better were it to draw in its horns, or allow them to be drawn in, and be decently and quietly swallowed, just as the rest of the menagerie predicted when the simple steer first began grazing in the boa's particular section of the jungle.

AN AWAKENING.

Ultra-protectionists, within the republican party, are really strayed afar from the path pointed out by the leaders of that party. Right or wrong originally, the illustrious McKinley, whose name stands for protection, in that farewell address at Buffalo pointed out the changed conditions which prevail, and the demand for a broader, more liberal intercourse with the producing and consuming nations of the earth.

Conceding—solely for sake of argument—that the embryo industry demanded incubation, and the infant nursing, must it follow that a matured industry, in all the vigor of its manhood, in the herculean strength of its giant stature, is still to be coddled and fondled at the breast of a nurse whose strength is far inferior to its own?

Is an institution which successfully competes in the open market with the manufacturers of all the great producing countries, still to be considered an "infant industry" at home? It was a labor of years for leaders like McKinley to convince the American

voter of the necessity for the very laws which, just previous to his sad death he declared no longer necessary, but on the other hand burdensome and oppressive. Those who followed two or three years behind him into this movement seem as far or farther to the rear in coming out of it.

Again granting—solely for argument's sake—that, in its time, the theory of protection was sound, and a power for good, listen to the warning voice of McKinley, the voice which so many hundreds of thousands of republicans loved to hear and heed, when it was raised for protection: "A system which provides a mutual exchange of commodities, is manifestly essential to the healthful growth of an export trade—We must not repose in fancied security that we can, forever, sell everything, and buy little or nothing.—*The period of exclusiveness is past.* The expansion of our trade is the pressing problem. Commercial wars are unprofitable.—A policy of good will and friendly trade relations will prevent reprisals.—Isolation is no longer possible or desirable.—We have a vast and intricate business built up through years of toil and struggle, in which every part of the country has its stake, which will not permit of either neglect or undue selfishness. No narrow, sordid policy will subserve it.—Our capacity to produce has developed so enormously, and our products have so multiplied, that the problem of more markets requires our urgent and immediate attention."

But while Mr. McKinley, with other erstwhile protectionists, has caught the true scent, the great rabble has not yet found the track, but follows the blind trail which begins anywhere and ends nowhere.

Breathing into their lungs the dust of ages, walking and working amidst hazy dreams of the past, their trance seems destined to continue until some giant leader, some political Sandow, arises to grasp the frayed, antiquated double of each somnambulist, and jerk him forward into this century. Then and only then, will the world feel the commercial supremacy of this grand republic; then will the escarpments be levelled and the moats be filled, that our neighbors may visit us, to find, not the isolated, frowning castle, but an open hospitable mansion within whose halls no selfish plots are hatched, and whose lords may draw from the surrounding fertile plains and honey-combed mountains food, raiment and mineral wealth, to be profitably distributed among the less favored nations of the earth, in that spirit of "good will and friendly trade relations" which will "prevent reprisals."