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OBSERVATIONS

"Are you a candidate for president?" I asked William J. Bryan the other day. Mr. Bryan smiled pleasantly and replied: "I have kept myself out of the contest for the democratic nomination for president, and have no plans except to go to Chicago as a delegate and fight for the rights of the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1." Mr. Bryan is confident that the silver men will control the national democratic convention. "We will have a majority of not less than 50 votes, probably a good many more than that," he said. "We will carry Iowa, Illinois and Indiana in addition to the west and south generally, and we may get the delegations from Ohio and Kentucky. We are bound to have a majority and to organize the convention and nominate a candidate for president and vice-president on a silver platform. It is true that we may not have such men as Brice and Gorman, but the great leaders of the democracy are with us, and we will win.

"In case the silver men control the convention who will be nominated?"

"Bland and Boies are both good men."

"What would the administration democrats do?"

"They will withdraw and put up some such man as Carlisle or Pattison or Russell. I think in any event there will be two democratic tickets in the field."

In answer to a question as to his opinion of the outcome in November Mr. Bryan said: "No power on earth can prevent the election of the free silver democratic candidate, particularly if the republicans nominate McKinley, as they are pretty sure to. If Mr. Bland or Mr. Boies or some other good man is nominated in Chicago on a silver platform I am confident that the populists will endorse him in St. Louis. So, of course, will the silver party. There will be only one candidate before the people of the United States represent-

ing the cause of free silver, and he will get, practically, all the votes of the supporters of silver, regardless of party. On the other hand the gold bugs will divide their strength between the republican candidate and the gold bug democratic candidate. McKinley will get some democratic votes, but most of these will be cast in the eastern states which will go republican anyway. If by any chance the conditions at Chicago should be reversed, the result would be the same, one silver candidate and two gold bug candidates. The platform on which McKinley or the republican candidate, whoever he may be, will run will, I think, be a stronger gold declaration than was generally expected a couple of months ago, and we will get a considerable number of republican votes. It will be pretty hard for democrats to vote for McKinley on account of his extreme tariff views."

Mr. Bryan, as was stated in these columns two weeks ago, demonstrated his political sagacity at the silver democratic state convention. He handled that body with consummate skill, keeping himself well in the background. The result is that he is himself a delegate to the national convention, and the Nebraska silver delegation is absolutely under his control. Messrs. Boies and Bland and other candidates will, in all probability, be compelled to do their fighting by proxy, but Mr. Bryan will be in a position to personally lead the silver forces. He will undoubtedly be a member of the committee on resolutions in the regular convention if the silver men control it, or in the bolting convention, if the straights win at Chicago, and Mr. Bryan is pretty sure to make a sensation that will be of great advantage to him when it comes to naming a candidate for president. It is certainly not improbable that he will be the nominee of some party for president in this year's campaign.

Russell, of Massachusetts, a leading candidate for the gold bug nomination, is 39 years of age, and while he is well known, it is pointed out by a friend of Bryan, that he is not prominently associated with any great national issue. Mr. Bryan is 36, and it is certainly true that he owes his prominence almost entirely to his course with reference to national questions.

Some months ago the editors of the Standard dictionary sent me a list of simplified spellings, selected from a large list recommended by Philological societies of America and England. The list was sent to 499 eminent persons, besides myself, with the request that each one receiving it agree to adopt the simpler spellings. "provided 300 authors, editors, prominent teachers, or prominent business men should do the same." I did not bid myself, altho 200 persons, including Edgar Fawcett, William Dean Howells, Thomas W. Knox, Prof. Max Muller of Oxford university, and President Andrews of Brown university, signified their willingness to adopt the new

system. Now I have received another request to be one of 300, and this time I have embraced the opportunity to get in the class with Edgar Fawcett and William Dean Howells. An acceptance of the request was duly forwarded, and I await official notice that 300 signers have been secured, to begin in THE COURIER the use of this new system, which, at first glance, may appear to be a bit startling. It is the purpose to go about this matter of spelling reform deliberately and advisedly. At first the 300 eminent persons will follow only rule 1, which is as follows:

Change d to t when so pronounced as in abashed (abaash), wished (wisht), etc., and if a double consonant, as in chipped (chipt), dressed (drest), hopped (hopt), etc. Retain final ed when the effects a preceding sound. (1) When the preceding vowel sound is long and expressed by a single letter, as the following: baked, not bakt; caked, not cakt; draped, not drapt. N. B.—The e does not effect the preceding vowel sound when expressed by two or more letters, as in booked (bookt), bleached (bleacht), crouched (croucht). (2) When a preceding c has the sound of s as in chanced (not chanct), forced (not forct), faced (not fact), etc.

The rule is not very simple, but it can be learned in a week or two. Here is a specimen of a paragraph the words of which are spelt in accordance with rule 1 of the new system:

A man approacht and admonisht his friend, who attackt him in return, and clincht and clutcht and clipt and blinkt and blockt and blackt and bilkt and boxt and buckt and clastht and crackt and crampht and cuft and jerkt and embost and finisht him. It has a sort Hjalmar Hjorth look, hasn't it? But William Dean Howells has approved it, and that ought to settle it. But somehow the new scheme seems a little hard and harsh for Mr. Howells' soft and tender use.

The people of Nebraska pay \$2,500 to the man who acts as governor of the state. They do not expect much in return for this comfortable salary—and it is not often that they get more than they expect. But there should be some equivalent. Now in the case of Silas Adipose Holcomb the expenditure of the \$2,500 salary has not brought a freedom from scandal in the administration of the state's affairs. It has not brought any measure of reform or economy in the state's business. It has not brought \$2,500 worth of statesmanship. The question is, What is it that we are getting in return for this salary, amounting to \$5,000, exclusive of trimmings, for the term of two years? It was thought for awhile that the governor was a good public speaker; but when Silas Adipose mounted the platform the first time we all knew that if speaking was his one accomplishment then we were not getting anywhere near our money's worth. Finally somebody said that while the governor couldn't talk he was a beautiful writer. It was said that he could handle English as gracefully as a butcher handles Hamburger steak. Then we waited for a specimen of our

\$5,000 grammar, and we got it last week, when Governor Holcomb made a public statement exonerating Dr. Mackay of the Norfolk Insane asylum. One portion of the governor's statement reads as follows:

I am of the opinion that neither are at all supported by the evidence, nor is there any sufficient foundation in fact to lead an unprejudiced mind in a different conclusion.

Here is another specimen:

It is also quite apparent to me that influences have been put in motion in order to lend color to the charges whose promoters would not hesitate to destroy the usefulness of this or any other public institution in the state if it were thought that partisan advantage could be gained thereby.

A year's subscription to THE COURIER will be given to any one who will send to this office a key to the meaning of the above.

It certainly isn't English or grammar that we are paying \$2,500 a year for. Mature thought must, I believe, bring the conclusion that the equivalent for our \$5,000 is size, and it must be admitted that Silas Adipose is all that anyone could desire in this respect. Three hundred pounds ought to be worth \$2,500 a year.

It seems that smiling "Jack" McColl, candidate for the republican nomination for governor, who is making his canvass upon a platform of whiskers and affability, has behind him a powerful political syndicate, the members of which express the utmost confidence in their ability to manipulate the state convention in any manner they see fit. These gentlemen, consulting their mutual interests, have agreed upon a slate, and the combination is being pushed with all the enthusiasm which its promoters can command.

Mr. Bartley, the retiring state treasurer, may properly be regarded as the controlling power of the syndicate. Without going into details it is sufficient to say that Mr. Bartley is chiefly concerned in the question as to who will be his own successor. He is particularly desirous that the man who succeeds him shall be a friendly Indian. He does not want as a successor a man who might be disagreeably inquisitive. Accordingly Mr. Bartley has studied the situation, and after mature deliberation, selected as the man to step into his shoes, C. C. McNish, of Wisner. Mr. McNish may be and doubtless is a good man. But beyond the fact that he is "one of the boys" there does not seem to be anything to especially commend him. However, he is slated, and so he must be swallowed.

Mr. Bartley having taken Mr. McNish to his bosom, with the cordial acquiescence of McNish, and disposed of the office of state treasurer to his own satisfaction—and McNish's—now turns to the other offices to be filled this fall. A mutual interest, something apart from politics, having drawn him into close as