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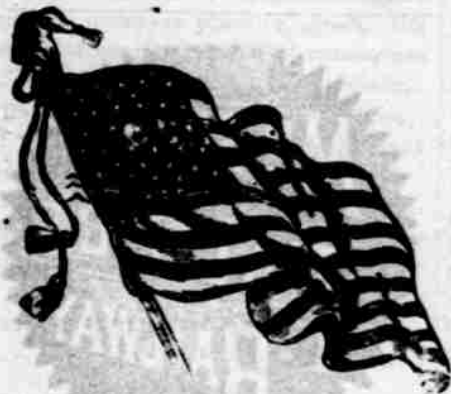
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OBSERVATIONS

When, two weeks ago, we said in these columns that before one month had passed the conspicuous resident of Lincoln whose present specialty is being nominated for president, would become an object of amused consideration, some persons were disposed to criticize our remarks for not according to Mr. Bryan the serious respect which, they claimed, was due him. They objected to the inference that there was anything absurd or amusing in his candidacy.

We leave it to our readers if our prediction has not come true—and we have two weeks to spare. Let us, in the immortal words called into utterance by the gentleman from Georgia who is running for vice president on one of Mr. Bryan's several and separate tickets, see where "we are at" or rather "where Mr. Bryan is at." In the first place Mr. Bryan crowded the sober, serious, conservative element of democracy out of the national convention, and by a speech as pleasing in rhythm and ridiculous in logic as ever tickled the ears of emotional men, turned the convention into a lurid melodrama and in the general excitement succeeded in having himself nominated for president of the United States. Mr. Bryan and his colleagues are fond of telling us what "all history teaches."

We venture to say that all history teaches that men have never ascended unto the highest and most exalted places by means of transitory tremors such as Mr. Bryan induced in Chicago. When this remarkable gathering and its results are considered in a dispassionate manner we are forced to the conclusion that the American people are become a nation of sentimentalists, swayed by bathos and ruled by impulse, or that the incident in Chicago is one of those peculiar and ridiculous phenomena such as the Coxey raid which now and then cause a temporary disturbance even when civilization is at its highest point. And we are not ready to admit that the lawless, mocking element that crowded out the Whitneys, Hills and Russells in Chicago, and established a political pandemonium, in any way represents the dominant spirit of this progressive and intelligent people. Looking back to the noisy mass meeting in Chicago we can see the absurdity of a man being raised up and made a candidate for the high office of chief executive of this great nation as the result of the glib emission of fantastic folderol about crowns of thorns and crosses of gold. Was not Mr. Bryan an object of amused consideration as soon as he was made the hasty choice of spell bound faddists?

But that was only the beginning. Mr. Bryan immediately began a spectacular tour that accentuated the unreasonableness of his candidacy. And within twenty-four hours after the Chicago melodrama, Mr. Bryan opened negotiations with another political party, and caused still another to be organized for his especial benefit. His personal representative proceeded to St. Louis and degraded the high office of president by a bargain and sale of nominations, and traffic in promises, unprecedented in the history of American politics, a species of wholesale jobbery that would be alarming in its boldness were it not so absurd in its climax. The whole transaction in St. Louis, including Senator Jones' deliverance of the remnant of democracy over to the greed of populism, and Mr. Bryan's transparent bluff, as well as the jumbling of platforms and vice presidential candidates, with a Coxey and a Vandervoort in the foreground, was a Saturnalia, a fantasy, an absurdity, and it will be remembered as the crowning triumph of populist lunacy. Governments are not made and maintained by such spasmodic outbursts as took place in Chicago and St. Louis, and the men who propose to profit by such manifestations forfeit their claims to the serious and honest respect of thinking people. Mr. Bryan's circus started out with too many side shows and the side shows have swallowed the circus, and the whole thing is grotesque. Boy's play has brought its predicament and Mr. Bryan's wiggling has been most amusing.

Ben Butler was up to his time, the most amusing candidate for president this country has produced. Mr. Bryan has already outclassed Butler.

If the supporters of Mr. Bryan object to his being considered lightly, they

also object to his being considered seriously. The word anarchy has been mentioned in connection with the Chicago mass meeting. And Mr. Bryan and his friends are outraged. They say they are done a great injustice. Let us look into this.

One of the planks in the platform adopted in Chicago reads as follows: "We denounce the arbitrary interference by federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the constitution of the United States and a crime against free institutions." When the word anarchy is used in connection with the Chicago platform, on which Mr. Bryan stands with so much assurance it is this plank that is particularly in mind.

We have been advised that it is a dangerous thing to discuss the question of anarchy in Nebraska. We cannot see why it should be. The people of this state are not anarchists. They have nothing in common with anarchists. They are peace-loving, order-preserving people. They do not countenance lawlessness in any form. If there is any place in the union where the denunciation of anarchy finds a hearty response it is here in Nebraska, where the blue sky of heaven and the bright light of the sun and the cool breezes of the prairies ennoble and uplift and make men devout and God fearing and man loving. There is no reason why we should hesitate to study this question here.

This plank would not occasion comment or be objected to if it were not for the history back of it. It is the outcome of the Chicago riots of 1894. That strike started in a little settlement. At first there was a principle involved, and people differed as to the justice of the position of the strikers. But the strike grew to immense proportions, and the principle was lost sight of in the tremendous destructiveness of the strikers. A leader rose. He incited all railway men in Chicago to quit work. Volunteers offered to take the place of the strikers and they were attacked. Trains were ruthlessly destroyed, lives were taken and men and women were wounded. The business of a large section of the country was paralyzed. The condition in and about Chicago was that of the wildest dismay and danger—lawlessness, open anarchy. Governor Altgeld of Illinois was appealed to preserve order, and protect human life, but the man who pardoned the Haymarket wholesale assassins turned a deaf ear to the appeals. "He refused to do anything to maintain order, and the United States authorities were compelled to send troops to stop the rioting, which threatened to spread widely and start a carnival of mobs all over the country. It was the president's duty to see that the mails were not obstructed. The rioters thought that the government should be content to send out a mail car now and then alone instead of as part of a regular train as usual, so that they could be free to attack the ordinary cars without interfering with the mails, and they were extremely bitter because the president would not become thus a silent partner

in rioting. But aside from the question of mails, the president had a duty. The Chicago mob was as much in rebellion in 1894 as the people of Charleston were in 1861, and Mr. Cleveland was as much under obligations to suppress lawlessness in spite of the governor of Illinois as Mr. Lincoln was in spite of the governor of South Carolina. He did suppress it, and the house of representatives approved his action by a vote of 125 to 27."

Is it, then, an extravagance of speech to say that the Altgeldized platform upon which Mr. Bryan stands is anarchistic in its tendency?

The enthusiastic glee with which Mr. Bryan has exploited his nomination is a good deal like the noisy vociferation of the small boy with a new top. The manner in which the youngest man who was ever nominated for president has conducted himself since his return home has impressed upon his neighbors certain characteristics which were not so conspicuous before the melodramatic feat in Chicago. For six or seven years the people who have known Mr. Bryan have recognized in him a consummate actor. His star engagement of one day unsettled him, and now for a couple of weeks he has been exposed to view in his true light. In all the hubbub and hurry since the singular gathering in Chicago Mr. Bryan has not thought of rehearsing. He has been too excited to think of hiding himself under the cloak of art. He has appeared as he is.

Mr. Bryan in his new role, realism itself, is interesting and to a certain extent attractive. Youthful enthusiasm and vigor when exhibited in any wholesome form are always attractive. It is a pleasure to witness the small boy toot for the first time his new horn or hold at arm's length in admiring contemplation his new top, gaudy with color. One of the first things the boy does when he gets a new horn or a new top is to call in his friends or go out and find them and tell them all about how he got the bauble and what a fine thing it is and what he is going to do with it, and this is pleasant to witness also, for there is youthfulness and ingenuousness in the spectacle. But Mr. Bryan in showing his youth has shown his immaturity. His immaturity as exhibited in the last two weeks is deep and expansive. If he is the youngest man ever nominated for president he is also the most impulsive, restless, uncertain, undignified man ever named for the high office of president by a great political party. All of the boyish traits and fidgety instincts of youth unformed are retained in this candidate, who in law, reached man's estate fifteen years ago. There is one element which great men possess in common—that of repose. Mr. Bryan is singularly lacking in this quality. He does not impress people with the idea that there is reserve force back of his nervous energy. He seems to be a man of little self-restraint. He decides, but does not deliberate. The fleeting thought of the moment is his rule of action. His brain is active and the product is released at once for gratuitous distribution. Mr. Bryan has been praised with-