

A CAMPAIGN FOR A PRINCIPLE.

THE weakness of the Democratic party at the close of the Civil War compelled it to rely for a return to popular favor more upon the misdeeds and demerits of its opponents than upon positive merits of its own. Anxious to draw recruits to its wasted ranks, it naturally had recourse, both in its platforms and in its campaigns, to vigorous arraignments of the party in power rather than to clear and explicit statements of its own purposes and principles. Yet it would be unfair to charge it with any concealment of its temper and attitude as to the chief controversies of the day. It was, as it ever had been, a national party, and exerted itself at all times to assuage the spirit of sectionalism. It was, as ever, a States' rights party, and did all that it could to revive the drooping cause of local self-government and to resist the centripetal forces let loose by the war. It was, as ever, regardful of the burdens of the people, and fought against extravagance in public expenditure. These were great and timely services, and they were wisely and well rendered by the party under the lead of Hendricks, Thurman, and Bayard. But any party condemned to remain long in opposition, if it does not actually dissolve, loses something of the boldness and initiative that belong to and are developed by responsibility and action. It is too apt to content itself with censure and criticism, to become lax, if not ambiguous, in its own expressions of faith, welcoming to its ranks all who are willing to co-operate in war upon the party in power, without requiring from them the acceptance of any definite principles.

The Whig party, in its day, developed immense enthusiasm among its followers, and had a great and superb array of leaders; but the battles it won were fought upon ambiguous platforms, with ambiguous leaders on whose military prestige it depended for popular strength. Once only in its history did it venture into a presidential campaign with a genuine Whig candidate upon a genuine Whig platform, and then it lost. But what was both prudence and necessity in the first contests after the war ceased to be such when voters began to manifest a weariness of the Republican party and a willingness to

abandon its ranks if they could know with certainty where such abandonment would take them. As the first principles of the Democratic party fix its position on all fundamental questions, it was more habitual strategy, born of long exclusion from power, than any necessary uncertainty that held it back from taking the unmistakable position on the tariff question which was no less sound policy for itself than frank dealing with the people.

But the rank and file were ready for the word of command; and when that word came from President Cleveland in December, 1887, they marched forth with great enthusiasm for a great cause, and with something of the affirmative and aggressive purpose that had so often led the party to triumph in past generations. The first battle was lost, and lost as much through the lingering vitality of the sectional issue as through the perfect combination of the protected industries. But deeply as they felt the defeat of an administration whose vigor, honesty, and fidelity to Democratic principles well deserved approval from the people, the Democratic hosts lost neither faith nor earnestness in their cause, and went out of power with the buoyant confidence that in its name they would speedily win again permanent control of the Federal government. Everywhere they kept the tariff issue to the front, defined their position more boldly and clearly upon it, made it a theme of constant debate on the hustings, in the press, at the school-house, the post-office, and the village store, until economic discussions got "into the air," and the screamings of the bloody-shirt orator fell upon unheeding and unsympathetic ears.

The first fruits of this policy were gathered in the State elections of 1889. Iowa swung over into the Democratic column; Ohio chose a Democratic governor; Massachusetts was lost by a mere scratch; and New York, which had so grievously disappointed the Democratic hopes in 1888, came back with majorities ranging from ten to twenty thousand on her State officers. These and other victories clearly showed that, in addition to local causes operating in the different States and communities, there was one general and steady force working everywhere for Democratic success.

The Fifty-first Congress, by its partisanship, its extravagance, its tariff and Force Bills, greatly quickened the revolution, and turned what had been a slow and orderly retreat of the Republican column into a disastrous rout, where, in the words of its leader, only those who started early were able to save their baggage. In the State campaigns of 1891 party lines were again restored, but Democratic

victories in Iowa, New York, and Massachusetts indicated the unchecked progress of tariff reform. In all this series of notable victories, following immediately upon its defeat in 1888, the Democratic party had won on the simple condition of being true to itself. Every intelligent man who knew the traditional principles of the party knew that, when it came to itself, it must take up the fight for tariff reform as its great cause, and carry that fight to final and permanent victory. As soon as it ceased to be an opportunist, manœuvring for success, and began to speak in sincere and courageous tones, because it was its duty so to speak, it felt not only a kindling of zeal in its own ranks, but had accessions of strength for which it had scarcely hoped. The powerful independent press of the country came to its side, and ardent and enthusiastic friends sprang up in every quarter.

In all this there was nothing strange. In the first triumphs of the Republican party, Martin Van Buren prophesied that as soon as "the perturbations of party names and systems produced by the disturbing subject of slavery" had spent their force, the old lines would be reformed, and "the individuals who now constitute the so-called Republican party" would "revert to their original positions." If the historian who records the prompt and honest acceptance by the South of the results of the war is perplexed to understand how the passions and hatreds of that war could so long serve as political capital for a party, he will see the explanation in the fact that the opponents of the Republican party had not found or had not forced any great national issue sufficient to expel these feelings from the breasts of the people. The habits of a quarter of a century prevented the older men who, Democrats in principle, had joined the Republican party on the slavery question, "from reverting to their original positions," but the sons of the fathers saw no glory or patriotism in fighting for monopoly or the bloody shirt, and, with the great and growing body of Independents, on whom party ties had sat loosely or uncomfortably for years, were glad to enlist in a cause that commanded their approval and was worthy of their highest services.

If in the light of its triumphs for the past three years the Democratic party does not now see where the path of duty and the opportunity of success are alike found, it does not rightly interpret the popular favor that has been bestowed upon it, and does not comprehend the vitality and greatness of the cause in whose name it has been overcoming its enemies. "It so happened," said Mr. Burke, when he was defending the American colonies in the House of Commons, "that

the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times on the question of taxing." And so must they always be, for a just and equal system of taxation is the only foundation of free government. To secure and maintain such a system is the high and never-ending mission of the Democratic party. That party came into existence to uphold the idea, not very old in the world as yet, and nowhere in the world fully acted upon as yet, that all government is the servant of the people, that it should always be under their control, and never in the control or service of privileged classes or favored individuals.

Tariff reform is therefore not only a great issue, it is a cardinal Democratic issue. It means not only the rescue of the government from the service and control of privileged classes and favored individuals, but it involves and carries with it all the other great reforms which unselfish citizens are so anxious to secure, and at times so hopeless of securing, in our politics. It is truly said by Herbert Spencer that every principle has its momentum, and the principle of protection brings with it a brood of evils more incompatible with pure government than are all its unjust money exactions. In the very outset, it teaches that some men have a right to rely on government for success in private business rather than upon their own efforts and merits. Such a doctrine wrests government from the service of all and turns it over to the service of a class. Moreover, it bestows upon government, to use the words of an old Virginia statesman, "the worldly omnipotence that belongs to the power of dealing out wealth and poverty," and thus changes political campaigns from contests for sound principles into battles for private booty. A reform of the tariff must therefore precede any genuine and lasting ballot reform. We may adopt the Australian system, just as in days past we adopted the secret ballot, and for a while baffle the briber and the intimidator; but greed and ingenuity will soon learn the combination, if great plunder is still to be had by rifling the safe. And it is not only the voter who must be shielded from temptation and corrupting influences, but also the law-maker. A permanent lobby is a necessary part of a protective system. "Close the doors this morning," said Senator Beck, when the tariff bill of 1883 was under consideration in Congress, "and there will be found five hundred men in the corridors, in the lobbies, in the committee-rooms, in the reception-room, everywhere, besieging senators and representatives to stand by them and their interests. Promises, flattery, threats—everything is resorted to." Equally strong was

the outcry of Senator Plumb, of Kansas: "The moment it was announced that it [the tariff question] was to be discussed, there came to this city from all quarters of the country scores of men interested in the various industries to be affected by the tariff, who came to counsel, came to advise, came to cajole, and came to threaten, almost, in some cases, I have no doubt."

Tariff reform is likewise the condition of any great and permanent reform of the civil service. Bribery of voters and of party workers is not only by money paid them, but by offices and government positions pledged them. England was not able to get rid of the spoils system in her civil service until she had eliminated protection from her laws. "The decisive part of the contest between patronage and open competition," says Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, in his "History of Civil Service in Great Britain," "was between 1845 and 1855, though the victors did not take possession of the full field until 1870." The principle at the basis of the protective and the spoils systems is identical—the claim to use the power and patronage of government for private favoritism.

And lastly, we are now no longer left in doubt that tariff reform is the essential safeguard of that doctrine that lies so near the Democratic heart, the doctrine of local self-government—the vital breath of our continental, Federal republic. Every one who was not blind discerned the hand that was behind the Force Bill in the last Congress. The experience of Supervisor Davenport might be invoked to draft its crafty network of details, the literary reputation of Mr. Lodge to become sponsor for it in the House, and the affluent learning and high personal character of Mr. Hoar to give it headway in the Senate; but the strong and driving force behind the whole scheme was the great and vigilant combination of our tariff-supported industries. It was an attempt on their part, under a false mask, to get control of the power of government, in perpetuity, without the constantly recurring expense of bribing the voters and the constantly recurring hazard of submitting their bounties to popular elections. For fear its friends in the House would not clearly understand this fact, the New York "Tribune" had the frankness to blurt it out, while the bill was pending there, by saying, "The election bill carries within itself the assurance of future tariff bills by the hundred."

It is thus, because tariff reform, aside from its economic advantages, is the beginning and necessary foundation of other great reforms that tend to elevate American citizenship and to give stability and purity to American institutions, that it has so speedily brought allies to the

Democratic camp. These allies are animated by unselfish patriotism. They ask nothing for themselves. Many of them, doubtless enough of them to hold the balance of power in doubtful States, are not yet willing to admit that they "belong" to the Democratic party so that they will follow its flag wherever it may choose to go, but even the "Mugwump," against whom partisans on both sides delight to rail, will almost always be found ready to vote the Democratic ticket, provided the Democratic ticket stands sincerely for Democratic principles.

Should the party now falter in this fight, should it suffer a cause that has given the party so much moral as well as voting strength, that is so great and democratic in itself, and so big with other great reforms, to fall into the background while rival candidates struggle for the presidential nomination, or permit it to be weighted down by other issues, then the party will manifest such a trifling with duty and such a throwing away of great opportunities as to provoke a moral reaction against itself, involving not only disaster, but disaster with merited disgrace. The mere suspicion that all this might happen has already thrown some confusion into its ranks and awakened the most anxious feeling in the country. Yet success still waits upon the discharge of duty, and duty requires two things at its hands in the presidential campaign of 1892: first, the adoption of a clear and unambiguous tariff-reform platform, and a campaign made upon that platform alone, with the exclusion of issues on which the party itself is split and the country undoubtedly against it; secondly, the nomination of candidates whose names and characters shall give the people the unmistakable guaranty that they represent in person all that the platform sets forth in words. If it be said that this is pitching a national campaign upon a single issue, I have already shown that this single issue involves, not remotely, but directly and vitally, almost everything that we understand by good government, and to the enumeration already made must be added the ever-present issue of frugality and honesty in government expenditures.

But the question arises: Who doubts that the Democratic party is loyal to the cause of tariff reform and ready to fight for its success? Why is it necessary to say all this to-day? Because another issue has been made prominent that threatens to divide the party into warring fragments and cause it to squander in internal strife the strength it has been gathering for a great and final contest with protection.

It is idle to deny that, to a great many earnest Democrats and sincere tariff reformers, the silver question presents itself as an issue of

equal dignity and equal promise of benefit to the people; and we who live in or near what may just now be called the silver zone of the country know something of the earnestness with which the great farmer organization has been induced to take up the cry for free silver, as more important to them just now than a reduction of tariff taxes.

It is not within the purpose of this article to present or consider the arguments *pro* or *con* regarding the free-silver question. The financial question is the weak point in popular government, and unfortunately it presses its way to the front at the very times when the people are least able to deal with it intelligently. Macaulay has said that there is no quackery in medicine, religion, or politics which may not impose even on a powerful mind, when that mind is disordered by pain or fear; and, adapting his words to the condition of the Southern and Western farmers, we may say that they are to-day what their situation has made them, irritable from a sense of distress, and naturally prone to accept remedies that seem to promise speediest relief from the misfortunes with which they are suffering. To men struggling with the burdens of debt no explanation seems so plausible as the artificial scarcity of money, no remedy so simple and speedy as an "abundant and elastic circulating medium" provided by or through the agency of government.

Beyond question the temporary prostration or distress of the great planting and farming interests has been greatly aggravated by the tariff, for it has thrown upon them not only an unjust share of the burdens of government, but also the support of many dependent industries, while it has lessened their means by shutting them off from a profitable exchange of their surplus products. The farmer's great need to-day is less taxes and more markets, a healthy and natural expansion of commerce, which, as Mr. Hamilton said, vivifies and invigorates every channel of industry and makes it flow with greater activity and copiousness. But this sounds like an old song, and the remedy requires time to work it out, while the farmer, like our Republican leaders in the last House, is after immediate "results."

But upon what plea will the most sincere advocate of free coinage within the Democratic ranks justify to himself the forcing upon his party, in the present state of public opinion, and in the coming campaign, an issue that threatens to defeat the party and carry down in one common wreck party, tariff reform, and possibly bi-metallism also? This question is one that addresses itself to-day with unprecedented directness to the Democrats of the South, for to them it is

something more than a matter of party success or party defeat. The South has now realized what has been her most ardent longing since the war, the obliteration of the sectional issue. For the first time since Appomattox, she sees an issue big enough, national enough, and near enough to the people to cast down the bloody shirt, to the discussion of which her own sons are invited in the most genuine spirit of fraternity on all platforms in the North, and by whose virtue as an antidote to sectionalism one of her ex-soldiers has been raised to the Speaker's chair of the House of Representatives. For the first time since the war, Democrats of the South see their party completely rehabilitated as a national party, bringing to the House of Representatives a majority of members from the North as well as from the South; bringing to the Senate members from Wisconsin, Illinois, and New York; and occupying the Governor's chair in Michigan, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Iowa—States, until the last year or two, the very strongholds of Republicanism.

Is the Southern Democracy so satisfied in its own mind that the free coinage of silver is the one great and specific remedy for the distresses real or imagined of the people, that in pursuit of that remedy it is willing to put in peril all these things, to risk all it has slowly and painfully gained in the political contests of twenty-seven years; and this in the face of the warning, expostulation, and pleading for life of so many of their wisest, discreetest, and most sincere Northern brethren, men who for the sake of the South fought many years in political minorities, without hope or prospect of personal advancement? Let the answer to these questions be looked for and made, not in the House or the Senate, chosen months and years ago, but in the coming national convention, made up of representatives fresh from the people, and commissioned by them to see that no detriment is done to the great party whose success in the coming campaign involves the cause of wise and frugal government, a just system of taxation, and in all things, to quote the words of its founder, "the cherishment of the people."

If it be true, as I have assumed, that, notwithstanding the remarkable Democratic victories of the past three years, the fate of this presidential campaign is still in the hands of the independent voter, it may not be amiss to close this article with some review of the present administration, especially as to those matters which chiefly interest such a voter. The country had a right to expect great things from this administration in the way of civil-service reform. It made great pledges,

and it was less subject to temptation than any party had been in the past half-century. When President Cleveland took the office, he found a civil service almost unanimously Republican and almost entirely built up on the spoils system. When President Harrison succeeded, he found his own party still holding the great majority of places in the classified service and a considerable per cent of the places in the unclassified service. Moreover, a Republican Senate had reserved for him almost all the offices that fell vacant after the election in 1888, by refusing to act on Mr. Cleveland's nominations, although it had confirmed almost all the nominations made by President Arthur after the election in 1884. The Republican platform was strong in its civil-service plank; and in his letter of acceptance, President Harrison had added to his hearty indorsement of the platform his own virtual pledge that "in appointments to every grade and department, fitness and not party service should be the essential and discriminating test, and fidelity and efficiency the only sure tenure of office. Only the interest of the public service should suggest removals from office." As a senator criticising Mr. Cleveland, he had "lifted up a hearty prayer that we may never have a President who will not pursue a civil-service policy pure and simple, upon a just basis, allowing men accused to be heard, and deciding against them only on competent proof and fairly," adding, "or for God's sake let us have that other frank and bold, if brutal, method of turning men and women out simply for political opinions."

In the face of this noble prayer and these noble pledges the President turned over the post-office department to the spoilsmen. The railway mail service was looted in the first months of the administration, two-thirds of the presidential post-offices were filled during the first year, and Clarkson's axe ceased to fall among the fourth-class post-masters only when there were no more heads worth decapitating. Nor did any fidelity and efficiency or regard for the interests of the public service save Pearson in New York, Hendrix in Brooklyn, Corse in Boston, Collector Saltonstall and other less conspicuous but equally faithful public servants. The great census bureau also, contrary to recent practice, was given over to patronage, with results that discredited some of its most important work. Over against these abuses, aggravated as they were by the transfer of patronage to local bosses in New York and other States, we may give the administration some credit for the reforms introduced by Secretary Tracy in the navy-yards.

The administration must also accept the responsibility for the McKinley act, for it not only indorsed and approved the bill as considered and passed, but has been at great pains to try to vindicate its operation since it went into effect. That act has carried the doctrine of protection to an extreme never before seriously advocated in this country. It found the treasury embarrassed by a surplus revenue and reduced that revenue by abolishing taxes that went to the government, and by readjusting the terms of partnership in the use of the taxing power between the government and private interests so as to divert a still larger share of their joint income from the former to the latter. It placed the heaviest taxes upon the necessities of life and the necessities of labor that any self-governing people ever submitted to, and in its avowed effort to check commerce it aimed a foul blow at the prosperity of the farmer, by demonetizing or debasing through prohibition and heavy fines the only currency—foreign imports—for which he could exchange his surplus products.

It has been proclaimed by its defenders as the most harmonious system of protection ever enacted into law, whereas those who watched the methods of its preparation saw that it was but a vast and voluminous system of class taxation in which private interests were invited and allowed to write their own demands upon a tax-paying people. Its immediate and natural effects have been mitigated by enormous harvests and foiled by these elements of exuberant prosperity with which our country beyond all others is blessed, but it is and will continue as long as it remains on our statute-book an unjust distribution of the burdens of government and of the avails of industry. The scheme of so-called reciprocity incorporated into it is based upon the idea that if other governments insist on making or for fiscal reasons are compelled to make food dear and scarce to their people, we will retaliate on our people by making shoes and sugar and tea and coffee scarcer and dearer to them.

And lastly the Force Bill was as much an administrative measure as a persistent and almost passionate advocacy of such a measure by the President could make it. That bill was not an ordinary remedial statute. It was at cross purposes with the very structure of the State. "He who appoints the judges," said John Adams, "may have what law he pleases"; and if this be true generally, with what undoubted force would it apply to the power of appointing judges of elections! Mr. Jefferson said that the old Federalists when beaten at all other points attempted to retire into the judiciary. The Lodge bill, wit-

tingly or unwittingly, imitated their tactics. It proposed to give a Federal judiciary, composed, with a single exception, of Republican judges, full control through its appointees of elections for representatives in Congress and presidential electors in the States. In order to prevent sporadic cases of fraud in the interest of one or the other party as the case might be, it would have invited or permitted universal and permanent fraud in the interests of one party.

But aside from its partisan purposes and effects, it was an assault on the foundations of free government. The idea from which it sprang and the principle on which it was founded were alike false and vicious. It was, even in its best intentions, very near to that fanaticism that believes it can change the constitution of human society, "undo the work of evolution," and in its own way "remodel human life." It proceeded on the idea that never did, and, happily for us, never can, have any substantial basis: that when two races live commingled in the common citizenship of a State or congressional district, to one of whom the ideas and habits of self-government and the skilful use of political representation has, by the training of two thousand years, become a second nature, while the other has just emerged from slavery, and a little farther back from unspeakable barbarism and ignorance, political supremacy is a mere question of numbers, and election returns may be worked out by the census. Because elections in Southern States and Southern districts failed to follow the color line, as that line is described in the United States census of population, the framers of the Lodge bill drew the conclusive presumption of fraud, and undertook to reconstruct human society, to punish and disfranchise intelligence and leadership and capacity for self-government. And the shadow of the Force Bill has not yet vanished from the land.

The independent voter must still find his congenial home, his appropriate field of duty and of political work, with the Democratic party.

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THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLT IN NEW YORK.

THE Democratic party to-day occupies a position of singular and exceptional advantage. Its growth, relative and absolute, has of late years been continuous and remarkable. The decadence of its old enemy has been as conspicuous as its own progress. The old lion of Republicanism, whose roar once filled the land, if not the world, now mildly walks about in quest of food, solicitous for existence, anxious for patronage, without which its life has lost its charms, and roaring, when its voice is heard at all, gently as any sucking dove. Born of sectional difference, nurtured by war and sustained by discord, it never sought to maintain its ascendancy by cultivating the gentler arts of harmony. Logically enough, it developed according to the laws of its origin, and was never able to adapt itself to the circumstances of a united and prosperous nation. The South was never in its eyes an integral part of our people. Remission for past misdeeds could not be accorded the late enemies of the Union without the sacrifice of consistency or the abandonment of prejudices too deeply rooted for the surgeon's knife. Its vital principle and power were buried at Appomattox, and while its own momentum, the mistakes of its adversaries, and patronage unscrupulously dispensed still kept it active, its doom was inevitable. Having outlived its usefulness and its dignity, the party of Lincoln, of Seward, of Grant, of Chase passed to the hands of men unworthy to loose the latchet of those great men's shoes. Think, if you can, of Lincoln heading an army of southern carpet-baggers, of Seward in desperation looking to Force Bills for party salvation, and of Grant bullying little Chili in order that the great Republican party might live four years more! Even to a Democrat the spectacle is not one of unmixed satisfaction. His patriotism can derive no comfort from the degradation of his foes, nor can his pride receive satisfaction from a triumph over a diminished enemy.

The Democratic party during the same time developed and grew in the direction of its origin. Beaten, baffled, derided by many years of unsuccessful contest, unrefreshed by official patronage, it is brave