

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

and defiant as ever. It made many mistakes, its leaders often failed in their duty, it sometimes yielded to temptation for temporary advantage, but throughout it retained its distinctive character as the party of the people; not of this section or that, not of the rich or the strong, not of division or discord, but of the whole people, North and South, East and West. It did not feed old resentments nor aggravate slumbering remnants of former animosities. Appeals to sectional prejudices were a crime in its code as they were of necessity a virtue in the Republican catechism. To wave the bloody trophies of a hideous past before the people as a flag, at every recurring election, could never be consistent with Democratic policy. Its creed was catholic enough to cover the land with a broad mantle of charity. The wrongs, the errors, the sins of the past were buried from its sight, and it was ready to fall upon the neck of the prodigal son, to receive him back into his father's house and let him vie with the other members of the great family of citizens in a common effort to magnify and enrich the country. It therefore remained by excellence the party of the people and the party of patriotism. Discussion may scarcely be had on profitable terms where argument is required to show that union is better than discord, love better than hate, and forgetfulness of a cruel past better than a periodical and fierce rehearsal of ancient injuries.

But this was not the only source of strength to the Democratic party. Time and education became its potent allies. The day finally dawned when epithets no longer stood for facts and calumny no longer usurped the place of truth. The old cry of traitors, sympathizers, copperheads, and the like wore itself out. The men who bawled it until they were hoarse became ridiculous. The spell of vituperation had vanished. The rising generation took counsel from safer sources than inflamed and unjust recitals of past events. The young men read and studied and counted the graves of the Democratic heroes who died in the great battles for human freedom, and then they lost—if they ever had it—all taste for periodical and frenzied exhibitions of malice and misrepresentation. If the party of great moral ideas could only live with the aid of the Father of Lies, it had best die. He had served it faithfully and well, but even his power had an end.

Then the Democratic party came to the front, with unabated vigor. A decade had scarcely passed after the war, the ashes of the civil commotion were not yet cold, many of its heroes were still living, when a Democratic candidate was elected by the majority of the electors and

of the people to the chief magistracy of the nation. Then the sick lion found some of his old-time strength and power, enough to commit a great crime—the greatest perhaps in our history. It is not a pleasant subject for an American who loves his country to contemplate. Let us pass briefly over it. The crime was consummated, the usurpation was completed, and the victorious party, yielding in patriotic submission, accepted the wrong because it was skilfully draped in the outer garments of the law.

Thus the adversary retained its power. Skilful, wary, unscrupulous, with unlimited resources at its command, with an overflowing treasury, with old traditions of success behind and the fear of extinction before it, familiar with every ruse that long experience and wily agents could furnish, the Republican party strove to perpetuate its hold. But where was it to look for a support among those voters who cared much for right and little for office? Its moral ideas were reduced to the narrowest compass. It must still sound the old blast of sectional jealousy; it must still, by arousing the fear and anger of the South, unify the party that claimed the credit of reducing that rebellious South to submission. But the discordant note had lost its potency, and in 1884 the Democratic party elected its candidate. For the first time in a quarter of a century the party that made the nation entered the White House, and a successor of Jefferson took into his strong hands the reins of Federal administration.

The opportunity had come at last. A brave and honest Democratic President would show how vain were the fears of those who predicted ruin to the country, from the mere fact of his advent to power. The Confederate debt was not paid, the Confederate brigadiers did not mount their old chargers and resume attempted subjugation of the North. The finances were honestly and economically administered, the national honor was carefully guarded, brilliant statesmanship was not attempted, the safe traditions of a Democratic past were followed, and during the four years of that administration every citizen felt that the safety of the country was secured. No one could doubt the renewal of the trust conferred by the country. Indeed, the acquiescence was general, and hope itself seemed almost extinct in the breast of the Republican chiefs.

But the Democratic President took a serious and unprofessional view of the situation. He had imbibed the idea that he was a trustee for the whole people, and that the performance of that trust being the most sacred of duties, he must perform it at every peril. Of course

there was much to arouse hilarity in that view of the subject, and we may well imagine that some of those who were watching their opportunity were at once encouraged and amused at the contemplation of these intellectual vagaries. That the main and most sacred function of the tenant of the White House could be any other than to secure a renewal of his lease seemed eccentric enough to deserve even a stronger name. It was evident that such a moral hallucination, if carried into practical operation, must create new and otherwise impossible chances for the ambitious outsider. Any change must brighten his prospects and revive his drooping spirits. Would the Democratic President at the crucial moment mount his hobby of public duty and disregard the dictates of sound and safe policy? That form of madness meant a chance for the Republican party, because the gods first make mad those whom they would destroy. Would the weary gods once more smile upon its shattered fortunes and permit it to re-form the disjected members of the once great party into a solid and victorious phalanx?

Whether the old gods heard the prayer of the Republicans or not, the event justified the most sanguine expectations. The Democratic President did precisely the thing that his enemies hoped and prayed for. He gave them an issue, and they almost forgot the bloody banner of the old days in their exultation, as they shouted that the Democratic party was the enemy of the American workman and the friend of English and other foreign labor. Huge sums of money were easily raised to pay the expenses of the swelling chorus, and, bright with the anticipation of a new lease, the Republican party rose from its lethargy to brave and successful effort. The letter of Napoleon written at Fontainebleau in 1814, advising the allied forces of Europe that he was ready to abdicate his throne and power, was not more effectual for its purpose than the tariff letter became as an act of abdication. It was published before the education of the people had been completed; and while truth was preparing its arms and making ready for the fray, the old fallacies were striking terror into the wage-worker lest his daily bread should be taken away. Thus, with its flag flying at the mast-head, the Democratic party went down. Its leader took all the risks and lost the game. Once more the party was in the darkness and shadow of defeat.

That all the followers of that leader took the self-procured defeat kindly, it would be idle to pretend. It is easier and pleasanter to see present advantages than those which lie in the remote future. To

surrender a stronghold of inestimable strength because of a conscientious scruple is not a method of warfare calculated to elicit unbounded applause from the victims of the operation. It may frankly be conceded that the average Democrat is human, and that the pride which he may take in the contemplation of heroism that brings honor and destruction together is not wholly unmixed with a dash of regret. We are not all giants in moral stature and cannot in every case emulate the lofty and judicial spirit of Washington. So there may have been repining in a few, perhaps in many, instances.

But the heart and conscience of the American people are sound. Nothing will arouse them to a sense of genuine animation and enthusiasm like acts of brave and honest self-sacrifice. We are too much accustomed to petty selfishness and narrow ambition to look upon such acts without feeling that they are as unusual as they are creditable. Though the letter on the tariff was an act of abdication, it turned out to be also the starting-point of new efforts, the enlargement of the Democratic horizon, and a new bond of union between the party and the people. It took the truth some little time to prepare for its travels, but it started at last, and the awakened and enlightened nation sent up one loud shout of approval for the policy so recently rejected. And now the people, the large majority in the North and South, believe in the tariff message, in the tariff-reform policy, in the brave and wise action of the Democratic President. The eyes of the workman are opened, and he asks himself if it is not time to protest against a theory and practice of protection which does indeed protect, but only those who least need to be protected. The American artisan is too intelligent to admire protection when it lavishes kind words on him and large estates on his employer, and he is not wholly relieved from his misgivings as to the expediency of a high tariff because his employer generously spends a part of his increased profits in building a hospital and a reading-room for the care and entertainment of his employees. And when three years of protection run mad have failed to increase his wages to any appreciable extent, he doubts the good faith of his Republican advisers or questions their intelligence.

This, then, is to-day the position of the Democratic party. It has waited patiently for the education of the people, and it enjoys its reward. Old prejudices and foolish fears of its ascendancy have been driven away, and it is proved now that there is at least one man in the party who will risk his office to save his conscience. Its path is now clear. It has earned its right to victory. Its record is

honest. The young men of the rising generation look upon it as the party of progress and of the future. Wherein, then, lies the danger? Is there any in its way to create a reasonable doubt of its success? None, save from itself. It is, in New York at least, too strong for its own safety. It is well to have the strength of a giant, provided that strength be temperately and wisely used. But abuse of strength brings resistance, and resistance rebellion. No party is strong enough to give just grounds of resentment to its followers. Tyranny is as hateful in a political party as it is in a municipal or State government. Taxation without representation is tyranny, whether that taxation takes the form of a money tribute on ships or a duty on tea, or an exaction of loyalty without a corresponding return of protection in every legal right. The party lash may be felt and obeyed on condition that the hands that wield it have been duly commissioned to that end, and that the discipline which it implies and symbolizes shall only be exercised for legitimate party purposes. The obligation to obey is not stronger than the duty to require nothing beyond the law. Our habits of freedom are too well fixed to make us accept any other conditions of voluntary and limited servitude; when these conditions are disregarded on the one side, the compact may well be deemed at an end on the other. Partisanship has its limitations. Men enter political organizations as they enter into society: they abandon certain rights for the benefits which the organized condition is supposed to afford. If the benefits are withdrawn, what becomes of the duty of submission?

The protest formulated on the eleventh day of February by a large number of Democrats at the Cooper Union and echoed with singular enthusiasm from all parts of the State cannot in any sense be termed a rebellion. It is a solemn and deliberate warning, uttered by earnest and thoughtful men to their brethren, urging them to retrace their steps because they are on the road to disaster. To deny them this right of remonstrance would be folly; to belittle it, most imprudent. Strong as the party in this State may be, let our leaders bear in mind that at no time in our history or in the world's history have men reflected on public affairs as they do to-day. At no time has knowledge been so general or intelligent discussion of state concerns so much a public habit as to-day. Illiteracy is a phenomenon, daily growing rarer, and the time is fast approaching when an absolutely illiterate American citizen will belong to an extinct species as hard to find as a specimen of the defunct *ichthyosaurus*. It is not safe to rely upon mere assertions of right or exhibitions of power. Where do you get your power?

Why do you assert and whence comes that right? These questions will be asked by every man who reads a newspaper. As Lowell puts it: "You are the powers that be. Are you the powers that ought to be? is a question that will be asked." Louis XIV. might say, "I am the state," but no one has said it safely or long since the French King joined his royal fathers. The moral forces of to-day rule men, parties, and states. They laugh at bayonets; their voice is louder than the voice of cannon; they sweep away kings and governments. Even the great Napoleon, with his victorious legions behind him, was driven by moral forces to his rock. "Will the Pope's excommunication cause the muskets to fall from the hands of my soldiers?" said he, with a warrior's contempt for anything but brute force. Within four years the muskets did literally fall from the frozen hands of his heroic followers, and less than two years later he abdicated on the very spot which had been the scene of the captive Pope's coerced surrender of his rights. The Pope, aged, friendless, imprisoned, tortured by threats and importunities, represented the moral force which triumphed, as it always does, in the end.

The Democrats who assembled at the recent meeting in the Cooper Union were brought together to protect the common right of Democratic citizens by insisting that forms should not be used to strangle substance. In the language of the notice, "a convention selected in midwinter, upon so short a call, cannot be fairly and truly representative of the Democratic sentiment of the State, and would inevitably debar the mass of the Democratic voters of the State of New York from the voice which they are justly entitled to in the selection of the Democratic candidates for President and Vice-President and the framing of the party's platform." To say that these Democrats—many of them long eminent in the party councils for devotion and faithful service—were disaffected or disloyal or "mugwumps" is wholly beside the question. They stated their grievance and based their reluctance to arbitrary dictation upon the statement above quoted. If the fact was as stated by them, who could deny the justice of their remonstrance? If it were otherwise and the hastening of the convention at so unusual a season was not intended to effect an ulterior and unavowed purpose, then it was incumbent on the movers to justify their action otherwise than by frivolous pretences or angry denunciation. Just remonstrances deserve something more than ebullitions of temper in reply. Strike, if you please, but answer, if you can, otherwise than by blows. The great mass of voters can-

not be frightened into silence nor threatened into submission. They are the people, and the people constitute the court of last resort. Shams cannot live long in the daylight of free discussion. Judgment will, at some time or other, be pronounced on the merits.

The protest at the Cooper Union was not only a warning but a lesson, one that should be thankfully accepted. It means that even loyal and faithful party men will, on occasion, define their duty and their allegiance. They reserve certain sovereign rights which are not surrendered when they enter the party. They recognize that chiefs are indispensable to organization, and that success cannot be had without organization. They recognize that for the good of the party and the attainment of its ends self-denial must be practised and a generous postponement of personal preferences shown. It is obvious to them that here and elsewhere the majority must rule and the minority (save in extreme cases) submit. It is plain, too, that ready and cheerful co-operation is necessary in legitimate efforts to secure the ascendancy of party principles, by promoting the success of those selected as the exponents of those principles.

But they will insist, and their leaders would, if wise, remember, that the will of the majority is only an empty and meaningless formula unless it is regularly and fairly ascertained; that any attempt to thwart the expression of such will by disingenuous or fraudulent device, or by reckless indifference, or through excessive deference to or affection for a preferred aspirant to office, may justly arouse the indignation and resentment of loyal party men. The question of personality sinks into indifference as compared with the principle involved. It is one of justice, that kind of justice which respects right and enforces duty. "This looks like a riot," said Louis XVI. when the mutterings of the great collapse first broke out into overt acts. "No, sire," was the answer, "not a riot, but a revolution." Wise rulers should beware lest riots ripen into rebellion, and rebellion into revolution, and revolution into destruction.

Some of those who discountenance the movement of which mention is made above will belittle it, others will denounce it as a "bolt." As to the former, they represent a numerous class upon whom argument has no more effect than Wagner's music on a deaf man. If they had lived in Pliny's time and had seen the angry volcano sending out its lava, they would have laughed and gone to bed, trusting with optimistic security that something or other would check the disagreeable manifestation. As to the others, it may be asked of

them, In what respect is the movement a "bolt"? This expression denotes a desertion from the ranks of the party, for the purpose of giving one's vote to a candidate other than the regular candidate of the party with which the so-called "bolter" has been affiliated. But in this case there is no such element. It is the right of every Democrat to be represented in the councils of the party personally, or by a representative in the choice of whom he has had a share or an opportunity to take part. Here it is alleged that sound customs have been violated, that great masses of our people have been practically disfranchised, that a most important convention has been called, in advance of the proper season, for the express purpose of excluding those who might oppose the wishes of influential persons having ends of their own to subserve. That this charge is really well founded has not been seriously denied. A feeble and (probably) half-humorous attempt has been made to justify this course, on the ground that the season of midwinter was more convenient for the farmer—a tender solicitude for whose interests has dictated a change which has aroused great and wide-spread indignation. *Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?* Do not fear to laugh, my friends. You will not enjoy the joke half so much as those who perpetrated it for the first time.

Perhaps it may be said that to call a second convention and to send delegates to Chicago to knock at the door of the first for admission is in itself rebellion. Why, pray? For what are committees on contested seats provided, but to pass upon the very questions that the protestants are anxious to raise? To say that the first convention is regular merely begs the question. If regularity implies only an outward observance of forms and formulas, accompanied by undisguised contempt for substantial rights, then the claim is founded. But it may be that those who say that forms were designed to protect rights, not to cover wrongs, may prevail, and that they may be admitted to the convention hall. What will happen then? If, on the contrary, the National Convention choose to consummate the work of exclusion and disfranchisement, why should the so-called "regulars" complain of an appeal to the court of competent jurisdiction, especially where judgment is rendered in their favor? Nor is it necessary, as many may suppose, that a separate ticket for electors shall be run. The men placed upon the ticket will no doubt be accepted as the candidates of the Democracy, with the assurance that they will, as indeed they must, deposit the vote of the State for the nominees of the convention.

That there is danger ahead and breakers in sight may be true, but whose is the fault? Who is responsible for a condition of things easily avoided, first by a due regard for sound usages, secondly by a considerate deference to the wishes and a decent respect for the rights of thousands whose devotion to Democracy has never been impeached? It is possible, and some may think it highly probable, that the action of the leaders in this movement has in fact averted a formidable danger. Uncontrolled power is dangerous even when exercised by wise men. The wine of authority may rise to their head and obscure their vision. Does any impartial man think that it was expedient from the standpoint of the party's interest to close discussion in February on all the subjects that are to agitate the public mind in June? Was it for the benefit of the party that sharp lines of duty were drawn a few days ago without reference to the changes in the near future? Was it prudent to commit this mandate to agents to-day, when it could not be exercised until three long months had passed? The questions answer themselves.

How much good or how much evil will come of all this, we may conjecture and surmise, but we may not with any assurance predict. This we may safely say: that when the great Democratic party shall be so ruled that thousands of its members, with no fault of their own, are disfranchised without a murmur and gagged without an attempt at remonstrance, then the letters shall be seen upon the wall, then the great principles of popular rights, of State sovereignty, of equal taxation, of restriction upon Federal authority and resistance to Federal encroachment, the principles which Jefferson chose to establish for the benefit of our Nation, these principles must be committed to other hands. *Dii avertite!*

FREDERIC R. COUDERT.

HOW THE NEW YORK SENATE WAS CAPTURED.

Soon after the New York election of 1891, David B. Hill, then Governor of the State, announced in a newspaper interview that nothing but cowardice would prevent the Democrats from having a majority in the newly elected State senate. The unofficial returns from the thirty-two senatorial districts showed the election of seventeen Republicans, one Independent Republican, and fourteen Democrats. Time proved that Governor Hill's announcement was no idle boast.

Claims were put forth that in four districts in which Republican candidates were said to have been elected, irregularities of one kind or another had been committed which would give seats in the senate to the Democratic candidates. In the twenty-seventh district it was claimed that the Republican candidate, Sherwood, who had received nearly 1,700 plurality, was ineligible because of his holding a city office. In the twenty-fifth district it was claimed that because of errors in the distribution of the ballots among the election districts, votes cast for the Republican candidate, who had received a plurality of about 1,400, should be thrown out, sufficient in number, to give the election to his Democratic opponent. In the sixteenth district it was claimed that there had been irregularities which would justify the conversion of a Republican plurality of 600 into a Democratic plurality. In the fifteenth district it was claimed that owing to the presence of certain marks upon some of the Republican ballots, and other irregularities, a sufficient number should be rejected to convert the Republican plurality of 68 into a Democratic plurality of 14.

In each of these four senatorial districts there was one county in which a majority of the board of supervisors, who under the law are also the board of county canvassers, were Democrats. In each of these counties this Democratic board took steps to have the Democratic claim against the Republican senatorial candidate brought before the State canvassing board. In the twenty-seventh district, which is composed of the counties of Chemung, Steuben, and Alleghany, the Democratic board of Steuben passed resolutions declaring Sherwood to have been ineligible, and attached them, with affidavits and other papers, to the