

# The Public

Sixth Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1904.

Number 303.

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Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post Office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last page.

Congressman Hearst's Presidential boom, which has now burst through the confines of the Hearst papers and surprised the readers of other journals with its unexpected suddenness and unthinkable magnitude, bids fair to rank as the most cynical episode in the progress of American politics toward the bread-and-circus climax of McKinleyism.

It is commonly believed of Mr. Hearst that he is trying to buy a Presidential nomination, and then to buy the election. Circumstances seem to justify this impeachment. But what of it, and why not? Should that be his purpose, and should he succeed, the only novelty about it all would be the fact that he had done the buying himself and with his own money.

It is this novelty, however, that gives to the matter its cynical aspect. When Mr. McKinley's nomination and election were bought in 1896, the political proprieties were observed—superficially. Mr. McKinley bought no nomination. He bought no election. He furnished no funds. Mr. Hanna acted as purchasing agent, and the funds were furnished by the expectant syndicates of Wall street. So Mr. McKinley became President nominally in the old-fashioned way. He did not buy the office. It was bought for him.

Yet the fact that the Presidency was bought, proved that it could be bought; and with cynical shrewdness Mr. Hearst has set about gratifying his ambition by taking advantage of that discov-

ery. If the Presidency could be bought for McKinley, why may it not be bought by Hearst? There you have the psychology of the Hearst boom. "Is the office for sale, politicians and voters all? Is it money you want? Don't go to Wall street. I'll give money—my own money. And why tangle yourselves up with middlemen? I'll give it myself." That is the spirit of the Hearst movement.

While this is cynical to the verge of grim humor, it is due to Mr. Hearst to observe that there is "no string tied" to the money he is lavishing, save the one condition that it shall bring him the particular commodity he is openly offering to buy. Unlike the money that bought McKinley's election, no secret obligation to greedy syndicates goes with Hearst's money. On the contrary he is committed in most respects to an anti-plutocratic policy. In an interview, for instance, which is reported in the Chicago Tribune of the 19th, Mr. Hearst fairly shines as an aggressive Democrat. So he does in some of the editorials that appear in his papers. But there is a disturbing fear that in both interview and editorial his refulgence is a reflected light. Mr. Hearst publishes great editorials, but does not always write them. He sends impressive letters to public meetings, but modestly refrains from verifying their authorship by equally impressive appearances as a speaker. His experience in expression has not been extensive. Yet it must be said for him that in his Tribune interview—ostensibly an oral extemporaneous talk of two hours in duration—he appears to have exhibited a firm grasp of great and subtle questions and ready powers of expression, which orators with years of experience in extemporaneous debate on ques-

tions of state might envy. Had Mr. Hearst delivered this interview as a speaker on the floor of Congress, under fire and visibly before the country, where he could not shine by reflected light, it would have placed him beyond dispute among statesmen of the Presidential class.

But in the plutocratic atmosphere of the day Mr. Hearst cares less, probably, to be a statesman of the Presidential class than to be in the class of Presidential candidates who can command "the price" without being dependent upon anyone for a dollar. And certain it is that he has already played havoc with the Gormans and Parkers and all their kind, who are looking to Wall street syndicates to buy the office for them. In spite of the gravity of the matter, the consternation of these plutocratic Democrats is something to laugh at. But the situation is really very grave. That such a movement as Hearst's should have become formidable in American politics is a scathing commentary upon the degradation into which McKinleyism has plunged the country. Here you have the ripened fruit of the McKinleyistic gospel of "get there."

How great the relief to turn from that degrading gospel to the elevating and regenerating gospel which the real intellectual and moral leader of the Democratic party, William J. Bryan, is teaching, and to which he gave this expression in his speech at the welcome-home banquet in Lincoln on the 18th:

We are confronted with a condition that may well alarm the thoughtful and patriotic. We find corruption everywhere. Voters are bought at so much per head, representatives in our city government are profiting by their positions, and even Federal officials are selling their influence. What is the cause? The commercial spirit that puts

a price on everything and resolves every question into "Will it pay?" This commercialism has given popularity to that theory of government which permits the granting of privileges to a favored few, and defends the theory by an attempt to show that the money thus given directly finds its way indirectly back into the pockets of the taxpayers. We see this theory in operation on every side. The protective tariff schedules illustrate it; our financial system rests upon it; the trusts hide themselves behind it, and imperialists are substituting this theory for the Constitution. Is it strange that money is used to carry elections? If a party makes certain classes rich by law, will it not naturally turn to those classes for contributions during the campaign. If Congress votes millions of dollars annually to tariff barons, money magnates and monopolists, is it not natural that aldermen should traffic in the small legislation of a city council, and if officials high and low use the government as if it were a private asset, is it surprising that many individuals who are without official position yield to the temptation to sell the only political influence they have—namely, the ballot. What is the remedy? There is but one remedy—an appeal to the moral sense of the country—an awakening of public conscience. And how can this appeal be made? Not by showing a greater desire for the spoils of office than for reforms, but by turning a deaf ear to the contemptible cry of "anything to win," and by announcing an honest and straightforward position on every public question. If we would appeal to sincere men, we must ourselves be sincere, and our sincerity can be shown only by a willingness to suffer defeat, rather than abandon the cause of good government. Shall we accept imperialism as an accomplished fact in order to appease those who are willing to indorse "government without the consent of the governed?" There can be no thought of such a surrender, for who would trust us to deal with other questions if we prove false to the fundamental principles of self-government. Shall we change our position on the trust question in order to secure the support of the trust magnates? Not for a moment can we think of it. We want the trust magnates against us, not for us. Their opposition is proof of our party's fidelity—their support would cast suspicion upon us. Shall we abandon our advocacy of bimetallism in order to conciliate those who defeated the party in other campaigns? Never. Some phase of the money question is always before Congress, and no one can predict when the coinage phase of the money question will again become acute. No reform of any kind would be possible with the money changers in control of the party. Shall we change our position on the tariff question in order to win over Democrats who are enjoying the benefits of protection? It is absurd to sug-

gest it, for the same vicious principle runs through all of the abuses from which the people suffer. . . . Let us defend our position, not upon the low ground of dollars and cents, but by showing how Republican policies violate moral principles and invite the punishment that sooner or later overtakes the wrongdoer. Will such a course insure victory? The best that our party can do is to deserve victory, and an appeal to the conscience of the American people is sure to win ultimately and offers the best promise of immediate success.

A witty Jeffersonian, writing in the Springfield Republican, suggests to his fellow Democrats that the next national platform should consist of but two planks, as follows:

Resolved, That we reaffirm our faith in the substantial verity of the multiplication table as it is; but if the Republican party shall succeed in modifying it at any time we will acquiesce in such modification as an accomplished fact.

Resolved, That we adhere to the law of gravitation as a convenient rule, not to be departed from unless dissented from by Senator Gorman or other Democratic leader.

With this platform he thinks the great sine qua non, the carrying of New York, can be accomplished. Let us all join "Jeffersonian" in commending his suggestion to the next Democratic dinner to be given in that part of the country.

Gov. Cummins, of Iowa, has revived his "Iowa Idea" of free trade, and with greater emphasis than before. In his inaugural address on the 14th he declared for free trade with Canada for agricultural products and urged reciprocity treaties with all the rest of the world. That he might not be misunderstood he specifically denounced Mr. Hanna's "stand pat" policy. But then it is easy to silence Gov. Cummins. The protectionists have tried it with success. He either knows so little about the subject or cares so little for what he knows, that a puff of party authority bowls him over.

A wise decision regarding taxation was made by the farmers of the Kansas Grange at its 32d annual meeting, held in Arkansas City last month. They adopted a resolution requesting the legislature to

submit to the people an amendment to the State constitution striking out the cast-iron provision on taxation. When farmers begin to realize that the attempts they have been making to tax everything react against themselves, and demand that the way for discovering scientific taxation be cleared, there is hope for the future.

We would not be counted among the enemies to the "good roads" movement. On the contrary, we believe in good roads, and are confident that much of future progress will spring from that source. But let us not be deceived about the distribution of its financial benefits. So long as those land values which are due to public improvement are treated as the private property of land owners, the pecuniary advantages of good roads will be pocketed by land owners. The people generally, though they have better roads, will have to pay more for the privilege to the few who own the land which those good roads serve.

These reflections are suggested by a "good roads" tract which Congressman Brownlow is circulating extensively. Mr. Brownlow is the father of the bill now pending in Congress for subsidizing road building out of the Federal treasury. Upon his own showing in this tract, the subsidy is in the special interest of farmland owners. Mr. Brownlow speaks of them as farmers, but inasmuch as the proportion of the farming population who are landowners is small and growing less, he does not quite mean farmers. He means farm owners whether they happen to be farmers or not. Let us quote from his really candid tract:

Q. Do improved roads increase the value of farm lands?

A. Yes; in the States of Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut and New York, and wherever roads have been built by State aid, values of farm lands have increased.

Q. Why is this so?

A. A good road enables the farmer to haul his produce to market the year