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## EDITORIAL

### Bryan and the Presidency.

Mr. Bryan's attitude with reference to the Presidential nomination in 1908 has been disclosed by a St. Louis friend, M. C. Wetmore, who publishes a letter just received from Egypt, where Mr. Bryan wrote it. In this letter, as reported, Mr. Bryan says:

I am satisfied that the things I have been fighting for are growing, but who will be most available in 1908 is a question that cannot be answered now. I shall not do anything to secure another nomination, and do not want it unless circumstances seem to demand it. Time alone can determine that.

In that frank declaration there is nothing new to Mr. Bryan's more intimate friends. When the tide of popular sentiment began a year and a half ago to break away from the plutocratic channels

in which it had been flowing, and its trend toward democratic ideals became more and more obvious, Bryan's popularity as a national leader visibly grew. So his friends naturally turned to him as their candidate for the presidency in 1908. But his invariable response was in the same spirit and to the same effect as his recent letter to Mr. Wetmore. He recognized the tendency of public opinion to accept the ideas for which he had been fighting; and he was not insensible to the fact, equally plain, that the popular tendency toward his cause was running also toward himself. But he firmly refused to forestall the future. He would not consent to make his personality an object of contention to the possible detriment of his cause, nor assume the responsibility of entangling his friends in any premature campaign for his nomination. Time might develop a better or more available candidate, he said, and he wished in that event to be free in his own mind and to leave his friends free in theirs, to decide in the interest not of a man to whose personal fortunes they were bound, but of the common cause to which they were devoted. This is one of the things that honorably distinguish William J. Bryan in American politics. He is a leader and not a place hunter.

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### Carl Schurz.

With the death of Carl Schurz there passes away the most distinguished of the democratic exiles whom we received from Germany upon the collapse of the popular uprisings of 1848. No puritan New Englander of two hundred years before contributed more to the democratic spirit in American life. Carl Schurz was a man of ideals and convictions, whose convictions never lacked courage and whose ideals were instinct with democracy. It has been said that he was uncompromising and therefore impracticable. He was uncompromising, as every man has been whose memory has survived his funeral wreaths. But he was not impracticable—in any worthy sense. He was indeed impracticable when crime was afoot and he was wanted for a partner. But in adjusting differences of policy for worthy ends, he was one of the most practicable of men. Being human, he did not always clearly distinguish between eddies and currents in the great stream of democratic progress. He consequently misread the popular unrest of 1896, and like other genuine democrats similarly deceived by superficial

appearances, gave his sympathies and his influence to the plutocratic side in that contest. But no one doubted his sincerity, and four years later he stood where from the convictions of a life time he naturally belonged. From boyhood he was a democrat. It was devotion to democracy that placed his life in jeopardy in Germany in 1848, and that made him a Republican in the United States in the '50's, and a Democrat in the '70's and since. His life has been a long one, and always a sincere and useful one. But in nothing else has it been so useful as in the democratic character he developed as an American citizen and servant, the example and influence of which he leaves as a rich legacy to the country of his adoption.

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#### Roosevelt and the Railroad Ring.

The important consideration is not whether Mr. Roosevelt's or Mr. Chandler's version of their interviews over the Hepburn bill is the true one. Although the circumstances, so far as disclosed, indicate that Mr. Roosevelt did send for Mr. Chandler, that he did solicit Mr. Chandler's mediation for an alliance with Senator Tillman, and that he did say to Mr. Chandler that certain Republican senators were bent on frustrating his rate regulation policy, yet these are only incidents in a general situation. The essential thing about it all is not the verity of Mr. Roosevelt's version of these incidents, but Mr. Roosevelt himself as a factor in the general situation. And as to this there is neither dispute nor any room for dispute.

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Certain senators were implacably hostile to the Hepburn bill. Mr. Roosevelt was committed to the principle of this bill. The bill would have been smothered in senatorial committee but for the union of Mr. Roosevelt's supporters with the Democrats of the committee. When this bi-partisan majority of the committee had defeated those of their Republican colleagues who represented the railroad interests, the latter proceeded to humiliate Mr. Roosevelt and his supporters in the Senate, as party men, by placing the bill in the hands of a Democrat as floor leader. The intended humiliation was personal as well as political, for the Democrat they named was Senator Tillman, whom Mr. Roosevelt had deliberately and publicly insulted. Between the two, therefore, a long-standing enmity notoriously existed. These facts, dependent upon nobody's veracity, imply obviously that the enemies in the Senate of Mr. Roosevelt's rate-making policy had declared open war against him and his policy.

Mr. Roosevelt's enemies then transferred the seat of their warfare from the committee room to the Senate chamber. If Mr. Roosevelt did not by this time recognize them as irreconcilable enemies to his rate-making policy he was singularly obtuse; and if he did not say so, he was unusually reticent. But whether he did say so, as Mr. Chandler informed Senator Tillman at the time, or did not say so, as he himself now protests, makes little difference; the fact of the determined hostility of these senators to Mr. Roosevelt's rate-making policy is undisputed and indisputable. One of their methods of warfare was to make of every act of the Interstate Commerce Commission under the bill, which might be unsatisfactory to the railroads, a football for the courts. Thereby they hoped to destroy the effectiveness of the Commission. It was to be done by giving unlimited powers to the courts to review the acts of the Commission. Mr. Roosevelt and his friends were opposed to granting such powers. They insisted upon limiting the power of court review to such acts of the Commission as might be in excess of their authority under the law or in derogation of property rights under the Constitution. In this position Mr. Roosevelt and his friends were supported by the Democrats. And they welcomed the support; not cordially, to be sure, but as a harrowing necessity. The railroad interests were thereby checked, and the success of Mr. Roosevelt's policy was practically assured. But just as he was on the point of winning a victory for his policy, and so for the people if his policy would produce the results its supporters claim for it, he suddenly changed front. With his party supporters (Senator La Follette alone excepted) he went over to the other side, over to the side of the railroad ring, and in union with the railroad senators agreed to an unlimited court review clause. The facts bearing out this generalization are as indisputable as those already alluded to as leading up to it; and not only does nobody dispute them, but Mr. Roosevelt's own letter bears them out.

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When so much is told the whole story is told. Mr. Roosevelt may have accurately narrated the details of interviews between himself and Mr. Chandler, after the climax and in self-defense, or they may have been stated accurately by Mr. Chandler as they occurred. That raises an issue of veracity between Mr. Chandler and Mr. Roosevelt. But regardless of that issue, Mr. Roosevelt stands out in full public view, simply upon the historical facts that need no personal verifica-