

## BRYAN'S CHICAGO SPEECH.

It is safe to say that no other man could have drawn so large and thoughtful an audience under similar circumstances as that which gathered at Chicago last Saturday to hear Bryan's speech on the present crisis in the Democratic party. A meeting as large might have been easily assembled by a President in office, a foreign potentate, or a capital execution; but it would have been a meeting of thoughtless curiosity-seekers. Bryan's audience was not attracted by curiosity nor was it composed of thoughtless people. It had come together for the purpose of listening to the advice of a man who has proved that he would rather be right as he sees the right than to be a mortgaged President.

The circumstances and the occasion were remarkable.

No one need be reminded that the "irrepressible conflict" of which Seward spoke, is entering upon a new phase. The fact is rapidly becoming obvious to everybody. In Seward's time it was concerned with the question of chattel slavery; in ours the issue is plutocracy.

This issue is tending more and more to divide the two great parties, and in the process it is driving a wedge through both. Neither party is free from the splitting tendency; but in the Democratic party it is already manifest, whereas in the Republican party it is as yet subconscious.

It came to the surface in the Democratic party when the national convention revolted against the partnership its own President, Grover Cleveland, had so evidently made with the leaders of plutocracy. Since that time there have been two groups of leadership in the Democratic party: the plutocratic Democrats, represented in their several subgroups by Cleveland, Hill, Gorman and Belmont; and the democratic-Democrats, whose most conspicuous representative is Bryan.

We do not mean to say that all the Democratic adversaries of Bryan are really plutocrats, nor that all his followers are really democrats. In any great com-

bination of conflicting forces there are confusing eddies, and this political combination is no exception. Just as there are true democrats in the Republican party, who remain there because they do not correctly distinguish the main currents of national politics, so there are true democrats in the plutocratic faction of the Democratic party, who are in that faction because they do not distinguish the main currents of Democratic factionalism. Neither would we imply that even Bryan himself is in all things democratic, by the test of ideal standards; or that Cleveland, Hill, Gorman and Belmont are in all things plutocratic. What we do imply is that the main current of plutocracy in the Democratic party carries Cleveland and the others upon its surface, while the main current of democracy carries Bryan. Show us an intense admirer of Grover Cleveland, and the chances are ninety-nine in a hundred that you are showing us a believer in plutocracy; show us an intense admirer of William J. Bryan, and the chances are ninety-nine in a hundred that you are showing us a believer in democracy.

The latest and most critical expression of this split in the Democratic party was made by the Democratic convention of New York, when it adopted a bunco platform (p. 39) and instructed for a candidate who, though he conceals his opinions from the public, manages in some occult way to win the confidence of the plutocratic press, of the plutocratic financiers, and of such interesting varieties of plutocratic statesmen as Belmont, Gorman, Hill and Cleveland. This challenge to the democratic-Democracy of the country was met by Mr. Bryan in his speech of the 23d at Chicago.

There was no blare of trumpets nor beating of drums. No clubs nor local leaders were invited to invite Mr. Bryan to address them. No dead walls were covered with posters, no advertisements filled the papers. Mr. Bryan merely let it be known, four days in advance, that on the date specified and at the place named he would speak to those who cared to hear him. So insistent was he upon avoiding all complications of a merely personal sort that he rented the hall

himself and dispensed with committees, chairman, vice chairmen, and all the customary paraphernalia of public meetings. In effect he simply said to the public, and in the simplest way: "I have something to say about the present crisis in the Democratic party, especially with reference to the New York platform, and if you care to hear me I have provided a hall for your accommodation."

Only that, and nothing more. Yet the large auditorium was too small by more than half for the people who came. As they poured in, the local authorities discovered that only 2,000 could be admitted, as per city ordinance; but nearly 3,000 had gained admission before this official discovery was made. And in the street in front of the building there was another audience larger still, which vainly sought admission. The hour of the meeting was 8 o'clock, but few of the thousands who arrived after 7:30 were allowed by the police to enter the hall, and hundreds of these waited in a drenching rain for a possible chance to get in.

Mr. Bryan's speech was as remarkable as the circumstances under which he delivered it.

It was a plain warning that a capture of the Democratic organization for plutocracy by stealth will not be tolerated by democratic-Democrats; and this sentiment evidently expressed the views of the audience.

So eminently does this speech appear to us to be the master speech of an epoch that we reproduce in full in our Miscellaneous department the abstract prepared by Mr. Bryan himself. He read this abstract to the audience, but occasionally elaborated its points with extemporaneous remarks. Among these was his eloquent elaboration of the point on imperialism and colonialism, which he made so emphatic as to leave no room for the slightest assumption that he regards that issue as having been settled or as one to be compromised. He is a pronounced anti-imperialist, and "he works at it," which cannot be said of the Eastern gentlemen who are trying to get the Democratic party into office through the favor of Wall street syndicates.

Two other points in Bryan's extemporaneous remarks are espe-

cially worthy of note. We quote from the Record-Herald's report:

"We had an administration nominally Democratic, but really a J. P. Morgan administration," Mr. Bryan exclaimed, "and God forbid that we should have another that would be an August Belmont administration." After finishing his prepared speech, Mr. Bryan raised his voice above the thunder then bellowing overhead to give a parting shot to the Eastern reorganizers. "I have said I was anxious for success," he said. "Let me outline a plan. Let me show how the Democratic ticket may be made invincible. The trouble is the people doubt that the Democrats would do any better than the Republicans if placed in power. Why? Because of such a platform as that adopted in New York. Because such men as David B. Hill, August Belmont and Grover Cleveland are believed to be behind the Democratic candidate. Why do they doubt our party? Because when there is an investigating committee in city or State or nation it catches Democrats as well as Republicans. Let the party rise up and whip out those not true to the interests of the public. Let us drive them into the Republican party. Let's have a platform that is honest and a ticket that is in conformity with that platform."

Some effort was made at the Bryan meeting to give an appearance of its being a Hearst meeting. But this resulted in utter failure. A few cheers for Hearst two or three times were so feeble as to dispirit the Hearst clique that started them. Those were enough, however, to afford excuse for an elaborately false description of the meeting in the Hearst papers as a Hearst meeting, and to account for a page headline in Hearst's Examiner, which was insulting to Bryan as well as misrepresentative of the audience: "Bryan's gathering causes ovation for Hearst; listens to Ex—but cheers next candidate." It is a pity that Hearst's papers cannot get far enough away from the proprietor's personality to make their news reports veracious and to elevate their political policy to the level of political principle. All the cheering at Bryan's meeting, and there was much of it and very enthusiastic, was for Bryan's declarations of principle. It was no man's meeting; but it was a democratic meeting. And the speech throughout was for no man, but was a straightforward appeal to conscience.

We predict with confidence that

this speech marks the beginning of a new and more progressive campaign in the irrepressible conflict between equality and privilege, liberty and power, right and wrong. For the Democratic party to win in the sense of getting at the offices concerns no one but office seekers; for it to win in the sense of advancing the march of democracy, whether in office or out of office, concerns us all. That was the spirit of Mr. Bryan's speech, and that is the spirit which the St. Louis convention will find itself forced to take most seriously into account. The convention may defy that spirit with both platform and candidate, but if it does it will thereby write the epitaph of its party. Like the "doughfaces" of our politics of half a century ago, the "doughfaces" of this generation are also coming to judgment.

#### EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

##### WASHINGTON.

Washington, D. C., April 23.—How completely Congress is governed and run by a few men was again plainly shown this week when they passed a Chinese exclusion act as a rider to an appropriation bill. It is doubtful whether Republicans had any idea that the leaders proposed to touch the question at this session. It was sprung upon the House without any notice, and the House kept in session for three hours beyond the usual hour of adjournment, so as to force it through that evening. Having received no intimation that the matter was even being considered, nearly half of the entire membership knew nothing of it until they read of its passage in the Washington papers the next morning.

The closing days of this Congress, as of all others, witness many attempts to rush through without notice, without warning, and without consideration, innumerable "log rolling" schemes. One would need to be argus-eyed, to be as sharp as a score of Philadelphia lawyers, and to be a regular magazine of information on multifarious subjects to be able to do one's duty under such circumstances. Under the rules any member who can obtain the previous consent of the Speaker can call up his particular pet project, asking unanimous consent for its immediate consideration. These bills are picked from a calendar containing several hundred projects, and they embrace every conceivable subject, running from a bill of ten lines to one of ten or more pages, as widely different as the construction of a bridge over

some unheard of stream to the building of a courthouse in some obscure town, or the granting of some special rights of entry on some public land, Indian or otherwise; or they may relate to a subject of such international importance as a government, or lack of it, for the new Panama canal zone. Probably the worst feature and the greatest danger to good government in this connection is the fact that so many members have one or more bills either already upon the calendar or which they are desirous of having considered at a later date, and fearing objection may be made to unanimous consent to consider these projects—no matter how innocent or meritorious—they sit by and offer no opposition to legislation which they know or believe to cover a steal or a raid upon the public treasury, fearing that their opposition to evil legislation may result in their failing to obtain unanimous consent for their meritorious measures. They are thus made assenting parties to vicious legislation. I admit that it is not an easy matter under present conditions and with the economic policies now obtaining to lay down a rule governing such a projected legislation which may not frequently work great hardship. But it would seem that it is not too much to require that the local authorities, preferably even the local community, must express an affirmative desire for local legislation before it can even be considered by the House. This would unquestionably cut off many log-rolling schemes which now are rushed through, not only because of the reasons just stated, but because of the total ignorance of their merits by practically the entire membership of the House. If such a rule were adopted, communities could compel railroad companies to pay for the privilege of bridging navigable streams, while bills to secure possession, without pay, of valuable water falls and large tracts of land would fail of passage unless they contained provisions protecting the public interests.

The attempt of the chairman and other Republican members of the House judiciary committee to make an exhibition of Mr. Hearst signally failed. Weeks ago Mr. Hearst introduced a resolution directing the attorney general to report what steps, if any, he had taken in the action he (Hearst) had instituted against the anthracite coal trust. This resolution has slumbered in the judiciary committee and probably never would have been discussed at all but for the belief privately expressed by some of the leading members of that committee that they could "make a monkey" of Hearst by inviting him to explain the purpose of the resolution. For nearly an hour he was subjected to a rapid cross-fire of questions, some of the most tantalizing nature, and all evidently designed for the purpose of embarrassing him to the fullest extent.