

preceded the constitution," he prophesies that it "may survive it." Mr. McKelway ought to know that this nation had no existence whatever until the constitution created it. Though it is true that the nation's sovereignty existed before the constitution, it existed in the several states, and was derived from them through the constitution and not otherwise. And the nation derived from the states no more sovereignty than they surrendered through the constitution. What they did not thus surrender it did not thereby nor in any other way acquire. And since it has no sovereignty except from the states through the constitution, and never can have, if its sovereignty should survive the constitution, as Mr. McKelway hints it may, that will be only as the result of some such usurpation of power as the imperialists now propose.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

It was notably a convention of politicians, but emphatically not a politicians' convention.

Though the majority of the delegates cared nothing for political principle, but were of that "peanut" variety of politician which the New York "Tammany hall" makes notorious and the Chicago "City hall" imitates in a small way, they were so thoroughly conscious of the demands of their constituents that they dared not follow their own inclinations, but were forced to obey him whom they reluctantly recognized as the tribune of the people. Had they been unrestrained by home instructions and felt no fear of popular resentment, they would not only have balked at the platform, but they would have gone so far as to nominate a man of the Hill type instead of Bryan. But with those instructions to reckon with they were as obedient as children.

They did not speak their own thoughts, they did not vote their own will; they were used as speaking and voting instruments by the democratic masses of the country. Because their constituents demanded the nomination of Bryan they nominated him. Because their constituents believed in

the ability and integrity of Bryan they dared raise no issue with him regarding the platform or anything else. What they understood him to require that they conceded. They conceded nothing more.

He insisted upon a reiteration of the bimetallic ratio demand, and although the committee on resolutions adopted it by a bare majority of two—Oklahoma and Hawaii—all the delegations, when the matter was laid before them for instructions, positively forbade the presentation of a minority report. If Bryan had expressed a preference as to the vice presidency, his choice would have been the nominee. A word from him and the ticket would have been Bryan and Towne instead of Bryan and Stevenson. That word being withheld, the convention followed its own inclination by selecting a strict party man. The majority would have preferred Hill, but Hill by declining (and it is due to him to say that he took high ground in his manner of doing this) forced upon them a second choice. So it was in all things else. Bryan's word was law to them. When Bryan was silent they became "peanut" politicians once more.

It was altogether an encouraging demonstration of the truth that the people do rule. Even though a majority of their agents be unprincipled politicians, the history of this convention amply shows that those politicians will meekly obey a popular mandate when it comes to them with unmistakable emphasis.

Naturally, the submission of the convention to Bryan's requirements has won him the title of "boss." Some Hanna papers are so utterly lacking in sense of humor as to call him a bigger boss than Hanna!

Absurd as the comparison is, it nevertheless embodies a welcome truth. Bryan is, indeed, a bigger boss than Hanna. He bosses the politicians of his party, by the power and with the authority of the masses of his party. This is a boss-ship which the people want. It is one to which Hanna could not aspire. Hanna is a boss, not by the authority of the masses of his party, but by the power of money and with the authority of trust magnates.

Though Bryan be a bigger boss than Hanna, McKinley is certainly not. McKinley is no boss at all. He cannot even boss himself, but is a poor weakling in the hands of Hanna—a weakling whose exalted principles of yesterday become, at the command of the master, his football to-day.

The circumstances that have induced plutocratic papers to call Bryan a boss, have raised him in the opinion not only of his own friends, but of all candid men. He became a boss rather than a trimmer.

"If by any chance," said he, "the committee on resolutions decides to report a platform in which there is not a silver plank there must be a minority report and a fight on the floor of the convention. I will come to Kansas City on the fastest train available, make a fight for silver on the floor of the convention, and then decline to take the nomination if the convention omits the ratio. This is final."

Whatever any man's opinion of the silver question may be, there can be after that but one opinion as to Bryan. We can feel assured that the man who stands so firmly by his convictions with which we do not agree, will stand firmly by his convictions with which we do agree. Since Bryan was ready to throw aside the highest personal honors rather than evade the subordinate silver issue, he can be relied upon not to trifle with the paramount issue of imperialism.

Imperialism is the paramount issue. It would have been so regardless of the platform. For platforms cannot create, they can only register, issues. But the platform itself declares, what events had predetermined, that this issue is paramount.

In doing so it lays down elementary principles which cannot be assailed without attacking the ideals of popular government. The inalienable rights of man as set forth in the declaration of independence are reaffirmed, not perfunctorily, but with direct reference to practical questions; and that old Jeffersonian document itself is declared to be the spirit of our government, of which the constitution is the form and letter. Not stopping there, the platform goes on to assert specifically that all governments de-

rive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that any government not based upon that consent is tyranny, and that to impose upon any people a government of force is to substitute the methods of imperialism for those of a republic. It then proclaims that the constitution follows the flag and denounces the imperial doctrine that a government deriving its powers from the constitution can exercise lawful authority beyond the constitution or in violation of it. Upon these fundamental principles, fortified by the statement that "no nation can long endure half republic and half empire," the platform rests its indictment against imperialism as exemplified by the republican policy with reference to Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

In this connection the platform rises to unexampled heights of political morality. Distinguishing between expansion and imperialism, it says:

We are not opposed to territorial expansion when it takes in desirable territory which can be erected into states in the union, and whose people are willing and fit to become American citizens. We favor trade expansion by every peaceful and legitimate means. But we are unalterably opposed to the seizing or purchasing of distant islands, to be governed outside the constitution and whose people can never become citizens. We are in favor of extending the republic's influence among the nations, but believe that influence should be extended not by force and violence, but through the persuasive power of a high and honorable example.

On the subject of trusts, the specific reforms recommended are not altogether satisfactory, as when it is proposed to require federal licenses and establish a censorship of the mails. Nevertheless, one genuine and far-reaching reform of the trust evil is advocated without evasion. We refer to the clause favoring an amendment to the tariff laws so as to put products of the trusts upon the free list.

But if, with that one exception, the specific reforms are disappointing, the general principle declared is perfect. And that, after all, is the more important. Specific demands necessarily change with changing circumstances; but a general principle once inserted

in a party platform offers to the radical wings of the party a leverage whereby they can force not only its continued repetition, but also the insertion of more and more appropriate specific demands. On this trust issue the principle of the platform is embodied in a pledge in these words:

Private monopolies are indefensible and intolerable. . . . We pledge the democratic party to an unceasing warfare in nation, state and city against private monopoly in every form.

Upon that declaration the most radical economic demands can rest. And if these demands be not made more and more radical with successive platforms, or if the principle ever be cut out or modified in the direction of conservatism, the fault will lie with those radical men of the country who, from partisan motives or personal indifference, may refuse at this election to strengthen the hands of the men who have secured so comprehensive a declaration.

The other planks of the platform may be briefly summarized.

A prompt redemption of the nation's pledge of independence to Cuba is demanded. The Monroe doctrine is reaffirmed. Militarism is denounced. The Dingley tariff law is condemned as a breeder of trusts. Enlarged powers for the interstate commerce commission are favored; and a demand is made for the election of federal senators by direct vote of the people, and for the establishment whenever practicable of direct legislation.

Government by injunction and the blacklist are condemned, and labor arbitration is advocated; while, to offset the demand of the republican platform for a cabinet secretary of commerce, this platform recommends the appointment of a cabinet secretary of labor.

The construction, ownership and control of a Nicaraguan canal are favored, and the Hay-Pauncefote treaty is condemned. Promises of immediate statehood, with home rule, are made to the people of Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma. It is proposed to irrigate the arid lands of the west, and enforcement of the Chinese exclusion law and its application to all Asiatic races, are urged.

Jefferson's doctrine of "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none," is approved as wholesome; while an earnest protest is entered—against the republican departure which has involved us in so-called world politics, including the diplomacy of Europe and the intrigue and land-grabbing of Asia.

A clause condemning "the ill-concealed republican alliance with England, which must mean discrimination against other friendly nations and which has already stifled the nation's voice while liberty is being strangled in Africa," leads on to this expression of sympathy for the Boer republic:

Believing in the principles of self-government, and rejecting, as did our forefathers, the claim of monarchy, we view with indignation the purpose of England to overwhelm with force the South African republics. Speaking, as we believe, for the entire republican nation, except its republican office holders, and for all free men everywhere, we extend our sympathies to the heroic burghers in their unequal struggle to maintain their liberty and independence.

Following this sympathetic note are a denunciation of lavish appropriations, a criticism of surplus accumulations in the treasury, and a condemnation of the shipping subsidy bill, together with a demand for the reduction and speedy repeal of the war taxes; and the platform concludes with an earnest appeal for the "hearty support of the liberty loving people, regardless of previous party affiliations."

With that concluding clause in the platform the logical candidate for vice president was clearly Charles A. Towne, the republican whom the populists had named and whom the silver republicans stood ready to indorse. This nomination would have guaranteed republicans of the Lincoln type that the invitation to all liberty loving people "regardless of previous party affiliations," was not an aggregation of empty phrases. But "previous party affiliations" were regarded as vital by a majority of the delegates, despite the warmth of their invitation; so Mr. Stevenson instead of Mr. Towne was chosen.

It was not an unwise choice. Next to Towne, it was the best choice possi-

ble; and as a matter of party policy it was better than Towne. Though Stevenson cannot make the effective speaking campaign that Towne would have made; though he cannot draw to the party the hosts of new voters that Towne, as the nominee, would have drawn; though he is conservative, probably too much so for the principal candidate and the platform,—yet he has advantages of his own. He is radical enough to have been in his younger days a greenback member of congress, and democratic enough to have been while vice president persona non grata to the Whitneys and Lamonts and Eckelses who fostered the spirit of plutocracy in Grover Cleveland. Moreover, he was a Bryan democrat in the campaign of 1896. From the standpoint of Bryanism, therefore, Mr. Stevenson is acceptable. And from that of democratic partisanship, his lifetime loyalty to the organization makes him unobjectionable where Towne might have repelled because of his previous party affiliations. He will prevent loss of votes, even if he secures no gains. With all the rest, Mr. Stevenson is personally a good man and an excellent citizen, and has proved himself an able and honest public official.

The most that can be said against his nomination is that he is a sort of survival left over from the old democratic party. He is, indeed, the only link binding the democratic party of the civil war period which championed human slavery, to the democratic party of to-day which champions human liberty. His nomination is all that obscures the fact that a great political revolution culminated at Kansas City last week.

To realize the radical changes which have come over the democratic and the republican parties one has only to reflect upon two most significant things. The republican party which in 1856 planted itself upon the declaration of independence, dared not mention that great charter of liberty in its platform of 1900, though its meeting at Philadelphia, where the declaration was signed and the republican party was born, made the occasion peculiarly appropriate. The party is a living protest against

the other hand, the democratic party, which in 1856 dared not mention the declaration of independence because it was then the party of slavery, made that document the cornerstone of its platform in 1900 and caused it to be read at large to the convention. There is great significance in these facts. Since 1856 the two parties have changed places. Then the democratic party had fallen under the power of the negro slave oligarchy; and the republican party, a new organization, came into existence, breathing the spirit of the declaration of independence, to assail and finally exterminate that power. But now the republican party has fallen under the power of giant trusts and the spell of imperialism; and the democratic party, new in impulse though not in form, shakes off its pro-slavery nightmare, and, animated in turn by the principles of the declaration of independence, prepares to exterminate trusts and to destroy the empire before the empire destroys the republic.

History repeats itself. The repetition is never the same in details, but in generals there need seldom be any doubt of the identity.

If we glance back over the history of this country we find the federalists in power until their imperialistic tendency had warmed into life the republican party of Jefferson, which was then denounced as "democratic" in much the same spirit that "anarchist" is now applied to Bryan. With the subsequent decay of the federal party, Jefferson's republican party grew in power and respectability until it forgot its elementary principles. Then Jackson sprang to the fore as the leader of a new democracy, which, when slavery had devitalized it, succumbed to the present republican party. It was a long time after that until the slave oligarchy's successors, those greedy conservators of unearned wealth who have become so familiar as economic and political types, began to realize that their interests would be cared for by the republican party as the interests of slaveholders had been cared for in a former generation by the decadent party of Jackson. But they all learned it in 1896. That was the year that marked the beginning of the new anti-slavery fight.

It was to 1900 what 1852 had been to 1856. In 1852 the free soil party broke up old political alignments, and opened the way for the republican party of 1856, much as in 1896 the free silver issue broke up alignments and opened the way for the magnificent Kansas City platform of 1900—the best platform ever put forth by any political party in this country, and one which marks a change so complete as to make the democratic party to all intents and purposes a new party. This party is to the slavery issues of 1900 what the republican party was to the slavery issues of 1856.

Whether the new democratic party will achieve a victory this year depends upon the readiness with which the democratic masses in all parties recognize the new situation.

The plutocrats have recognized it. Those of them who had been nominal democrats, but directly or indirectly supported McKinley four years ago on the silver issue, are settling down comfortably in McKinley's party. That is where they belong, and they know it. But many true democrats who supported McKinley then because they rejected the democratic party's heresy on the financial question, are coming to the democratic party now, regardless of its financial teachings, because they know that at last it is democratic fundamentally. Should the democracy of the party come to be as generally recognized during the campaign by men of democratic instincts in all parties as it is by most men of plutocratic instincts, the line between democracy and plutocracy will be sharply drawn at the polls this year, and democracy will win. But if there be a failure now on the part of a large number of the real democrats of the country to recognize the situation as shrewdly as the plutocrats recognize it, the victory will be postponed. As this is among the possibilities, even if not probable, it is all the more important to democratic principles that men of democratic instincts who do realize that a revolution in parties has taken place, should work faithfully for the democratic party this year so as to be in position to prevent its backsliding and to push it further on four years hence.