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Champ Clark's Letter

Chairman Griggs and His Good Luck—Prosperity Which Republicans Did Not Cause

DENIZENS of New York are being taught a trust lesson which may be of consequence hereafter morally, politically and otherwise. The anthracite coal trust is the teacher, and Gothamites, without respect to politics or religion, the victims. "Hard Coal Advances a Dollar" is a frequent newspaper headline. The coal barons may catch it where the chicken got it—in the neck.

If the late lamented Phineas T. Barnum, "lord mayor of Bridgeport," owner of "the greatest show on earth," etc., could revisit the glimpses of the moon, he would, unless he has lost that gift up and get which made him both rich and famous, hasten to secure the services of Mr. Babcock, congressman from Wisconsin and chairman of the Republican congressional campaign committee, and would advertise him as "the greatest living acrobat—the greatest that ever lived." Bab's capers on the tariff and trust questions have never been equaled since the morning stars sang together for joy. One of two things is true about Bab—either he is a most uncommon somersault turner or he is "teched in the head"—hard to tell which.

Chairman Griggs.
Hon. James M. Griggs of Georgia, chairman of the Democratic congressional committee, is winning favor where it was least expected—in the east. Judge Griggs is bright, amiable, patient, enthusiastic, capable, ambitious and industrious. What's more, he's lucky. In speaking to Griggs of his election to the chairmanship, Hon. W. M. Howard, one of the ablest young men in the house, said: "Griggs, I believe now that we will elect the next house. Your invariable good luck will enable us to win." Griggs is busy as a bee in planning the campaign. The New York Times says:

Mr. Griggs, chairman of the Democratic congressional committee, is a man of sense. He announces that his committee proposes to conduct the campaign for congressional candidates this fall chiefly on the issue of the tariff. He reports an urgent demand from all parts of the Union for "literature" on that issue.

If the Democrats are prepared, as Mr. Griggs proposes, to wage the fight this fall on the tariff issue and if they will put up candidates for the house and for the senate who will not regard their election as license for peddling their votes to the tariff beneficiaries, they will deserve to win. In many districts they will have a fair chance to win, and even if they do not secure a majority in either house they will lay the basis of an honest and substantial political organization that will be worth working with and for.

Republican Prosperity.
Senator Marcus A. Hanna says that the Republicans made the present prosperity. Let's see. One of my constituents, J. A. Norton, of St. Charles county, one of the richest agricultural counties in the world, has just harvested 70,000 bushels of wheat from his own farm, the crop averaging thirty-five bushels to the acre. Did Republicans cause his prosperity? Did Mark sow that wheat, water it, make the sun shine on it and harvest it? Go to, Marcus Alonso, with such rot!

Another of my constituents, W. S. Nelson of Lincoln county, made last year \$84,900 net from the milk of one Holstein cow, the dairy of which performance Senator Hanna would claim for the Republican party. The chances are that the cow would have given the same quantum of duce lac if there had been a Democratic president and congress in Washington.

Another of my constituents, whose name I have forgotten, but who lives near New Florence, in Montgomery county, raised ginseng worth \$125 on about one rod of ground, which, of course, is proof positive that Mark makes it rain.

All over Missouri the corn is from ten to twenty feet high, potatoes are big as ostrich eggs, the earth groans beneath the weight of a most bountiful harvest of all cereals, fruits and vegetables; consequently we all ought to go down on our knees to Mark, provided he made the rain to fall and the sun to shine. But, query: If Mark makes it reasonable this year, why didn't he make it reasonable last year? Does he cause it to rain only in election years? People ought to have information on this subject, because it is important, don't you know.

Subserviency to Trusts.
The Washington Post, independent, goldbuggish and high tariff shouter, gives this solar plexus blow to the Republicans in this congress for their subserviency to the trusts:

It is not very improbable that the Republicans in both houses will be ready to vote for one or two carefully drawn antitrust measures when congress convenes. They are hearing and will continue to hear from the people on that subject. They will know a little later, if they do not already realize, that there is widespread and deep dissatisfaction with their subserviency during the Fifty-sixth and the long session of the Fifty-seventh congress to the interests of monopolistic industrial combinations. Whether they come back victorious or defeated, they will come to face a strong pressure for antitrust enactments. And it will not be strange if they yield to this pressure.

As to Crazyness.
General Joseph R. Hawley, senator and senate speaker from Connecticut, has declared that Senator George Frisbie Hoar, the old man eloquent from Massachusetts, is "crazy" because of his attitude on the Philippine question. On Hawley's characterization of Hoar the Boston Herald, independent, remarks:

The difficulty with Senator Hawley's estimate of Senator Hoar as a man who is "crazy" on the subject of the Philippine Islands is that the acceptance of it implies too many men besides Senator Hoar as in the same category. Mr. Hoar himself may be an enthusiast whose devotion to his own ideas sometimes runs away with him, but we think the instance was never known before in which they led him away from his party. If there were any enthusiasm that was to turn his brain, it would be naturally in the reverse direction. But, to return to the point from which we started, if Mr. Hoar is crazy here, so was President Harrison crazy; so is Senator Boutwell crazy; so is Senator Edmunds, late of Vermont, crazy; so is Speaker Reed crazy. If there can be found any four men in this country who were less likely to have the soundness of their intellect affected by either enthusiasm or brooding than Harrison, Boutwell, Edmunds and Reed, we should like to know them. This is to leave out of account the author of the most magnificent speeches made in the present era of the nation's history.

That Herald editorial appears to be a regular sockdologer on the Nutmeg statesman. He will have to spit on his hands and try it over again.

Free Advice.
The Atlanta Constitution, Democratic, rises to remark:

The Democratic congressional campaign of this year should be a vigorous and aggressive attack on those tariff schedules that are being used no longer to ward off the foreign competition but to rob our own people and build up enormous personal fortunes for favored classes and sections. The way to kill the trust is to kill the special legislation which is the spinal cord of its life. The way to destroy the leather trust and get sheep at fair prices is to repeal the taxes on hides. The way to destroy the food trust is to repeal the food taxes and let the cattle and fresh meats of Canada, Mexico and South America come in to regulate prices to a living level. And so on to the end of the chapter.

That's one remedy and a good one, but it is an old saying that "doctors disagree." In a long editorial on the subject of trusts the New York Mail and Express, Republican, says:

A more inexorable law than any statute framed in Washington is responsible for the early demise of these corporations—the law of supply and demand. The American dollar frames that law. It is alert to opportunity, eager for investment, hard to beat in competition. It is at work all the time against the trust that inflates prices or seeks return on watered stock. And it will come nearer solving the trust problem than will any legislation enacted by congress. Congress can do much and should do something to make unlawful some of the present practices of the trusts, but individual American enterprise and capital will after all prove to be the real and vital force against them.

That is only another way of stating the wacry of Hon. Seneca E. Payne, "Let well enough alone!" or Mark Hanna's improvement on Payne, "Keep on letting well enough alone," to which every trust and criminal in the land will give a most fervent and hearty "Amen!" There is no sort of doubt that the suggestion of the constitution is preferable to that of the Mail and Express. Horace Greeley said, "The way to resume is to resume," and the way to bust the trusts is to bust them. It is true that individual enterprise endeavors to bust them; but, as a rule, they bust individual enterprise. If the M. and E. would give a complete list of the private enterprises crushed by the Standard Oil company, it would be a valuable lesson.

The President and the Trusts.
Individually I am inclined to give the president credit for honesty in his crusade against the trusts. It is said that he has selected Mr. Littlefield of Maine to introduce and manage an antitrust bill. The Washington Post, independent and high tariff shouter, is a doubting Thomas as to what a Republican congress is likely to do to the trusts. The Post is on the ground and possesses unusual facilities for information not only as to what is done and left undone, but also as to the motives of the actors. As to the Roosevelt-Littlefield pronouncement against the trusts it discourses in this cynical strain:

It appears that an administration antitrust bill is to be introduced in congress on the reassembling of that body in December. Hitherto executive activities in behalf of antitrust legislation have been confined to recommendations in the regular annual messages. President McKinley called the attention of congress to this subject and expressed the hope that a legislative remedy for the evils of monopolistic combinations would be devised and applied. President Roosevelt in his message to the Fifty-seventh congress last December treated the trusts in a conservative manner, but suggested publicity as an important feature of remedial legislation. But neither the recommendation of McKinley to the Fifty-sixth congress nor of Roosevelt to the Fifty-seventh congress fructified in any antitrust enactment. Indeed, there was no feature of the programme of the Republican leaders in both of those congresses—in the Fifty-sixth throughout its life and in the Fifty-seventh throughout its long session—more evident than their determination to avoid interference with the trusts in any way.

But in the Fifty-sixth congress the house of representatives did make a farcical pretense of attempting an attack on trusts and combines. Assuming it to be a fact that the president has requested Representative Littlefield of Maine, whose name fills seventh place on the house judiciary committee, to prepare the proposed administration antitrust bill, we are moved to remind that gentleman of the existence of an antitrust measure that was prepared by that committee, was put through the house almost, if not quite, unanimously and is now in a pigeonhole in the room of the senate judiciary committee, the identical place for which it was originally intended, the restful abode toward which it was intentionally directed by its framers and promoters. Mr. Littlefield was even then, although new to congress, a member of that important committee, but he was so credited with—suspected—of the authorship of that measure, yet it would be far from creditable to his intelligence and sagacity to

suppose that he did not have a full understanding and keen appreciation of the farce which his committee was perpetrating. It was a two act production, including besides that famous antitrust bill, now entered upon its third year of unshaken slumber, the still more widely famed Bryan-Naphen-Jenkins-Ray committee's antitrust amendment. Fresh as he then was in the councils of the nation, the new "man from Maine" brought with him a keenness of perception and a sense of humor which must have heightened his enjoyment of that racy farce comedy.

That bill, although intended to meet death in the process of parturition, was printed, and several copies of it are in existence. Possibly Mr. Littlefield has one of them. At any rate, he can readily obtain one, and he may find it edifying to make a careful study of the means which such distinguished statesmen as Messrs. Ray, Jenkins, Parker, Overstreet, Alexander, Warner and others recommended for the suppression of evils incident to monopolistic combinations.

But if in the course of his investigations of the operations of trusts and combines it should happen to occur to Mr. Littlefield that some of the most extortionate and exasperating of the monopolies are sheltered by tariff schedules which are not needed for protection or revenue, what will he do then?

That article is about as scathing as anything written by Junius or spoken by John Randolph of Roanoke. It knocks the bottom clear out of the pretensions of the Republicans as trust fighters and pillories Ray & Co. as fakirs. Of course everybody with any sense knew all the time that the bill spoken of was cheap and bold demagoguery, but nobody has so tersely and mercilessly exposed it as does the Post in the aforementioned editorial. Such organ grinders as the Globe-Democrat make a show of believing that Ray and his pals were in earnest, but they only excite the derision of honest men. When the devil sets about putting out his fire, the Republicans will bust the trusts and not before.

"Et Tu, Brute!"
The New York Evening Post, independent, founded by Alexander Hamilton and for years edited by William Cullen Bryant, author of "Thanatopsis," makes the following satirical remarks touching the presidential mid-summer trust hunt:

We would not be thought to speak flippantly of the president's plans. He is, no doubt, in dead earnest. His sincerity in the position which he has taken on this subject is unquestionable as his courage. We cannot, however, blind ourselves to the fact that a long range summer fight with trusts is a very different thing from coming to close grips with the monsters in the winter at Washington. From such a hand to hand contest the president and his party have just emerged, and the trusts were not the ones to come out of it "considerable shook up like" and "permissively chewed." The truth is, as a careful study of the habits of the trust will show, that animal is what may be called an estivating instead of a hibernating species. It goes peacefully the summer through, caring not for the loud cries of its assailants on stump or platform. But when the winter comes, with an actual bill in congress, like Mr. Littlefield's of this year, then it appears all teeth and claws, and by the time the trust gets through with that bill its own father would not recognize it.

Another Witness.
The Chicago Record, which supported Mr. McKinley in 1896, thus expresses its opinion of the president's antitrust crusade:

The most important observation contained in the president's Pittsburgh address is that in which he declares that new legislation is needed on the subject of trusts and combinations in restraint of trade in an industry.

Probably 99 per cent of the American people will agree with the president on the proposition that there should be additional legislation relative to the trusts of the criminal variety, but most of those who are in earnest in their hostility to combinations will not support him in his assumption that that legislation should be in the line of regulation and control exclusively.

The kind of legislation which would put most of the great commercial plunderers out of business could be effected by an honest congress in a few days and in a few words by placing the products of every lawless trust on the free list.

Mr. Roosevelt adheres to the policy which makes trusts. He has no particular regard for a policy which would unmake them.

A La Silas Wegg.
Readers of Charles Dickens of blessed memory will remember that at irregular and frequent intervals Silas Wegg dropped into poetry, a pleasant if somewhat inartistic performance on the part of Mr. Wegg. Some anonymous writer, following Mr. Wegg's example, tackled the Philippine problem in this wise:

Spain once had a tiny lamb, the meekest lamb around. She sold the lamb to Uncle Sam for twenty millions down. Then Sammy took it by the tail to lead it home, you know. The mutter rare turned out a bear, and Sam can't let 'er go.

The poet, whoever he was, just about exhausted the subject, with which orators, statesmen and editors have been wrestling for more than three years.

Champ Clark

The Healthy Savage.
It is a question whether any purely savage peoples were subject to epidemic diseases before they came in contact with civilized nations. The probability is that they were not so, as the universal practice of all such peoples was to destroy weakly and diseased infants and also to kill off aged people and those who had contracted any disease. This would have the effect of producing an absolutely healthy adult population, among which epidemic disease, unless introduced from outside, would never be able to gain a footing.

Of civilized peoples the Scandinavians have during the period covered by history been most free from epidemics, although an apparent exception is to be found in the comparative prevalence of leprosy. But this can hardly be described as epidemic, as it is almost entirely due to the eating of stale and imperfectly cured fish during the long winter. This has been assigned as one of the causes of this disease, but it has not been absolutely demonstrated, and even if it had been it would be rather a disease of accident than an epidemic.



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