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THE INDEPENDENT ELEMENT IN '76.

The existence of an independent element in our politics strong enough, under certain conditions, to determine contests between the two recognized parties is a fact that cannot be doubted. Democratic and Republican leaders may not like to admit it but they cannot afford to ignore it; and at this very moment, they are perhaps without knowing it, doing homage to this independent power which, while not a party itself, may become arbitrator between the existing parties. They see the necessity for shaping the programme of the next presidential election with reference to it. They cannot leave it out of the calculation, for whatever else may be vague and uncertain about the coming struggle, this much at least is known and admitted, viz: that if the full strength of the independent element shall be thrown in favor of one party and against the other, it will control the decision. It has already proved its power to give half a dozen Northern states to either party—and this is enough to do the business. If the independents shall be able, as it is now almost admitted they will be, to carry New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Ohio, with their 73 electoral votes, they will elect the candidate to whom they give their support; nay, even if they shall be able to carry three of these states, they may determine the result. What the independent element will do, therefore, is a question of increasing concern. No authoritative and formal statement of their designs had been given till the Schurz dinner at New last week, and even on that occasion only their immature ideas, rather than their settled designs, were outlined in the speech of the guest of the evening. Mr. Schurz said:

"I would not at this moment venture to advise a definite policy in detail, to be followed with regard to the coming presidential election. For that I believe it is too early yet. But it does seem advisable to me that the independent men of the country, in view of the influence they will be called upon to exert, should take such initiatory steps as will enable them to come to an understanding among themselves, be it by the organization of committees, or such other measures as the skill of organizers may suggest, so that when the time arrives they may be well prepared to act with united power upon the existing parties by their moral pressure, or, if necessary, without them. I deem it quite probable that the suggestion I venture to make will not find favor with the managers of either of the existing organizations. If you ask me, 'In hostility to which party are such steps to be taken?' I would answer: 'Not necessarily in hostility to either. It depends upon their own well-doing.' Each of them will say: 'We are going to offer you all the good things you are aiming at. Why, then, this preparation?' The answer is: 'Very well, if you try to do so in good faith, and give the necessary guarantees in the character of your men, we shall certainly not hinder but aid you in doing so. If you offer us a choice of blessings instead of a choice of evil, we shall congratulate the country and ourselves. But if you do not, then we are justified in preparing to act as our judgment may dictate. And if you ask us specifically what we want, you must find it only natural that we should prepare for the possibility of telling you at the approximate time with the emphasis of united expression.'"

It is impossible that these words, coming from one whom the distinguished gentlemen at the banquet spoke of as their leader, should not have a meaning; and, indeed they convey that meaning on their face. The independents do not form an organized party; they may never form an organized party; it is not absolutely necessary to an effective exertion of their influence that they can accomplish results without it.

But they are meditating a participation in the next national struggle—what sort of participation Mr. Schurz himself is not prepared to say. It is a matter to be determined by the other parties. There are several courses open to them; they may support an unobjectionable Democratic ticket against an objectionable Republican ticket; they may support the Republican ticket as a choice of evils; and to defeat a reactionary Democracy; if the platforms and candidates of the opposing parties are both unobjectionable, they may be satisfied to disperse and vote as Democrats and Republicans; if both are so objectionable as to leave no room for choice between them, then, as Mr. Schurz intimates, the occasion will have arrived for the organization of a new party, and the independents will proceed to do it. It is not probable that this emergency will arise; both the existing parties are under a wholesome fear of the element which gave New Hampshire to the Republicans and Connecticut to the Democrats, and which is able to cast the electoral votes of greater states than New Hampshire and Connecticut as it may desire. It is far more probable that both the existing parties will seek to propitiate the independents in their platforms and candidates. Each will make their platform and nominate its ticket under the vigilant scrutiny of the waiting independents, and under its conditional menace of opposition. It is hardly possible that this shall not secure a platform and candidates of high character on one side at least; and if one of the opposing causes shall fulfil the reasonable conditions of the occasion, it will be the bounden duty of the independents to give it their cheerful support.

The politicians on both sides may as well, therefore, make this class of detached voters, which belongs to neither party and goes with either, according to circumstances, a landmark in the next campaign. It is not a party; it may not hold a convention, nor nominate a ticket. It will perhaps be better for it not to do this, for while it is formidable as an arbitrator, it would be insignificant as a third combatant. Besides, it already possesses all the efficiency that formal organizations usually impart; it is animated by a quick instinct which a few words from its recognized representatives can give direction to; and the fact that it asks no favors and rewards for its members will enable it to carry with it no inconsiderable amount of moral and national force to the side it supports.—Missouri Republican.

OREGON.

Umatilla has eleven families and three China wash-houses.

There is supposed to be 250,000 bushels of the old wheat crop in this State unsold.

Last fall Senator Jewell, of Umatilla county, purchased five Spanish merino bucks, which he has just sheared. They yielded, in the aggregate, 112½ pounds. Four of them were sheared about 11 months ago, and the fifth was sheared only about 9 months ago. Mr. Jewell has finished shearing his sheep, and the total average is 5½ pounds apiece. Mr. J. fed his sheep over 100 tons of hay during the winter.

The Record learns from Mr. P. D. Hull, of Jacksonville, that cinnabar mines are being discovered constantly in that vicinity and just before he left there a prospector brought in ore so rich that on breaking it open the native quicksilver would ooze out of it. This was found near the location of former discoveries in Sam's valley. One prospecting party from Oregon has made discoveries in Siskiyou county, California, just south of the Oregon line, and is reported to have struck some rich cinnabar.

It is estimated that over 5,000 men will rush into the Black Hills this spring in search of—disappointment.

FRAUDS IN THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

The charges that have been preferred and published against Secretary Chadwick's administration are, in brief, as follows:

First—That ever since 1870 he has been paying at the rate of \$4,950 a year rent for State offices, when better accommodations might have been had elsewhere for \$1,500.

Second—That having been ordered by the last Legislature to discontinue this wasteful extravagance, he has failed to do so.

Third—That he has been drawing salaries for three clerks, at the rate of \$2,800 a year, when no clerk whatever was employed or required.

Fourth—That a certain law reached the Governor with an important provision left out, which was in it when it passed the last branch of the Legislature, and that the Secretary must have been aware of and ought to have prevented or denounced the criminal mutilation.

Fifth—That the Secretary accepted a tender of \$500 to sign certain bonds for the Lock Company, when his official obligation required him to perform the office without charge.

To fully comprehend the enormity of the Old State House job, it is necessary to go back a little:

The Hon. C. A. Reed and others, owners of the Opera House block, contracted in writing with the former Secretary of State, Samuel E. May, to supply and furnish suitable apartments for all the State offices for \$2,000 a year. In pursuance with their agreement, they did arrange and adapt the first and second stories of the Opera House in the most suitable, complete and satisfactory manner, thus presenting a State House which would have answered all reasonable purposes for twenty years to come. The apartments intended for the Governor, Adjutant General, Supreme Court and State Library were so occupied, and were being paid for by the State when Chadwick came into office.

By some means not generally known, the owners of the building then occupied by the Legislative and State Departments, induced Secretary May to remain there, thus refusing to comply with his contract with the Opera House Company. When Chadwick came into office Mr. Reed waited on him to remove these departments to the places contracted for, but Chadwick refused on the pretext that "his party friends would not suffer him to do so"—meaning, of course, the particular friends who were interested in the old premises. Reed then offered to lower the rent to \$1,500 a year; but still Chadwick's "friends" were obdurate; and so, under the influence of his despotic friends, the new Secretary continued to pay above \$4,000 a year for State offices scattered all over town, in Griswold's building, in Tom Patton's building, in Watkins & Dearborn's building, and in the present old State House, when better quarters, especially adapted to the purpose, could have been had all together in the Opera House for \$1,500.

In consequence of this inexcusable breach of contract and mean rascality the public spirited Mr. Reed lost some \$25,000 and was utterly broken up, to say nothing of the other citizens interested in the Opera House property. On this point, more to the purpose hereafter.

Immediately after the adjournment of the last Legislature George H. Jones addressed a communication to Secretary Chadwick, offering the use of the Opera House for \$1,000 for the two years then to precede the occupancy of the new Capitol. Mr. Jones reminded the Secretary that he took into consideration the expense of removal, and would therefore save \$1,000 from the original proposition for the two years in question. Still the Secretary's friends were inexorable.

From the foregoing facts, it must be clear to every reasonable mind

that in continuing to occupy unsuitable State buildings at extravagant rents, when appropriate apartments were offered and had been contracted for for less than half the money, Secretary Chadwick was acting solely in the interests of certain property owners. Whether he did so out of disinterested benevolence toward those parties, or whether he derived any individual advantage from the arrangement, are open questions for public discrimination. But the one question which chiefly concerns the people of this Commonwealth is fully demonstrated; that a large amount of public money has been squandered under his administration, through his connivance, and which he might have saved. The other propositions set forth in the foregoing article, remain to be considered hereafter.—Statesman.

A POINT WELL MADE.

The Bulletin says Colonel George B. Curry, of Canyon City, Grant county, writes a letter to the Mountaineer, in which he takes the position that the act of the last Legislature appropriating money in aid of a State Capitol, is an unconstitutional act. The point he makes is, that the act transfers fifty thousand dollars from the Soldiers' Bounty Fund to the Capitol Building Fund, when the Constitution of the State expressly forbids the application of money raised by one law to the purposes of a different law. His argument will appear from the following extracts from his letter:

Section 4. And be it further enacted that for the purpose of providing funds for immediate use, the State Treasurer is hereby authorized and required to transfer from the Soldiers' Bounty Fund to the State House Building Fund, the funds arising from the one mill tax of said Soldiers' Bounty Fund.

The said Soldiers' Bounty Fund by the act of the Oregon Legislature, approved October 24, 1864, ten years ago, and the act creating it is entitled "An Act granting bounties to the volunteers of this State, enlisted in the service of the United States, and for issuing bonds to provide funds for the payment of the same, and to levy a tax to pay such bonds."

Section 8 of this act provides for issuing State bonds to the amount of \$100,000, drawing interest at the rate of seven per cent. per annum.

Section 11 of the same act reads as follows: "For the payment of the principal and interest of the bonds issued under this act, there shall be collected annually, until final payment or redemption of the same, and in the same manner as other revenue is or may be directed by law to be levied and collected upon all real and personal property in this State, a tax of one mill on the dollar of valuation of such property, in addition to the taxes for general State purposes."

Section 12 of this act provides for the redemption of \$10,000 worth of bonds annually.

From the sections of statutes quoted it will be clear that the Soldiers' Bounty Fund was created in 1864, for the purpose of raising \$100,000 and interest thereon at seven per cent. per annum, and that to meet this this demand and give value to the bonds, a tax of one mill on the dollar of all taxable property in the State was by law levied; that by the terms of the act, creating the fund and making the one mill levy, the money thus raised could be applied to no other purpose, under the Constitution of Oregon, than the payment of the bonds and interest thereon, and that by the very terms employed by the Legislature the act expended its force and ceased to be operative as soon as this object was accomplished.

The Constitution of Oregon, Article 9, Section 3, reads as follows: "No tax shall be levied except in pursuance of law, and every law imposing a tax shall state distinctly the object of the same, to which only it

shall be applied. Of the \$100,000 mentioned, par-enthetically in statute first quoted as having been expended, one hundred \$50,000, was taken from the Soldiers' Bounty Fund under the act of 1872.

The history of the State House Building Fund presents the unlooked for phenomenon in a free republic, but not unknown to the despotic rulers of medieval Europe, that of first getting a law limited by its terms as to time and amount, permitting a tax gathering, and then by expedients, known in Courts as despotism, render them perpetual as to time, and illimitable as to amount and indefinite as to application. The Act of 1864, provided for raising \$100,000, and levied a tax deemed sufficient to raise that sum in ten years, the money to be raised for a definite purpose and for no other. The Act of 1872 takes from this fund specifically raised, and transfers \$50,000 to a building fund. The Act of 1874, as if encouraged by the success of its predecessor, takes from the same Soldiers' Bounty Fund \$100,000. Thus we see an Act originally passed to raise \$100,000 for the purpose of paying enlisted soldiers, has already, for aught the public knows, accomplished its original purpose, and in addition thereto has furnished \$150,000 to build a State House. If such a procedure is not a bold defiance of the Constitution, it is useless to conjecture a series of Legislative acts that can be deemed in contravention of that instrument.

New Mines.—Some new diggings have been found at Cariboo. The most experienced and reliable miners are of opinion that the diggings will prove to be rich. Up to Wednesday, of last week, 3,400 feet of new ground had been staked off and recorded, and about two miles of the creek is now held by four companies. Interests in the Peters Creek Company are held at high figures, and several interests in the Barkerville Company, adjoining their lower lines, and in which a pick has never been struck, have changed hands at good prices. This "strike" is the most important that has taken place in Cariboo for a long time, as it will call the attention of miners to a rich but neglected section of country.

A letter to the Salem Record, from The Dalles, says: "Since I wrote you last, the Baptist congregation have built themselves a fine church, and, I understand, will dedicate it on the 27th inst., at which time the Baptist association assemble in this city. The Episcopal are busily engaged in building an edifice for a worshiping place, which when done, will make five places for public worship in The Dalles, whose population is only 1,000 souls. Who can say that its good citizens are not interested in 'Holy things as becomes an enlightened people?'"

A dispatch to the Pueblo Chief-tain, from Grenada, Colorado, says that a band of about thirty buffalo hunters, under the leadership of Wm. Kirk, commonly called "Arizona Bill," were attacked by about fifty Indians of the Comanche tribe, on the 16th inst., at Aubrey's crossing on Bear creek, about fifty miles distant from Denver. A severe fight took place, the Indians finally being routed with a loss of more than half their number, while the whites lost thirteen killed and all more or less wounded.

A little girl at school read thus: "The widow lived on a limbay left her by a relative." "What did you call that word?" asked the teacher. "The word is legacy, not limbay." "But," said the little girl, "my sister says I must say limb, not leg."

—Boston Courier.

"Well, neighbor Slumidge, how much shall I put you down for to get a chandler for the church?" Neighbor B.—"Shoo! what we want to get a chandler for? The Inian's nobody kin play on ter when ye git it?"