

DEMOCRATIC HISTORY.

There is perhaps no study more interesting, and when judiciously pursued, none more productive of good results, than that of history. Not only does it broaden the view, and deepen the culture of those who engage in it, but it often has the practical advantage of saving them from making themselves very ridiculous. If, for instance, an American editor, upon receipt of information that a new country had been discovered, should gravely comment upon it as a very strange and hitherto unheard of event, and should declare that no such thing had ever happened to this country, one can easily see how even a meager acquaintance with the history of the topic he was considering, might have saved him from thus parading himself as an ignorant booby. Just at the present time, the democratic party occupies much this position of ignorance in the discussion of the Hubbell Assessment Circular. From the profuse display of virtuous horror depicted upon the democratic countenance when discussing this subject from the ostentatious uplifting of astonished democratic hands—from the thousand and one exclamatory escape-valves, that seem all too few for the relief of the boiling indignation of the democratic bosom—one would think that the grand old democratic party, which has sucked purity as a morning draught from the constitution, for these twenty years, had never accepted so much as a single penny from the hard-earned, beggarly pittance of the over-worked and down-trodden government clerk. Oh! no, she would scorn to take one farthing, even if the poor, crippled soldier should kneel upon the one leg left him by the late unpleasantness, and should beg her to take it.

Now, if these democrats could plug up their fountains of wrath for a few moments, and take down a political history of this country and begin its study—say with the great Jackson administration—about the time when the significant utterance of Governor Marcy, that "to the victor belongs the spoils" became the watchword of democratic politicians;—if he will continue the study from that time to the ignominious close of democratic supremacy, and see how the country, already burning low in the socket, was finally snuffed out by the bullets of the cripples whom it now professes to defend,—he will find such a persistent, continual, unblushing extortion from office holders—big and little—high and low—such open threats of removal upon failure to pay the demands of campaign committees—such instant execution, following hard upon disregarded threats, as will make the Hubbell Circular seem the very emblem of political perfection. Read the experience of those patriots who served the government during the Buchanan administration, notably of Isaac West and Mr. Wendell and Joseph M. Lucas and Stephen G. Dodge and a host of others, some of whom were kicked out because of their failure to submit to extortion, while others resigned just in time to escape dismissal. Republicans, however, must not console themselves with the recollection of the democratic deficiencies. The "you're another" argument is fast losing its force with the American people, and something much more potent than recrimination is required to support the measures of the party which is to control this government in the future. But the democratic attempt to make party capital out of this circular is much like his Satanic Majesty objecting to the use of brimstone in a matching factory.

The letters of Star Route Dorsey to President Garfield which have recently come to light, are excellent specimens of impudence run to seed. By the side of these letters the proverbial cheek of the government mule, pales into maidenly modesty. Dorsey not only undertakes to make the President's Cabinet for him, but proceeds to mark out the line of policy which the administration should pursue. Read between the lines and in the light of subsequent developments, it is easy to understand Dorsey's extreme anxiety on the subject of Cabinet appointments, especially those of Attorney-General, and Postmaster-General and the fact that he did not succeed in effecting the appointments he desired, may have contributed somewhat to the cause of his present difficulties.

Quite a ripple of excitement has been created in New York political circles by the publication, in a New York paper, of a charge that ex-Senator Conkling and Jay Gould recently attempted to bribe Governor Cornell to take certain action in some matters before him. Both Conkling and Gould strenuously deny the charge, and have taken measures to bring the matter before the Courts. Governor Cornell as yet has made no denial of the charge, and this would seem to give color to the suspicion that it is not made wholly without foundation.

PLAIN TALK TO REPUBLICANS.

The circular recently issued by the Republican Congressional Committee to employees of the various departments of the Government, and popularly known as the Assessment Circular, has been the means of provoking considerable discussion upon the subject of political assessments. The circular in question, as is generally known, contains a request that the person receiving it will remit a specified sum to Mr. Hubbell, Acting Treasurer of the Committee. This money, as is stated in the circular, is to be used in conducting the coming congressional elections. This means of procuring money for conducting political campaigns is nothing new. It has been the custom for years, and the present circular is an exact copy of the one issued in 1878, except the change of date. It has not been confined to any political party, but has been the common practice of all parties. The present discussion in its purposes is nothing new, and is not founded, as some seem to imagine, upon any sudden discovery of wrong doing, or any violent aggravation of a wrong already in existence. It is only in its earnestness and force, that the present agitation of this subject differs from all others. This earnestness comes from the depths of a conviction which is indifferent alike to tenders of favors and to tirades of abuse. It is the result of an honest, impartial and intelligent study of the past and present, applied with discriminating judgment and foresight to the future of American institutions. Its force is the irresistible force of conviction brought about by growing moral and intellectual development, assisted by the fearless and well directed efforts of a few brave and upright men. The men who oppose these assessments do so, because they honestly believe it to be wrong, and it will not do for the self constituted leaders of the party, to arise and read them out of the Republican ranks. They are Republicans still, and it remains for the future of American politics to say, whether they are not, after all, the truest and best Republicans and the saviors of the Republic.

The argument, that the poor people who are employed in the Government service should not be compelled to contribute to campaign funds because they are poor, is a miserable distortion of the much abused, poor man argument. All such argument collapses at once, before the fact that Government employes are generally paid much more than their work is worth, and that there are hundreds and thousands of applicants constantly clamoring for these offices—assessments and all. If the pages and poor women have been assessed, it is an oversight of course, and all fairminded criticism will accept it as such. The difficulty lies much deeper than the imaginary oppression of scavengers or scrub-women.

Despite the repeated assurance and re-assurance of the advocates of these assessments, that the contribution is purely voluntary, and that no person has been or shall be disturbed who refuses to contribute, the fact remains, that the requests of this committee are demands, and are intended to be such. The persons receiving these circulars understand that this oft repeated assurance of the political leaders, that no removals shall be made, is meant for the public, but that the demand for money is meant for them. A request from an employer to those in his service, is generally a command, and would be especially so, if the compliance or non-compliance with the request affected the business existence of the employer. "The king's requests are commands," no matter how formally or how politely made, and he who disregards them, does so at his peril. If these are purely voluntary contributions, why send a request to each person specifying the amount expected of him? Why not announce to the whole people through the medium of the public press, that funds are needed, and contributions will be thankfully received, or, if circulars are sent out, why not send them to all Republicans, instead of merely to those who work for the government? If the "committee feels authorized to apply to all citizens whose principles or interests are involved in the struggle," why not apply to the Republicans at large?

There is no use mincing matters, or twisting phrases to suit the shift of popular feeling on this subject. This circular means simply, that if the person receiving it does not respond by opening his purse, he lays himself liable to removal. Not that removal will follow, but that it may, and is very likely to follow. No one whose politics is not a mere matter of trade, needs to be told that such a system is wrong—radically, grievously wrong—and that it strikes at the very germ of our institutions. As we said a few weeks ago, those subordinate officers are only

necessary in the conduct of the business of the government, just as the clerks of a merchant are necessary in the conduct of his business, but the government is no more carried on for the purpose of providing places for clerks, than is the business of the merchant. For this committee to require the clerks of the government to pay money for any purpose is a species of bribery. It is virtually saying of them, "if you pay, we will keep you in employment, but if you do not pay, we will put you out and replace you with some one of the waiting thousands who will." A political party should remain in power by virtue of its superior administration of the affairs of the government. Its policy and principles, linked to its ability to carry out the one, and to apply the other, should constitute its claim upon the suffrages of the people, and it should not be driven to the necessity of holding its hand upon the purse of the government clerk, in order to continue in power.

But we are told that this committee must have money to disseminate political knowledge, and to let the people know what great and good things we have done. In these days of daily, weekly, semi-weekly and tri-weekly newspapers, all grasping every scrap of information, and sending it broadcast to millions of readers—when every event is commented upon by every class and grade of editors—when the country is flooded with speeches, and reports, and documents, without number—all distributed without limit and most of them without cost, it needs something besides money to induce the political education of the people. The twilight shadows of the day of political bosses and political machines, in the Republican party, are fast lengthening and, if they do not ere long deepen into the darkness of utter ruin and defeat for the republican party, it will not be the fault of these men who persistently refuse to heed all opinions save of their own forming, and who continue to answer a just admonition with impertinent abuse.

SENATOR HILL.

Ben. Hill is dead. The impetuous spirit of a brilliant man has drifted out into the majestic calm of the unknown land which lies beyond the grave. The eloquent lips which have so oft electrified the listening thousands, are forever stilled by the pulseless kiss of death. The great mistake of the countrymen, he made in the dark hour of his country's peril, was great indeed, but a generous people, though they forget it not, will remember it now not in anger, but rather in sorrow. He has made his own place in the history of his country, and whatever of this is due to the impetuosity of his nature, whatever to the circumstances and influences which surrounded him, this place must remain as he has left it. History cannot be changed, but what in life may be characterized with emphatic condemnation, may in the presence of death be mercifully charged to the enthusiasm of error. In the years that are to come, let those who remember his mistakes, forget not to remember something also of the nature and association of the man who made them. And when they read the burning sentences which in the days of his bitterness and hate, he hurled at the American Union, let them not fail to read also that generous, unselfish tribute which he afterward paid to those who had opposed him when he said, "We felt your heavy arm in the carnage of battle; but above the roar of cannon we heard your voice of kindness calling, Brother come back and we bear witness to you this day that your voice did more to the confederate ranks and weaken the confederate arm more than did all the artillery employed in the struggle."

Ought the Senator whom Oregon is to elect to be merely an adroit and unscrupulous political demagogue—a man whose life has outraged the moral sentiment of the state and broken down his party—whose political methods are habitually of the most debased and debasing kind—who has made merchandise of places in the public service for his own ends—who has been through the whole of his active life an agent and instrument of great corporations—who is notoriously without moral sensibility or breadth of culture—and who is coarse, selfish and corrupt in every fiber of his nature? Is there a man among all those who are spoken of for the senate who would be recognized by these touches? If so, are these the qualities—these, the outlines of character—to be sought in a representative of the state—"Oregonian."

The Hillsboro "Independent" nominates H. W. Scott editor of the "Oregonian" for the U. S. Senate. It is evident from the above that Mr. Scott has at last awakened to something like a fair estimate of his own character and accordingly has read himself out of the Senatorial race.

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