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THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION.

It is to be inferred from articles appearing in the coast papers that there is a serious, well-defined movement in the east to nominate Mr. Cleveland for president at the forthcoming democratic national convention. There is an equally strong movement in favor of Judge Parker, and Senator Gorman has many admirers who would like to see his name at the head of the ticket. Richard Olney is being boomed in Massachusetts, where the state convention has declared for him.

With this aggregation of talent the democrats are still casting about for a candidate. They have caught themselves a bitter lesson in the past eight years, and there is a general desire that repetition of the Bryan disasters shall not occur. It has been demonstrated conclusively to them a platform made up of "anti" planks will not get the suffrage of the majority of the voters of the nation, and they are seeking a man against whom such objection can not be waged.

The central figure in the democratic arena is Mr. Cleveland. Twice president of the nation, the first man in years to interfere with republican reign, he is looked upon by many democrats as the only person who would receive the full support that might go to a democratic candidate. These enthusiasts who are clamoring for his nomination have taken their stand in spite of the pronounced sentiment against a third term. Mr. Cleveland has positively announced that he will not accept the nomination under any consideration, and he may be regarded as unavailable. His enthusiastic friends will urge his candidacy before the convention, no doubt, but there is no present possibility of his nomination. He is properly likened by Puck to a Cincinnatus who declines to leave his plow to again enter political life. He feels that his public career has been of sufficient length, and that his time hereafter should be devoted to his interesting family.

It would seem, then, that the choice lies between Judge Parker, Senator Gorman and Mr. Olney. Of the three Judge Parker seems to have the strongest backing. He is a man of whom little is known to the nation at large, and his political career in his own state has not been such as to merit the prediction that he will develop strong running qualities. However, he is a clean man, against whom there has never been slightest suspicion, and his high personal character may land for him the nomination. Mr. Olney would doubtless prove a stronger candidate than Senator Gorman, who has always been a protectionist democrat. With the most substantial democrats the tariff is still the paramount issue, and Senator Gorman's course with reference to the tariff would not recommend his candidacy to the out-and-out democrats, who, after all, select candidates.

It would seem that the republican nomination will go either to President Roosevelt or Mr. Hanna. President Roosevelt's following is very strong—almost overwhelming among the rank and file—but Mr. Hanna, who is perhaps the best loved man in our public life, could command greater support if he would announce his candidacy. He says he has no idea of trying for the nomination, but that he is seriously regarded as a formidable aspirant is evident from the pronounced efforts on the part of Roosevelt's friends to bring out the Roosevelt sentiment. The nomination will unquestionably go to one of the two men, and, in view of the past record of the republican party, there is small doubt that the nomination will be equivalent to election. The people are satisfied to let good enough alone.

THE PORTO RICAN DECISION.

The United States supreme court handed down a decision on Monday which tends to define, perhaps, a little more sharply the civil status of the inhabitants of our insular dependencies, says the New York Tribune. A Porto Rican woman, seeking to enter the United States, had been detained at New York by Commissioner Williams on the ground that she was without means and likely to become a public

charge. Authority for such detention was found in an act of congress, passed in 1891, regulating the immigration of aliens into the United States. The supreme court has ruled that the commissioner of immigration erred in applying the provisions of that act to a citizen of Porto Rico.

The decision—which was unanimous—is in no sense startling or revolutionary. The court confined its judgment to the single issue before it—whether or not the term "alien" as used in the law of 1901 could be legitimately applied to Porto Ricans seeking entrance at our ports. In that law "aliens" were unquestionably meant to be defined as persons owing allegiance to a foreign government. No provision of the conditions which were to be created through the Spanish war could be imputed to the framers of that legislation. Within its meaning of the act of 1901, the inhabitants of our present dependencies could not by any possible stretch of inference be dealt with as "aliens." Under the laws and treaties of the United States they owe allegiance to the United States. They are "nationals," not "aliens;" and in the absence of any express denial to them by congress of the right of free entry at our ports no warrant can be found for rating them among those applicants for admission who have not yet renounced a foreign allegiance.

The judgment of the court leaves it within the power of congress to exclude Porto Ricans and Filipinos as Porto Ricans and Filipinos, but not as aliens. As under previous decisions, the political department of the government remains entirely free to fix or alter the political and civil status of the inhabitants of the insular dependencies. In the absence of expressed prohibitions these possessions must be dealt with as embraced within our general scheme of sovereignty. But they have no inherent or necessary place in our constitutional system. They must depend for their political privileges on the will of congress, and may be held—as we hope they will be held—indeinitely without the circle of the federal union.

The annual report of President Welch, of the Astoria Chamber of Commerce, which appears elsewhere in The Astorian this morning, is an important document, especially those portions dealing with river and harbor improvements. Mr. Welch points out that the improvements being carried on above Astoria are in some respects detrimental, and it should be the aim of the Chamber during the coming year to see that all funds are properly spent. The report encourages the growing tendency on the part of the people of Portland and Astoria to get together. It is rather late to plan concerted action, but Mr. Welch's suggestion is timely, nevertheless. It is ridiculous to say that the interests of the two Columbian ports are not identical, but so long as they work at cross purposes the sound ports will continue to get the bulk of the business that ought to be done on the Columbia. Portland should, in her own interests, long ago have demanded the full recognition of the ocean port, but, having failed to do so in the past, it is not too late to repair the damage already done. The time is ripe for friendly conferences between the commercial interests of Portland and Astoria, and it is devoutly to be hoped the effort will assume proportions.

According to Director Roberts, of the United States mint, the total value of the gold production of this country—Alaska included—for the calendar year of 1903 was substantially \$74,500,000—a falling off from the year before of about \$5,500,000. For this decline in output the nation is indebted to the striking miners in Colorado, a state whose production of the yellow metal fell off \$6,500,000. Had it not been for this labor outbreak it is probable that this country's yield of gold for 1903 would have been a record-smasher, for Utah, Arizona and Nevada show notable increases in output, far more than offsetting decreases in the other states and territories. Even as the case stands, the yield for last year exceeds that of any year preceding 1900, while it is more than double that of 1893. Indeed, with the exception of 1903, the gold output of the United States has increased regularly year by year since 1893, and present indications are that it will go on indefinitely. Is it any wonder that former free silverites prefer to talk of the grave and worms rather than of 16 to 1?

It is plain that congress will make the full appropriation of \$2,125,000 asked for the Lewis and Clark exposition. When the Oregon senators first took up the matter of securing the appropriation there was a pronounced sentiment at Washington against further fair appropriations. So many cities had asked aid for expositions that the fair scheme was regarded by many as of the graft order. With his sentiment to contend with, the senators set about to create favorable opinion toward the Portland fair, and have succeeded to such extent that the entire amount asked will unquestionably be made available. We could have no better evidence of the hustling quality of our delegation than this one circumstance, and Oregon has every reason to feel proud of Senators Mitchell and Fulton. They constitute a rare working team and should be kept at Washington just as long as they can be induced to remain.

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