

AN EDITOR'S ELOQUENCE

HON. HENRY WATTERSON'S GREAT SPEECH AT DETROIT.

He Gives a Clinical Dissection of the Republican Platform—Fals Pretenses of the G. O. P. Shown Up in Burning Words—An Earnest Appeal for the Reduction of Tarax.

Sensible men, surveying the state of affairs, will look about it, and ask themselves how we may best be saved from the mountain of war taxes on which we stand, in order to reach the dead level of a permanent and prosperous peace-footing. There is no question now for this country so important as this. It is, indeed, the issue of the campaign, and is purely one of condition, and in no wise one of fears. Now that the lines of battle are fixed—fixed by the message of the President, fixed by the Mills bill and the debate in Congress, fixed by the St. Louis platform, and fixed by the acceptance of the President—it is purely a question of what policy the government may observe touching the original principle of taxation. Mr. Blaine, for example, is opposed to the repeal of the whisky tax, while the Republican platform demands its repeal; yet Mr. Blaine supports without question the Republican ticket. When it comes to doctrinal hairsplitting, there are differences and degrees among the protectionists as well as differences and degrees among the revenue reformers. But this is neither a doctrinal nor a personal campaign. This is a campaign of party forces and organized ideas. Every party has its own platform, and each must abide the consequences of its act and word. It is too late for revision, it is too late for afterthoughts; the record is made up, and, as our friend Blackburn said on one occasion, he who dallies is a dastard, he who doubts is damned. I am going to-night to take these two national platforms, to put them on the stand and to let them say how they stand upon this great issue. It seems to me we have been so assailed with being free-traders that we have quite forgotten to apply to their platform the same logical tests they have been allowed to apply to ours. I want to go over them specifically and see how they stand. You all know that the tariff is a tax levied by the government upon articles of foreign import to raise money for its own support. We have had high taxes and low taxes; we have had peace tariffs and war tariffs. The present tariff unites all the bad features of all the bad tariffs that ever preceded, for it is a peace tariff on a war basis. That is to say, though reconstructed in time of peace, it actually multiplied and augmented all the impossible put upon the country during a time of war. The improvements were confined largely upon the patriotism of the people. They were confessedly made in response to the public exigency. Their authors promised, when they made them, that they should not outlast that exigency; and, yet, the only revision they have had, and then at the hands of the Republicans, since the war has not only failed to reduce them but has actually increased them; so that now they are higher than they were when, as a measure of military necessity, they were created. Nor is this all, nor the worst of it, for their authors, in writing all their original pledges, said that they were here to stay, and that they shall never be revised except to be made not lower, but higher. And in proof of that, I come without further parley to that fantastic exhibition of political misinformed ion, that curious receptacle of dry bones of the dead languages, that antiquarian comic almanac and last chapter in the gospel, you know, the Republican platform. Gentlemen, I have had a little experience with platform-making, and with the platform of my own party, and I know what it is to be suspected of being a fool. I am too honest and seeing a little too far ahead for that. I suppose if I were a Republican and had written this platform of my friend McKinley, I would not be living now as he is to tell the tale. It is the most treacherous and most irrelevant piece of jocosity, the most astonishing example of going back into the dark ages in quest of something without finding it, yet produced by the political annuals of the country. Dr. Burchard's famous oration of Brother Blaine alone excepted. Perusing that platform, I am in state of perpetual wonder how it happens that any man could have been so funny and so blind, and because as a rule humor is clear-sighted and sensible, I can only wish with perfect admiration. It is funny in its entireness, in its inconsistencies, funny in its very falsehoods. A clever rascal said to me such a platform would at least have avoided the mistake of arraigning the administration of Grover Cleveland on a series of specifications, each one of which is a direct and damaging indictment of antecedent Republican policies. But that is just what this platform does from first to last, and before I come to the main point, let me, for purposes of illustration, point you out a few of them. To take them at random: it doesn't make much difference, I suppose. For example, this platform says that the Republican party condemns the policy of the administration in its efforts to demonetize silver and favors the reduction of letter postage to one cent.

Why, it was the Republican party that demonetized silver. It was the Democratic party that remonetized it. It is true that the policy of the Treasury under the present administration has been set aside, the continued coining of the metal, and to that extent has been overruled by the Democratic majority in Congress; but it is on a direct line with the policy of the Treasury for three Republican secretaries, including John Sherman, and that is the reason. I suppose why the Republican platform denounces it. But just as a postage, cheaper postage reduced to one cent! The Republicans say they are in favor of that. Why, gentlemen, nearly a year before the adoption of this comic almanac, I mean this platform, nearly a year, Senator Beck of Kentucky, introduced into the Republican Senate exactly such a message. It was referred by the Republicans of the Senate to the Republican Committee on Postages, and there it sweetly sleeps to-night, and it sleeps so soundly that the Kentucky Senator, Democrat and Scotchman as he is, has not been strong enough to wake it up. Perhaps he will have better luck after the cows come home in November.

Well, next they demand the restoration of our merchant marine. Who destroyed it? When the Democratic party went out of power, after twenty-eight years of incumbency, the oceans of the world were white with American sails. There was not a port in Christendom which was not garrisoned and made brighter by the starry emblem of the royal fleet, floating from a Yankee man-of-war. Now, on the account of twenty-five years of Republican dominion? A friend of mine who has just returned from an extensive tour in foreign lands told me that the American ship he found in all his travels was the rotten hulk of an old Confederate cruiser, stranded on the coast of Barbary, and used by the Arabs as a sort of wharf boat. But still the Republicans demand the restoration of our merchant marine, annihilated by a quarter of a century of Republican policies.

Well, there is another good one. They say,

"We demand the right to the introduction into this country of foreign contract labor. A self-accuser again. It was the Republican party that originated that debasing system. I was in the Republican party that stuck to it like a brother. It was the Democratic party that forced the passage of laws restraining it. It is a Democratic administration which is enforcing those laws as they never were enforced by any Republican. It is a Democratic committee of Congress which is now going about the country investigating violations of the law and under-taking to see what can be done to make it still more oppressive and to a man caught in the foreign contract labor business than it is now, is how high tariff. But still this ostrich of a platform sticks its head behind the rock and denounces the introduction of foreign contract labor.

I think I will pass over. I will jump the references to the Monroe doctrine and the Mormons as hardly worth particular attention, as simple, jocose foot-notes stuck in to fill out the page, and I will also jump the reference to the heathen Chinese. I am going to do that because the man from Harrison, China's own, meets the reference to China's own labor. That nomination, it seems to me, sufficiently constitutes that. I am going to jump them because I want to get as soon as I can to a clause which, in view of recent events, seems to me to rise to the dignity of what the boys used to call "A good joke on Schenck." Stand from under, gentlemen, while I read it: "We denounce the Democratic administration for its weak and unpatriotic treatment of the fishery question." How is that for high, my countrymen? Why, Grover Cleveland took the lion's tail and twisted it clear out of its socket, and he took the lion's tail and lashed the Republican Senate into wisdom with it. But still this Republican "What Is" denounces the administration for its weak and unpatriotic treatment of the fishery question,

thus it is, gentlemen, that the Republican party is nothing if not a great warrior on paper. For a great many years it did not need any other orifice than the bloody shirt; but the bloody shirt seems destined to have worn out, and won't serve its purpose any longer, and so it must get out another red rag, and I find the red rag in the British lion, which with one reach of his big, broad hand, Grover Cleveland snatched bald-headed, and ever since, these warriors of battles that were never fought, with them, have been running about, hither and thither, and wringing their hands, and asking one another if they had seen any stray lions lying about here. There used to be in the old Bowery Theater in the city of New York, a very audience who will remember it, an actor by the name of Kirby. Kirby was the pride and glory of the Bowery. He had just one single slot, but that act kept the Bowery Theater going season after season, year after year. Kirby wrapped the American flag around him, rushed down to the footlights, fired off two pistol shots, and died like a son of a gun. Poor Kirby actually died years ago. His bones, rest his soul, were carried to the potter's field. All that is left behind him, of himself, his personal representative and residuary legate, is the Republican party, and that is bound to the same destination.

Be you pardon, gentlemen, I meant to stir up no such flood of levity as this. This is no laughing matter. Let us dry our eyes and come to the main point: let us come to the issue which divides the parties, as it appears in these two platforms.

The Republican platform starts out with the declaration that "we are uncompromisingly in favor of the American system of protection," and that all of a sudden it seems as though they had not been allowed to do so. I want to go over them specifically and see how they stand. You all know that the tariff is a tax levied by the government upon articles of foreign import to raise money for its own support. We have had high taxes and low taxes; we have had peace tariffs and war tariffs. The present tariff unites all the bad features of all the bad tariffs that ever preceded, for it is a peace tariff on a war basis. That is to say, though reconstructed in time of peace, it actually multiplied and augmented all the impossible put upon the country during a time of war.

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those clauses of the bill which put wool on the free list, for its particular denunciation. Now, there is no feature of the measure proposed by the Democratic Ways and Means Committee which will better bear discussion than this one, and I propose to make a test case of it. I propose to see what they propose in lieu of the Mills bill. They start out by saying that the Republicans have proposed to make it a tax on tobacco, and it scarcely seems to be a tax on tobacco. Well, one of the objections to the Mills bill is that it does that. But the reason the Republicans give for it is one of the funniest things in that funny business they were at in making this platform. But they are in favor of taking the tax off cigarettes and other forms of tobacco. Well, one of the objections to the Mills bill is that it does that. But the reason the Republicans give for it is one of the funniest things in that funny business they were at in making this platform. 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