

THREE YEARS OF MCKINLEY.

From the Standpoint of an Independent Republican.

The most extraordinary phenomenon of President McKinley's administration is the subsidence of social discontent.

The threatening flood of unrest and exasperation born of misfortune and adversity, which culminated in the nomination of Bryan, ebbed with his defeat. Socialism, communism, cheap money and the other driftwood rubbish and debris of that deplorable epoch, like the refuse of an inundation, now lie standing and decaying on the shore, or were swept into the sea of oblivion and the stream of national affairs flows undisturbed in its accustomed channel.

Coxey's noble army of martyrs has been mustered out. The occupation of Debs, Herr Most and other apostles of anarchy, preachers of pessimism, acolytes of despair is gone. Their crazy rant that once excited mobs to uncontrollable frenzy will now be heard with amusing or contempt. Demagogues are out of a job, and the only tramps are volunteers.

Something has scattered plenty o'er a smiling land. Employment is abundant and wages rise. Agriculture embarrasses the farmer with its riches and burdens the fleets of the world with its abundance. Commerce thrives beyond precedent. Manufactures multiply and replenish the earth. From Cape Nome to Porto Rico, from Manila to Maine, forges blaze, stacks smoke, wheels revolve, and electric lights turn night into day. It is an illuminated chapter from the romance of prosperity.

Even the per capita, that mysterious and menacing spectre whose shadow has so often darkened the feast has increased from \$22.47 when McKinley was inaugurated to \$25.42 at the close of the third year of his administration—the most rapid growth of money in circulation in our history and very largely in gold.

Whether this prodigious change is due wholly or in part, or not at all to the policy of the administration, is immaterial. It has happened. It may be cause and effect, or it may be coincidence; but the millions who were ground between the upper and the nether millstones of adversity in that dismal interval after the collapse of 1893 know that it has taken place.

They are not inquisitive as to how it came to pass. What they desire is its continuance.

As soon as the farmer has a bank account he ceases to be interested in abstract questions of finance. The capacity to draw a check makes him conservative. The artisan who owns his home and has constant occupation at living wages thinks less of communism and the redistribution of the assets of society.

Such a condition, while conducive of tranquility and happiness, is not favorable to reform. A people contented and prosperous inert and passively submit to wrongs that it is more difficult to resist than to endure. For this reason the encroachment of monopolies is now insidiously destroying competition and opportunity in every department of commercial and industrial activity. Even the newspapers, usually so prompt and vigorous to resent injustice and oppression, submit to the extortions of the trust which has recently so enormously increased the price of paper, almost without a murmur of protest. With combined effort they could wring the necks of the malefactors and throw their carcasses on the compost heap of mammon, where they belong. This trust levies its blackmail on education and religion, on the school book and the Bible, on knowledge, literature and libraries, on free thought and free press, which are the sentinels and guardians of liberty.

Of all the unforgiving crimes of the anarchy power this is the most indefensible and infamous. If the republican party does not strangle these monsters it is certain that some other party will.

The president's career from the beginning is a striking illustration of the immense value of pure, high, stainless, personal character as an element of success in public life. He wears the tripple armor of him who hath his quarrel just. He has escaped calumny.

All our recent presidents, with one exception, have been reputable enough, but McKinley has been more than this—he has lived up to his ideals. He has made the golden rule the law of his conduct. He has been loyal to his home, faithful to his friends, magnanimous to his adversaries, constant in his devotion to duty. He has paid his tithes of anise, mint and cinnamon; he has not omitted the weightier matters of law.

His defects and limitations are recognized, but no one doubts his patriotism, his sincerity, his determination to do right, his love of justice. He is safe and sane; a planet and not a meteor. His opponents respect him, and the people, regardless of party, honor and trust him.

Even caricature, the Roentgen ray of satire, which brings the hidden and secret infirmities of character to the surface, has discovered no flaws, and the lampooners have fallen back on the school-boy irony of depicting him as the marionette in a Punch and Judy show that moves as the strings are pulled by stronger men, which scarce provoke a smile.

This faith and confidence of the people have been a shield to the President in many emergencies where he might otherwise have been vulnerable.

The Spanish war was not a party question. It was the people's war. They knew the President was opposed to it. He desired to avoid blood, and so he sought a peaceable settlement; but his motives were never impugned, and congress gave him fifty millions to prepare for the conflict. No war of modern times has been followed by more momentous consequences, and none, on land, has been less prolific in heroes or glory. The private soldier fought magnificently as American soldiers always do, but Shafter's hammock and buckboard campaign, and his purpose to retreat at Santiago; the horrors of Mantauk, the Egan episode, the eccentric contracts of Alger are matters to which the historian will revert neither with pleasure nor pride. But no one holds the President responsible.

Still less will they believe that because he waits to learn their wishes he is infirm of purpose, or that he proposes to overthrow constitutional liberty and set up an empire on the republic.

Political issues, like poets, are born, not made. They are organic and not invented. They are not kept in stock like canned goods in a grocery nor hand-me-downs in a Hebrew misfit parlor.

The republicans hold the affirmative on every great question before the American people. They have redeemed their pledges and are not encumbered with ancient platform. They will renominate President McKinley, as the democrats will nominate Mr. Bryan, by acclamation. One will stand on a declaration of principles for 1900.

(Continued on next page.)

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