

NOMINATIONS AND PRINCIPLES.



Judge Tourgee Corrects an Erroneous Impression.

NOT SEEKING AN IRREGULAR NOMINATION.

Editor GRAPE BELT:—

My Dear Sir:—I see in your issue of the 20th you say that "Judge Tourgee is way off in intimating that he might accept a nomination for Congress at the hands of those who believe in him, if he is not nominated by the Republican convention."

I am not accustomed to subterfuge or fond of evasion. What I said was, not that I would accept a nomination by Petition; nor are my words susceptible of that construction. I said that a nomination by persons, *not Republicans*, whether by convention or petition, would not in the least modify my political views.

If I had desired such a thing to happen, that is just what I would *not* have done. On the contrary, I would have waited until after the event and then answered my inquiries, with a vagueness that would have led them to suppose my Republicanism was of that mushy kind that depends upon personal interest, rather than deep-rooted conviction. I simply thought that my fellow-citizens asking such a question, were in common courtesy entitled to a prompt, explicit, and public answer, in order that they might not be misled or delayed in any action they might see fit to take with regard to their own political interests.

Whenever the Republican party stands upon the principles laid down in its National platform and nominates a candidate for any office, for which I have a right to vote, by the free and fair expression of the will of its voters, that candidate will have my full and hearty support, if he is a man of sober and correct life and is not politically corrupt.

I will not, however, support a drunkard for any office, if I know it.

I will not support any man of the Breckenridge moral type, if I know it.

I will not support any man who buys a vote, corrupts a delegate or is nominated by bargain, sale or any "commercial transaction" if I know it.

These have long been established rules of my political action. No personal consideration has ever caused me to refrain from the support of a candidate and never will. I have never supported a man of any other party, except once, and then the Republican party put a Democrat at the head of its State ticket. To these I may add that I will not support a candidate who ignores an essential part of the platform of his party. These are general principles of what I deem the citizen's obligation to his party. I give them merely that no one shall have any excuse for misunderstanding my position. The many thousands who have read "Letters to a King," in which I fully discuss the duty of the citizen and of the partisan, will recognize the fact that they are not formulated for the present occasion, nor intended to have any specific application. It is not often that any such objection attaches to a Republican nominee, but whenever it does, I hold that it dissolves the citizen's obligation.

At this time, it becomes necessary, perhaps to say that I will not support any Republican who tries to stand one-legged on Protection and be a silent partner of the Southern Democracy, in denying security, free speech, equal right and opportunity to 8,000,000 of citizen's, to whom the party and the country stand

pledged to render justice and secure them in the enjoyment of those inalienable rights with which the Creator has endowed all men. I do not wish to make any concealment or leave any chance for evasion.

But this is not "practical politics": I am told! A candidate must not say such things. He will lose the nomination if he does!

Well I would rather lose all the nominations a party could bestow, than surrender my sense of obligation and duty, to my fellow citizens, the country and humanity.

"What the Republicans of this District want," said one who is according to his avowal, one of the most experienced of adepts in so-called "practical politics," "what the people want is a man who will follow his party to the devil. If a man is not willing to promise that, they don't want him."

I think I would be willing to face death for its principles; at least I have often done so in common with many thousands, and counted it no great hardship, but rather a privilege; but when it comes to "going to the devil" with it, I must be excused. I will do all I can to hold it back, but when it becomes clearly evident that it is bound to go, if such a time should come, I shall not go with it no matter how many honors it may have to give or how much plunder may be in sight.

I regard a party as the instrument by which the citizen exercises his part of the sovereign power *for the good of the people*. When he uses it for evil, it makes no difference whether we name it Tam-

many, Bourbon. or Republican—the crime against liberty is the same; and this fact cannot be hidden or diminished by success. The duty of the citizen is to rule righteously; if he creates, countenances or permits preventable oppression, he is just as much a tyrant as if he held the whole power of the Nation in his single hand. Parties are designed to aid the citizen to prevent wrong and the man who ‘follows a party to the devil,’ will have the devil for a paymaster. It is the people who suffer from wrong doing—not the party.

I enlisted in the Republican party to fight for liberty, justice, equality of right for all, and protection to American industry. I have fought early and late, in season and out of season, for these principles and for the Republican party as the representative of these principles. Whenever it ceases to represent them, or seeks to secure the one and abandon the other, it becomes in my opinion, a means of oppression rather than an instrument of liberty and a secure guardian of prosperity.

“But what are these things to us?” I am asked, “the wrongs of these people are nothing to us.”

That is precisely what the old Whig party said in regard to slavery, forty years ago. “It is nothing to us. Why should we trouble ourselves about 3,000,000 of Negro slaves? Let us look out for our own profit and leave slavery to care for itself.” God answered on a hundred battlefields. Three million soldiers answered with blood and toils. Now, their sons ask, “Why should we consider these things? These are only 8,000,000 of citizens: they are black: we are white: they are at the South: we live at the North: what have we to do with them—their liberties or their rights?”

Yet even now God is teaching us, in the sore experience of the Northern laborer, in the utter prostration of our industries, the one great lesson that *American industry is inseparably linked with liberty and justice*; that we cannot excuse wrong done to our fellowman on account of his color, now that he is by right a citizen, any more than when he was a slave: that

Close as sin and suffering joined,

We march to fate abreast.

I take this course also, because there can be no lasting or reliable prosperity while 8,000,000 American citizens are deprived of every right and debarred the exercise of every privilege of citizenship

by the most inhuman and unjust oppression;—because the power derived from such oppression will always be used to maintain the threat of free-trade which hangs over Northern industries. This very denial of right gives the Southern Democratic voter *from two to six times the power* in the national government that is exercised by the Northern voter. In New York at the last election 1,276,645 votes were cast by which 34 Congressmen were elected. At the same election the States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and Louisiana together cast 1,255,105 votes, being 41,540 less than New York. Yet these States elected 62 Congressmen against New York's 34. The votes of New York represented a population of 5,997,853: the votes of the other States named represented a population of 9,574,587. It was *the suppressed four millions* that gave the difference. Slavery never presented any such glaring inequality of power. Every Southern voter has more than twice the power of the Northern voter, because he has added to his own legitimate strength the strength of another citizen whom he does not allow to vote, to discuss public affairs, to defend his life or have any more voice in government or the defence of his own rights than if he was a slave. Take away this fictitious power and there would never be any more “Wilson Bills.”

Even if there were no peril to our prosperity here at the North, I would still stand as the advocate of justice, security and opportunity for these unfortunate citizens, whose two centuries and a half of wrongs, some think should be cured by some centuries more of even worse wrongs. I have made this cause mine because it is the cause of justice and humanity. If the time shall come when there is not one left to stand with me, I will still advocate their cause and have no doubt of victory, since I know it is the cause of God. As He destroyed the Whig party for its unfaithfulness to liberty, so will He destroy the Republican party when it turns its back on justice. He is no more afraid of the Republican party than He was of the Slave power, and when it refuses to stand for liberty and justice, I do not doubt that He will find means to establish them without its aid. But this confidence does not release me from the duty of urging it by every means in my power, to stand true to its pledges,

repeated with such solemn sanction through so many years.

If it is because of such sentiments that I am “way off” I hope I may remain so until the Republican party wakes again to its duty as the party of liberty, justice and the people.

I asked one of the foremost Republicans of the District who also thought I was “way off,” why he said so, and he replied; “Because in this District the longest pole always takes the persimmons; A man's chance for the nomination depends on his ability and willingness to ‘put up the stuff.’ This year it will be a regular game of auction—pitch to see who will put up the most money for the honor—not so much to satisfy the delegates.—not many of them will get anything—but to appease the patriotic yearnings of *the men who steer the delegates*.”

I suppose he knows whereof he speaks: he has been through the mill and bears the scars. More than one of the papers of the District have certified that I know nothing of “practical politics” (?) I am very grateful for their good opinion and hope I may be kept always ignorant of *this sort of “practical politics,”* I would rather never have an office than secure one by such means, and thank God most sincerely, that I am unable to think so meanly of the Republicans of this District as to suppose that they *like to be sold* for the benefit of “those who steer the delegates.” Some one wrote once about the “Slaves of Tammany,” who are proud of their servitude; I am not yet ready to believe the Republicans of this District are that sort of citizens. But whether they are or not, however, serves not at all to incline me towards such methods. I leave the matter to them without any discomposure, confident that a power which is greater than we, will remedy my deficiencies and even their mistakes, should any be made, to the promotion of liberty and the establishment of justice throughout the land. I have no doubt that the time will come, and that very soon, when even those “who steer the delegates,” whoever they may be, (I am sure I don't know and do not wish to know who they are) will thank me most heartily for the course I have taken. I believe this, because when the people really do speak, they almost always speak for liberty and justice. It may not be today nor this year, but in some near future, the Republicans of this District and of the whole country, will echo my words and thank me for having uttered them at this time.

ALBION W. TOURGEE.

Mayville, April 24, 1894.