

Mayville, N.Y.

May 3th 1894.

My dear Raymond:

Your letter occasioned me real pain,--not on my account but yours.

I do not mind at all whether I am nominated or elected, so far as my personal wishes are concerned. What I desire is to advance the interests of the country, justice, humanity and the Republican party. I believe that a great crisis impends in our national affair which I comprehend better than others simply because a strangely ordered life has forced upon me a knowledge of its elements and relations. To my apprehension, the duty of the citizen is the highest and holiest relation a man can sustain to his fellows, and I could not contemplate with anything like tolerance any act which means the subordination of the general welfare to personal ambition or advantage.

For this reason, I could never have brought myself to offer as a candidate, but for a sincere conviction of exceptional capacity to promote the just and true solution of the most important problem the American people have ever been called upon to solve--to wit, whether 3,000,000 of citizens shall be allowed to enjoy the inalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as equal heirs of the citizenship which so many shed their blood to bestow, or shall be reduced to serfdom and degrading dependency by American Christian civilization or destroyed by white American mobs. I cannot look to the future of our Republic without an agony of apprehension almost too keen for words to express. I cannot see the tendency to anarchy and murder, the defiance of law and the disregard of personal

right, going on to what it is apparent to every one must be its unavoidable consequence, without showing myself willing to do all in my power to remedy such evil and prevent the disaster that must accrue to liberty to liberty civilization and humanity, if it is not checked.

When I urged others to act, they said, rightly and properly enough, "Why do you not do or offer to do something yourself?" I looked about to see what I could do. Single-handed and alone, I organized the National Citizen's Rights Association. It grew beyond all my expectation. Still we touched the political thought only through the Republican party. I looked to that with hope and confidence. Thousands of our members had given up that hope. They desired an independent political organization which should be a constant protest at least. I begged them not to make it in 1892. They finally assented, more for my sake than from conviction, I think.

I saw that if something was not done this year to hold and inspire them with confidence, a great mass of liberty-loving and justice-loving voters, throughout the North would abandon the Republican party before 1896, and in all probability destroy its chances of success in the next presidential election.

Its leaders do not seem to realize the fact that the colored vote in the Northern States is becoming every day more and more solidly compacted. It cannot be otherwise. One has only to imagine himself a colored citizen and recall the fact that three of his race have been lynched for every week in this year and ten during the last week, to understand the reason of this special solidity. The colored man of the North finds that he must demand the protection of his people at the South at the price of his political support or

ultimately suffer with them. This vote alone can defeat the Republican party in any presidential election, since it represents the balance of power in five States of the North,--probably in seven.

With them stands a constantly increasing array of white voters who perceive the peril that must result to the Nation and civilization from the present conditions and tendencies. They are the counterpart in today's life, of the Abolitionists of fifty years ago. They will make this question paramount to all others, because they believe liberty and justice to be above all other considerations in government. They must constantly increase, and as they increase, the Republican party must decrease unless it binds them to it by the advocacy of justice and the security of personal right.

To promote this course by the Republican party was my controlling motive in acceding to the suggestion that I should declare myself a candidate for Congress. I believed that if nominated, I would accomplish two things:

1--Prevent this body of voters from abandoning the Republican party.

2--Prevent the Republican party from joining hands with the Bourbon Democracy of the South in the degradation and persecutuion of American citizens on account of race and color. This influence alone unless speedily counteracted, is sure to disintegrate the Republican party. No party can ~~stand~~ ever change front on such a question without inviting destruction.

I desired to serve my party, the country, and the cause of humanity. ~~While not insensible to the honor of representing the District~~

I had no wish to do so except that I might thereby accomplish these results. I have no doubt that the policy and wisdom of this course

will be fully acknowledged by every Republican long before the time you set as the limit of my opportunity, is reached--probably before the votes are counted in the presidential election of 1896.

This proffer had to be made to the Republican party by some one in good faith and in a manner not to be called in question. The lot fell upon me because of my prominence in connection with this movement. I accepted the responsibility, did my duty and the matter now rests with God and the people. I have no doubt as to the ultimate result. Whether it will come in the way I hope or not, I cannot say. However it may come, I have the satisfaction of knowing that my action will help to hasten the just solution of a mighty question. I cannot feel that any consideration should be sufficient to

make any one look with complacency on the prevalence of vote-buying caucus-corrupting and the barter and sale of offices, to which you ~~xxx~~ refer as inevitable. I do not care where the blame lies, which party does the most of it, nor how good the cause may be that seeks promotion by it; nothing can compensate the danger resulting from such corruption of the will of the people. When one man's money is matched against other men's merit and a candidate is expected to hire newspapers, to fee promoters, and to buy voters, a party is sure to come, sooner or later to represent the few rich as against the many poor.

I have four times been a candidate for important offices, and three times successful against overwhelming odds. I never sought a nomination, never solicited a delegate and never bought a voter, nor permitted it to be done on my behalf by another. I have too high a regard for the honor of the American citizen's right and duty to govern, to consent to its corruption directly or indirectly. You may say it is not politics, but I tell you my friend, it is patriotism, and the man who disregards the will of the people under the plea of a party necessity which demands submission to a purchased nomination, does the country a very ill service. I, for one will never, under any circumstances seek to advance what may seem to be my personal interests by such means; nor will I fail to raise up my voice against it whenever occasion occurs. I will not insult a people whose support I ask, by seeking to sway their judgment by corrupt inducements or hired emissaries.

The fruits of such a course are of the most debasing character. The politician, the official, the voters are all corrupted by it. I cannot understand how any good man should even be willing to submit to it. The safety of the Republic depends on the incorruptibility of the voter and yet "party discipline" is made the excuse and cover, the cloak and justification, of wholesale corruption. Thereby the confidence of the people in parties and leaders is destroyed, judicial and administrative officers impaired, and legislation comes to be regarded, simply as a game of plunder and spoliation. By this means, the way is prepared for anarchy. It is this distrust of the purpose and tendency of the Republican party which far more than any political principle, constitutes the strength of the Populist movement, which thus far has drawn its strength almost wholly from our ranks.

What surprises me is that any man knowing these things should be inclined to submit to them. I cannot: I must fight such wrongs.

It matters not how strong they are, I cannot rest until I have done what I may, in protest and resistance against them. I do not at all suppose these evils will be wholly eradicated or that the time will ever come when men will not buy and sell political power, bribe and corrupt for self and ambition, any more than the time will come when men will not kill or steal, kidnap or counterfeit. What I do believe is that every one who hates and fears these influences and tendencies, does what he can to prevent their spread, the time will come when they will no more be countenanced and approved than the other crimes I have mentioned, which are not nearly so hurtful to a self-governing people.

I do not think any good cause can excuse the adoption of such methods. Much as I desire to see citizenship assured and protected, I would not bribe a voter to give me his ballot in caucus, in convention or at the polls, even if I knew it would be decisive in my favor.

I believe this danger is growing more evident to the people of the country every day. They will not always permit the press to establish a gag-law, nor look with complacency on a nomination secured by the use of money. The indications are clear to my mind that this time will come very soon--much sooner than is generally supposed. Men are getting very tired of being bought and sold for other's benefit, and the best in every community, are coming to regard with supreme contempt and abhorrence, those who sell their power as citizen for their ^{personal} ~~own~~ advantage. I believe that what is popularly known as "shirt-tail politics," which has made this District notorious for its political corruption, has done very much to prepare the way for better things. It needs no argument to convince any one of the evil which has existed here so long. One has only to inquire in any neighborhood to learn its prevalence. Every sensible man knows the consequences. Many a man who has been called out of bed between midnight and morning and sold himself to the devil's service while half-awake and at half-price, would be glad enough now to wipe out the shame of such transactions by striking some good honest ~~man~~ ^{blows} for the right. When such a thing starts, the general conscience ^{always} fans it into flame, and it sweeps through a community like wild-fire. It is going to start in this District pretty soon.

It may not send me to Congress; but what I have done and what I mean to do, will help some one else there ^{the man} ~~some one~~ inspired by a high and patriotic purpose, who will owe his to the will of the people, not to the machinations of the hired "heeler", to the "purchased vote or a "manipulated" convention.

I am willing to serve the country where I can do most good; and if I can be of most service in fighting such influences, I am quite content and would rather not receive a nomination than compass it through the influences which you say, are so potently arrayed against me.

It is for this reason, I suppose that I am not in the least concerned with regard to the nomination. I have the feeling that I have done my duty to the party, the country and humanity, just as well as it lay in my power to do it. I have discharged my conscience as a citizen, a patriot and a partisan; if it brings me no personal advantage, I have lost no self-respect and shall at least, deserve well of my fellow-citizens by trying faithfully to do what all will

admit ought to be done.

I am sorry to have occasioned you any annoyance, as I evidently have, and trust that the time will soon come when you will regard with more **complacency** the course I have felt myself bound to pursue. I have no doubt you feel some disappointment now, but I am very certain the matter will turn out better than you have ever hoped. Do not have any trouble about me. I feel the same sense of satisfaction that I did when I enlisted as a private in April 1861. I did my duty ^{then} without speculating about the consequences to myself. It is the same ~~now~~. The country will sometime receive some good from my action whether I do or not.

Very sincerely yours,