

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1896.

	Page
Class Feature of the Campaign	1
The Republican Convention	2-3
Hanna and McKinley	2
Republican Platform	3
The Democratic Convention	4-10
The Silvertzes	4
The Convention	5
The Platform	6
Bryan	7
His Speech	8
The Press and the Convention	10
The Populist Convention	11-13
H.D.Lloyd on the Convention	11
The Fusionists	12
Bryan nominated	12
The Platform	13
The Campaign Itself.	14-36
The Element of Fear	14
Harpers' Weekly	14
Waldo R. Browne	15
The Nation	16
Steevens	17
Advertisements and Co-ercion	18
The N.Y. Sun	20
Goldwin Smith	21
Attacks from the Pulpit	22
The N.Y. Tribune	23
Carpenters' Union Resolution	24
A Virginia Barbecue	24
Silver Knight & National Watchman	25
Other Forms of Co-ercion	25
A Campaign of Education	26
Personal Contact Method	26
Republican Activities	27
Campaign Funds	28
McKinley's Campaigning	29
Bryan's speeches and Tour	31
"Betsy Gaskins (Dimicrat)"	33
The "Business Men's Parade"	34
Why the Unprecedented Poll?	35
The Election	35
Why the Conservative Victory?	36
Bibliography	37

INTRODUCTION.

"It does not require that distant historical perspective, which is supposed to be necessary for final judgments, to warrant the assertion that the campaign of 1896 marks a turning point in the course of American politics. The monetary issue, on which events ostensibly revolved, was, it is true, an ancient one, but the real conflict was not over the remonetization of silver or the gold standard. Deep, underlying class feeling found its expression in the conventions of both parties, and particularly that of the Democrats, and forced upon the attention of the country, in a dramatic manner, a conflict between great wealth and the lower middle and working classes, which had hitherto been recognized only in obscure circles. The sectional or vertical cleavage in American politics was definitely cut by new lines running horizontally through society, and was also crossed at right angles by another line running north and south representing the western protest against eastern creditors and the objectionable methods of great corporations which had been rapidly unfolded to public view by merciless criticism and many legislative investigations.

"Even the Republican party, whose convention had been largely prepared in advance by the vigorous labors of Mr. Marcus A. Hanna, was not untouched by the divisions which later rent the Democratic party in twain. When the platform was reported to the duly assembled Republican delegates by Mr. Foraker, of Ohio, its firm declaration of opposition to free silver, except by international agreement, was greeted by a divided house, although, as the record runs, there was a 'large demonstration of approval on the part of a large majority of the delegates which lasted several minutes.' When a vote was taken on the financial plank, it was discovered that 110 delegates favored free silver as against 812 in support of the proposition submitted by the platform committee. The defeated contingent then withdrew from the convention after having presented a statement, which they declared that 'the people cry aloud for relief; they are bending under a burden growing heavier with the passing hours; endeavor no longer brings its just reward--and unless the laws of the country and the policies of political parties shall be converted into mediums of redress, the effect of human desperation may sometime be witnessed here as in other lands and in other ages.'" (Beard, Contemporary American History, 164-165)

4 The following manifesto issued by the Populist executive committee during the campaign may serve to show how true this opinion is. "There are but two sides in the conflict that is being waged in this country to-day. On the one side are the allied hosts of monopolies, the money power, great trusts and railroad corporations, who seek the enactment of laws to benefit them and impoverish the people. On the other side are the farmers, laborers, merchants, and all others who produce wealth and bear the burdens of taxation. The one represents the wealthy and powerful classes who want the control of the Government to plunder the people. The other represents the people, contending for equality before the law, and the rights of man. Between these two there is no middle ground." (The Silver Knight and National Watchman, October 22, 1896, Page 5)

↑
Hansen