

THE CHATTANOOGA INCIDENT

The Associated Press makes this interesting report of a democratic dinner given at Chattanooga, Tenn.:

At the Bryan anniversary club dinner tonight John Temple Graves of Atlanta, in the course of an address, asked William J. Bryan to present the name of Theodore Roosevelt to the next democratic national convention as the party's candidate for president. Mr. Bryan in reply said that, according to present conditions he should not present Mr. Roosevelt's name to the convention.

"Bear in mind," said Mr. Bryan, "I say 'as at present advised.'"

Mr. Graves' address came as a climax of a series of events. When he reached the city toady he was requested by the toastmaster who had read his speech to eliminate all reference to Bryan nominating Roosevelt. Rather than submit to having his speech censored, Mr. Graves decided not to speak at all. His address, he said, represented his actual sentiments.

Mr. Graves went to the banquet hall for a few moments and then left without speaking. Mr. Bryan, learning of the incident, sent for Mr. Graves and insisted that he should make his speech according to the original plan. Accepting the Nebraskan's invitation, Mr. Graves spoke and was answered by Mr. Bryan in a short address.

This afternoon, when he had decided not to speak, Mr. Graves sent the fol-

lowing letter to the president of the club:

"I came to Chattanooga yielding to no one in my profound and affectionate regard for Mr. Bryan and the democratic party and its principles. In the course of my speech I tried to make it plain in as warm and glowing sentences as my heart could fashion. I am profoundly convinced that in this period of tremendous economic crisis the only man who can carry to successful conclusion the reforms instituted in behalf of the people is the man who is already entrenched in power and prestige of dauntless courage and a conspicuous success in the executive office. I have endeavored in my speech to give my convictions, and these convictions are so earnest and sincere that I cannot change them unless better reasons are given than have been presented to me up to the present time. My reason for stating this conviction at a Bryan banquet, with Mr. Bryan present, was because I considered it the manly and democratic thing to do. The time to voice a sentiment so momentous to the life, the prosperity and the realization of best ideals of a real democracy is in a council of the faithful and in the full presence of our great and shining leader who would be there to comment, approve or condemn with the full force of his influence and eloquence as he might see fit.

"If I had made this speech in the north, with a mixed audience present, it would have carried a suggestion of truckling or the appearance of seeking favors where the other party was stronger than my own.

"It appeared to me that the only fair and honest thing to do was to speak my convictions in full council and with open voice. In this belief my speech, on the request of the Associated Press, has already been sent out to the newspapers of the country.

"I have not one particle of dogmatism or mere pride of personal opinion in pressing this matter, but the publicity already given my speech commits me to it so far that I cannot encourage or in consistency suppress that part of my speech around which the whole revolves.

"I recognize the full right of the committee when they have secured from unreleased copies of my speech the trend of my remarks to express approval or disapproval of the utterance, and since I am the guest of the committee I must yield full obedience to their wishes in the matter. It is my misfortune to have misconstrued the occasion, as I find a Bryan ratification meeting where I came to attend a free and serious party deliberation.

"There seems nothing left me then save to withhold the speech from the Bryan banquet, although I cannot consistently ask the newspapers to which it has already been given to refrain from such use as they may see fit to make of it.

"Of course this is only an individual conviction submitted to the judgment of my party. I do not need to say that if Mr. Bryan shall be nominated in the wisdom of the democratic party as our candidate for next president that I shall give him my whole-hearted enthusiastic support. I thank the committee cordially for their invitation and regretting to find myself in variance with that portion of the club who have charge of the program I most sincerely wish them a joyous evening and a profitable discussion of the issues of importance to the party and people. Very sincerely,

"JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES."

In his address tonight, Mr. Graves said:

"The times may change and men may change as well before the campaign of 1908 begins. But if the conditions then are as they are today—if

Roosevelt rides the storm that is brewing in the realm of corporate capital, then our way seems open and our duty clear.

"Speaking here deliberately for myself, and in my fair judgment for the great majority of the plain and honest democrats, of the empire southern state from which I come, I believe that we should put the party below the people, the principle above the man. We should rebuke the spirit of spoils and the hunger of faction. We should affirm our principles, confess our faith, recite the necessity of the reform of corporate capital as the supreme and transcendent issue of the times, pay tribute to the great and typical American who has proved himself the dauntless and conquering captain of the peoples' cause, and then, in that great convention of our own, William J. Bryan, the one unmatched and incomparable evangel of our faith, speaking for a pure democracy and speaking for the whole plain people of the republic, should put in nomination Theodore Roosevelt for one more undisputed term of power to finish the work that he has so gloriously begun.

"It would give this great country of ours one millennial period in which factions and partisans should be stilled and the spirit of representative government should be given a new birth and a new consecration to its great ideals—to the glory of the people and the admiration of the world.

Mr. Chairman, I submit in high and representative honesty this proposition, which seems to be radical, but which I know to be right. I have never been more loyal to the life and fortunes of the great Nebraskan who is our honored guest tonight. I have never been a better and truer democrat than when I suggest this sacrifice which will make our peace with history and establish the prosperity of the people. Bury me if you will with partisan scorn tonight, but think of me tomorrow with that high and patriotic conscience which lifts the patriot above the partisan and blends the immortal principle with the real welfare of the people."

Replying to Mr. Graves' address, Mr. Bryan complimented the Georgian for his honesty and boldness and said that if there was any place in the world where absolute freedom of speech should prevail, it ought to be in a democratic gathering. He added that when he had heard Mr. Graves had retired from the hall, because there might be doubts about the wisdom of what he had to say, he sent for the Georgian had insisted that the speech be delivered.

"As at present advised," said Mr. Bryan, "I shall not present the name of Theodore Roosevelt to the national democratic convention. Bear in mind that I say 'as at present advised.'"

Mr. Bryan declared that if after due reflection on the arguments in the case he should consider that his duty lay in that direction he would present Mr. Roosevelt's name if it should prove the last act of his life. He added that if any republican were to be selected by the democrats to head their ticket the man should be Senator LaFollette.

Mr. Bryan then presented reasons, in his opinion, why Mr. Roosevelt was not the proper man for the presidency.

Mr. Bryan arraigned the republican party, but declared Mr. Roosevelt had adopted many democratic principles. Mr. Bryan thanked the club for the honor paid him in its being organized for the purpose of observing his birthday. Democracy was rapidly growing, he said, both in America and the world at large, and he foresaw an ultimate triumph of its principles.

"During the last fourteen years," he said, "the movement to secure the election of the United States senators by the people, a thoroughly democratic idea, has gained such momentum that

it has been endorsed five times in the national house and by nearly two-thirds of the states. Tariff reform has been growing not only among the farmers of the west, but among the farmers of New England until the murmurs of discontent are heard throughout the union because of the impotence of the republican party to

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* * *

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