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SENATORIAL SITUATION SENSIBLY SIZED UP.

Capt. R. W. Banks Reviews Interestingly the Political Situation in Mississippi—Thinks Vardaman Won't Win.

Pascagoula, Miss., March 25.
Editor Macon Beacon:

I confess I am one of those who see in Major Vardaman's candidacy a menace to the happiness of the people and a danger to the prosperity of the state. He impresses me as being an insincere and mischievous agitator whose teachings spring from selfish, overweening ambition and will, if he finds a following, inevitably lead to domestic dissension and the destruction of that political tranquility without which there can be neither wise nor safe government secured to the southern states.

His election would, I believe, be more than a local disaster; it would be a calamity to the South and an everlasting reproach to Mississippi.

If you put to me the question, "Watchman, what of the night?" I make answer: While Vardaman has a number of admirers and adherents in Jackson county who believe he will carry the county at the primaries in August, there are too many citizens of intelligence and political integrity, too many political men of honest thought and common sense, if you please, who are voters and who are too well advised of his indifference to his official duties and obligations, too familiar with his short comings and graver offenses, and of his loose ideas of law observance and good morals, while governor, to make it at all probable he will win at the polls in Jackson county.

With the facts already before the public, in reference to his use of G. & S. I. R. R. pass No. 864 which, in itself, was bad enough, but which he makes absolutely inexcusable and unpardonable by his disingenuous statements and dishonorable conduct about it, with the knowledge already before the public of his acceptance and use, throughout his gubernatorial term of office, of telegraph franks from both the Western Union and the Postal Telegraph Companies; with the exposure of his acceptance of unusual and expensive "champagne" courtesies at the hands of the Great Southern Hotel (of which Captain J. T. Jones is the reputed owner), and of his subsequent ungracious allusions to his then host, when he wrote in The Issue, "Old Man Jones would walk across hell on a rotten plank to grab a dirty dollar;" with the exposure of his evasions, equivocations, fables and fabrications, in connection with other crimes of omission and commission, in and out of office, of which he stands charged and of which he appears to be guilty, he has, it seems to me, very properly "cooked his goose" in Mississippi.

Again, Mississippi is distinguished as a state which rarely makes a mistake in selecting her representatives to the United States senate.

Wise selections have been the rule with her from her territorial days until the present hour, and it is scarce possible she will err this year. The difference in equipment, mental and moral, between either Percy or Alexander and Vardaman to answer to the name of Mississippi and become a spokesman for her in the senate is too marked to leave much room for doubt as to whether or not the honor will be conferred upon Vardaman. No amount of vigorous protestation of innocence on his part, or bold denial of his guilt on the part of his partisans and fierce denunciations of his opponents by him will ever satisfy the proud, spirited people of Mississippi of the major's innocence of the misdoings with which he stands openly charged, so long as his self-respecting pride is too small and his intellectual cowardice is too great for him either to face his accusers or permit them to face him on the charges he brings behind their backs and dares not make to their faces. In the role he is playing, the people see too much resemblance to the vaunting kid impudently railing at the passing wolf from a place of safety on the housetop.

Such tactics do not deserve success and have never yet won with a brave people.

From the best information I can get from over the state, the trend of public sentiment appears to be away from Vardaman. His personal popularity is passing; his political fortunes are waning, and defeat stares him in the face.

He is killing himself by ill-timed, ill-founded, ungenerous, senseless abuse of others.

If time permitted, a roll call would discover the fact that his appointees and their henchmen are his main support. At the State Capital, when he opened his campaign in the Coliseum the assemblage was presided over by appointee, "Major-General" Chalmers

M. Williamson, a carpet knight of un-fleshed sword, but wital as gallant a gentle and loyal, loving friend as ever stemmed the tide of battle or fell on any field of carnage who, in calling the meeting to order, dramatically inquired, "What means this sea of upturned faces?" and then proceeded to solve his own riddle by calling for reports. The first to answer was appointee "Judge" W. A. Roane, a long-haired apostle of Vardamanism from up-state, who reported substantially that in his neck of the woods "the cattle" were thriving and increasing, and were all for the White Chief.

When he spoke at Gulfport he was there presented to the audience by appointee "Judge" W. H. Hardy, who being a gentleman gifted in speech and plausible address almost beyond comparison, gave the White Chief a send off in euphemisms more soothing in phrase than accurate in statement.

A few nights later the White Chief was "billed" for Pascagoula. Here he was taken in hand by appointee Lord High Commissioner of Something, I do not know what, Hon. W. D. Bullard, who, in brief words and excellent taste presented to the Pascagoula the appointing power to whom he was indebted for the name of which I cannot at this moment recall. Mr. Bullard's brother, appointee "Judge" R. L. Bullard, of Hattiesburg, is also one of Vardaman's appointees; appointed, I believe, from Scott county.

And so it goes wherever the ex-governor goes on his vote-hunting expeditions, he there finds members of the noble army of appointees upon whom he confidently relies and who do not fail to rally around the flag he bears and by personal effort and appeals, drum up a crowd in recognition of past favors; and in token, too, of his excellent judgment in matters political, as evidenced by the wisdom and patriotism he displayed in the selection of themselves for posts of honor which, usually, are also positions of emolument.

If cut loose from his appointees, and it is estimated they alone number more than 1,200, and from the personal influence they are exerting for him; if deprived of the support of those men whose records long ago established their hate of the Democratic party, and its leaders under whom was won the revolution of 1875 which resulted in the forced resignation of Governor Adelbert Ames, at one time military strap of Mississippi, and the impeachment of your former distinguished fellow-townsmen, our saddle-colored lieutenant-governor, A. K. Davis—to repeat, if the support of his appointee and their following is that of the agitators of the Vardaman type who antagonized Lamar, George and Walthall and, by every art and trick of demagoguery sought to defeat the two latter, because of their opposition to the chimerical sub-treasury scheme in 1892, were withdrawn from Vardaman, he would scarce have a respectable corporal's guard now advocating his claims to further political preferment.

Take away from him the support of his appointees, "Judge" Eugene O. Sykes, of Monroe county, a chevalier sans peur et sans reproche; of appointee "Judge" W. A. Roane, of Yalobusha; of appointee "Judge" W. H. Hardy, of Harrison; of appointee "Judge" Bob Cochran, of Lauderdale; appointee "Judge" R. L. Bullard, now of Perry, et id omne genus; of appointees to military honors, General C. M. Williamson and Colonel Robert V. Rufford, Arcades ambo and their comrades of the governor's staff, seeking glory, with maiden swords, along primrose paths that lead neither to the cannon's mouth nor to the grave; of appointees of excellent record all along the line to the tune of more than the proverbial thousand and one, embracing every occupation and station from village official to chief justice of the supreme court, inclusive, all of whom, figuratively speaking, are now "tearing their shirts" to boost him along and then deprive him of the one time populist hosts and the alliance crowd led by Frank Burkett, of "wool hat" and "good bye to George and Walthall" fame (by the way, the ablest of the lot as he is now the first in merit, if not in place, the best and noblest of the race, among all the major's anti-Democratic lieutenants), Hon. John Bailey, hon. Polk Keeton and others of their ilk, together with the extreme wing of the prohibition party under the leadership of the late zealous, able and sincere partisan, B. T. Hobbs, of the Brookhaven Leader.

In Vardaman's following are men of many political creeds opposed to the Democratic party who have for years impeded its progress and prosperity as far as it was possible for them to do. Among them, too, there are, to be sure, many honest, earnest, patriotic citizens, and among these are many who are misled, because of being misinformed as to the facts, through the agency of designing demagogues.

Never before, in any political year of Mississippi history, has so many lies been told from the hustings, nor so many slanders and infamous concoctions of the brain been published in the press about any candidate as has been the case within the past twelve months in reference to Percy and Alexander, whose greatest sins are their superiority, in intellect, courage and morals and political worth to Vardaman, and their wisdom and patriotism in opposing him for the United States senate. Nor has a more honorable or patriotic legislature, taking it as a whole, ever con-

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vened in Mississippi than which elected Vercy over Vardaman to the United States senate.

Never was such political turpitude and intellectual cowardice witnessed in Mississippi as that of the White Chief who seeks to profit by the slander and defamation heaped upon the legislature and Senator Percy by others, notably the shameless Bilbo, and yet runs from truth and facts, as they apply to himself and to them, as though justice is a raging lion, and dodges joint discussions with either of his opponents like a truant school boy of the olden times dodging the schoolmaster when flogging was in fashion.

The spectacle of his dodging Percy and Alexander is as pitiful as his claims, his boastings and his denunciations of the honorable antagonist he fears and refuses to meet in honorable, fair debate are contemptible.

He is a cock that crows lustily on his own dung heap; to hear him one would think he was challenging the earth to test the keenness of his spurs. But alas! he is not "one of the blue hen's chickens." Let but a Percy or an Alexander appear upon the scene and challenge him to back his crow by his spurs and then, like a barn yard fowl, he raises his hack feathers, droops his head and tail and slinks away singing the song of the dunghill.

Lord! how I wish Old Cavett—Big Bud—God bless him, could take his money down and put it up once more on Alexander; for I know how it grieves his gallant soul to "pit a cock that won't fight"—to put his money on a chicken that runs away, because he can't stand the cold steel of the gaff. Poor Emmett! how my heart goes out to him in his distress. HE is game all right—has a heart of oak; aye, a heart of gold—and as true as death.

was seen that Percy had won, Old Cavett was among the foremost to congratulate him upon his gallant victory.

When the turmoil of the strife had ceased, and the smoke and dust of the battle had lifted so that men could see clearly to be guided by reason, it was Cavett who introduced the ringing resolution breathing the spirit of truth and chivalric honor, and expressing the very essence of justice in exonerating Senator Percy from any connection with or knowledge of bribery or corruption in connection with his election and Vardaman's defeat, which thrilled the hearts of Mississippians with pride everywhere.

It was a graceful and magnificently fitting thing to do; and it was handsomely done too. And the gentleman from Noxubee emphasized his loftiness of soul when he said: "I introduce this resolution not as a Vardaman or a Percy man, but because I do not believe there is a particle of taint upon Senator Percy's commission."

And when Percy—like a crusader of old, returned from Holy Land, entering the lists at the Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms of Ashby—came back from Washington in April 1910, and without hesitation or circumlocution, boldly issued his defy to Vardaman and Vardamanism, the challenge delighted no one more than E. D. Cavett, the Old Confederate and "Grand Cyclops of the Noxubee County Den of the Kuklux Klan."

For the eloquent words and the spirited manner of Percy, before the joint session of the Mississippi Legislature, April 15th, 1910, had struck home and rang true. They struck a responsive chord in the heart of every loyal son of Mississippi, and when the speaker concluded there was not a man within the sound of his voice but that knew his words were those of truth and soberness.

It was realized that they were the utterances of one who would die, if need be, for honor's sake.

They were words which carried hope and confidence to hearts of his followers and sent dismay to the souls of Vardaman and those advocating his cause who had engaged in disseminating the lies and slanders to which Percy had referred. It was superbly done, and there is scarce a doubt but that the knightly bearing, the courage, the courtesy and the ingenious manner of his throwing the gauntlet at the feet of the White Chief, challenging him to joint debate in which the action of the legislature (in conferring the commission of a senator upon Percy and refusing it to Vardaman because of the latter's unworthiness) would be defended "before the people of the State of Mississippi" reminded Mr. Cavett, as it did others, that "The Crusader has returned."

It was Ivanhoe, "The Disinherited Knight," home again and in the saddle, "riding straight up to the central pavilion" and striking "with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois Guilbert until it runs again." And that redoubted Knight, who at Ashby's joust was thus unexpectedly and rudely defied to mortal combat, was not more astounded than was Jas. K. Vardaman at the direct, unevasive and unequivocal challenge, then and there, to him by the newly made senator on his first home-coming.

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Your friend truly,
R. W. BANKS.

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Mrs. T. S. Murphey.