

## ONLY ONE SUCCESS

Mr. Starkey Recounts the Work of the Old Guard Since the Days of Peter Cooper

Editor Independent: What has the Old Guard to cheer them after the great sacrifice they have made for government reforms? Since the green-back movement in 1876 our efforts have only in one instance been crowned with success, namely, the stopping of the contraction of treasury notes at \$346,000,000.

Attempts to regulate railroads in the interest of the people have utterly failed. The abolishment of national banks and government control of public utilities is farther from a fact than ever. National banks now get 100 per cent of their bonds in currency and the tax is reduced one-half. Rates of transportation are higher. Monopolies are a hundredfold more numerous and the middle class is on its way down the pike that leads to slavery in a far greater degree than at the beginning or rather at the close of the civil war.

True, as a nation we are vastly better off; but as a people, not so. The special privileges have drawn from the masses and made giants of the favored class.

Why is this so, while thousands today have been educated and see the wrongs where but few saw them while the many felt them from 1873 to 1879? Do the people love to be slaves? Or have they lost confidence in all efforts to correct these evils? If the former, God pity us as a nation. If the latter what has caused it?

I cannot believe it is the love of drudgery, while I do believe it is a loss of confidence. When the green-back party sent thirteen men to congress in 1876 they were pure, honest and determined. They held the balance of power and not one of them flinched and they won a victory. They did not court any old party trades and spurned any offer of such even to the extent of a personal clash (as between General Weaver and Parks). So intent were they that the nation, even their political enemies, respected them for their candor.

Such men might since have done much more as the people gained knowledge of right as against wrong.

Since those days the populist party has claimed 26 members at one time in the congress of the United States, but where is the evidence? Ah, they were bound hand and foot because their election was the result of a barter! In the south by republican aid. They were not free men, and while the people waited they waited in vain for relief.

Finally their power was lessened; then it was that the cloven-foot of the enemy bore more heavily and set its talons deeper.

This loss of confidence is the result of stepping aside in duty's path and the result is so far-reaching that any effort at reform is met with suspicion. Even the Denver conference.

A party must always be true or weak and the farther from truth the weaker.

As one of the Old Guard, or at least one who has followed Peter Cooper since his race for reform, I am done as a populist; but believing in its principles and opposing both democratic and republican policies (which are one and the same), I am going to cast my lot with a party that, though not perfect, is true to name and sound in principle. However, I shall watch the trend of things and when honest, sincere men again stand up and show their faith by their works I will be pleased to wish them God-speed.

I cannot fully subscribe to socialism. It goes too far toward communism, while prohibition is but right and badly needed. W. C. STARKEY.

Violet, Neb.

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## The Tree of Populism

Editor Independent: I have been much of my life engaged in agriculture. Was principally reared in western Tennessee, with but poor facilities for acquiring an education. Was a soldier in the C. S. A. for four years. Returned to begin life with only an honest heart. Moved my abode to Texas in February, 1869.

Though democratic inclined, did not take any interest in politics till 1876, when that noble school began under the guidance of the farmers' alliance. I entered as a student, doing all in my might to spread its light. On the 4th day of July, 1892, at the time when the ground was being prepared to plant the tree that is to bear the fruit to feed the nation, I was standing before the people declaring the good things to come from that day's work. Many happy days have I watched the rapid growth; many hard days have I worked to nourish it and guard it from the sap-suckers that sought to perch upon it, till the withering blight of fusion attacked it. That caused it to shed its leaves, exposing its crop of ill-formed and unnatural fruit. We still rally around it, to save it from decay. Soon the unnatural fruit began to fall till only the sound was left. Some said the tree is dead, cut it down; but, no; we preferred to wait till spring, when it would put forth signs of new life.

As was indicated at the Denver conference, it was then seen to be in vigorous growth, and will, in its summer, put forth blooms with such profusion that all the world will admire it, and the laborers will be filled with joy at the approach of its fall season, when the national convention shall name a man worthy to care for its fruits when gathered at the election, when the choicest selections shall be placed in the White house, to feed the hungry who will gather there seeking relief from those who seek to rule with an iron rod. During its winter, time is afforded to digest the laws after the order of the initiative and referendum and imperative mandate, the fruits gathered from the noble tree, whose boughs spread broad and wide, that all may rest beneath them in peace; for then will come in fact, what we have now in theory, a government by and for the people, the right to govern only by the consent of the governed.

Hoping that God in his infinite wisdom may continue to guide and direct you in your efforts to lead the force as corporal of the guard to report as it is sounded along the lines. "All is well." W. D. WILSON.

Boonville, Ark.

## A Young Old Guard

Editor Independent: As you request all members of the populist party to write a short article for the Old Guard Edition, I write with pleasure the following letter:

I was born in Dover, near Clayton, in Lenawee county, Mich., February 8, 1882. Attended district school for seven years and after finishing that school I entered the Clayton high school. I was born a politician and began to study politics at the age of fifteen.

At the age of sixteen I was a strong democrat and wrote political articles

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for the Cincinnati Enquirer during John R. McLean's campaign in Ohio. McLean was the first politician I ever corresponded with. At that time I considered the democrats the "real reformers," but I was not versed in southern politics and knew nothing about the corrupt methods in the south. In 1900 I worked with the democrats. In 1901 I bolted the democratic party because it ignored the money question, repudiated the Kansas City platform in the Ohio convention and used Bryan's photograph as a carpet to walk on in the convention. I considered it an insult to Bryanites and declared that the democracy was again in the old plutocratic rut!

After that time I affiliated with the middle-of-the-road populist party. I cast my first vote for the prohibition ticket last spring. There was no populist ticket nominated and I could not vote the old party ticket.

Government issue of money without the intervention of banks, direct legislation, utter destruction of the American saloon, public ownership of trusts and the election of United States senators by a direct vote of the people are the great issues before the people today for consideration.

The work of the Denver conference is all right if we will permit the people to nominate their own candidates for the various offices. I stand for the people and sincerely believe the people ought to nominate their own candidates. If the populist party will only stick to their policy in regard to independent party action, then victory is in sight.

I am a journalist now and I intend to devote my time to this work.

E. J. PAYNE, B. L.  
Clayton, Mich.

## Minnesota

Editor Independent: My father was a Jackson democrat; my mother an old line whig. The lesson I was taught was to have the moral courage to do what was right and never run; and in politics I have always tried to carry the lesson with me.

I was born September 8, 1838, which made me old enough to cast my maiden vote for president in 1860, which went for Abraham Lincoln. Left the republican party in 1862-3, when the National Bank act became the law of the land, and have never voted with the party since.

My support and suffrage was given to McClellan in 1864; Seymour in 1868. In 1872 did not vote. In 1876, for Peter Cooper; in 1880, for Hancock; 1884 and 1888, for Grover Cleveland; Weaver, in 1892; Bryan, in '96, under protest; 1900, Barker and Donnelly received my support and what suffrage I possessed. And I expect to support the next populist candidate for president.

The Denver conference was a step in the right direction and if followed up by men of courage, liberty can be restored, the money devils driven from the country as Christ drove them from the temple at Jerusalem. Oh, for a Nehemiah (read 5th ch. Nehemiah) and one to pattern after him. Liberty and civilization are of the past with mankind driven from the face of God's green earth, unless the money devils are placed in limbo. Money is a creature of the government and interest thereon should go to the government, and not the individual.

A. T. D. AUSTIN.

Alden, Minn.

## Will Stay to the End

Editor Independent: Your request to hear from "the Old Guard who have come all the way over the trail" prompts me to send you a few words. I think that I am "one of 'em," but I know that I am not the only one left to tell the tale. In my present mood I am feeling somewhat lonesome as I recall those who have passed on and into the great beyond. Of those who organized the Nebraska state farmers' alliance in January, 1881, and in 1882 put a state ticket in the field, and elected our candidate for governor in 1890, how many have gone? And then

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to think how we fused with those who counted us out! There—I am too full for further utterance! I was in the people's independent party movement, from the beginning, and I am going to be in it while I live. I approve the action of the Denver conference and I only wish I had the money to push it along. I would have more money if I had not spent so much for the cause in the years past, especially in the early '80's when I was a candidate for governor on an independent ticket. But you can count on me to the end. E. P. INGERSOLL.

Tecumseh, Neb.

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