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The McClure-Nicolay Controversy—Governor Curtin's Testimony in the Case.

A controversy has sprung up and been in progress for some weeks between Col. McClure, of the Philadelphia Times, and JOHN G. NICOLAY, on the question whether President LINCOLN was in favor of the renomination of HANNIBAL HAMLIN for Vice President in 1864. Upon the recent death of Mr. HAMLIN the editor of the Times wrote an article in which he said that Mr. LINCOLN had preferred ANDREW JOHNSON to HANNIBAL HAMLIN as his associate on the ticket in 1864. He wrote from his recollection of events in which he was a prominent participant. NICOLAY contradicted his statement, and hence the controversy in which the latter has not been left a leg to stand on. It may be well enough to state that NICOLAY was the private secretary of President LINCOLN and in collaboration with JOHN HAY wrote the romance published in the Century Magazine which purported to be a life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Inasmuch as Colonel McClure was on the most intimate terms with Mr. LINCOLN, and one of his confidants in political matters, he was in a position to know his wishes in the matter in dispute. The evidence the Colonel brings to his support, with the particulars of detail in the relation of concurrent events touching the convention, fully sustains his position and completely knocks the private secretary out. One thing is quite certain—had Mr. LINCOLN desired HAMLIN on the ticket with him, in 1864, no one will doubt that he could have brought it about.

As NICOLAY, in his life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, did not hesitate to distort the truth to make falsehood appear reasonable in dealing with military commanders he disliked, we are not surprised that he jumped at conclusions in the matter of the Lincoln-Hamlin question. His want of truthfulness will destroy his claim to historical accuracy. Colonel McClure is sustained by DANA, of the Sun, who held equally intimate personal and political relations with Mr. LINCOLN.

Very important and convincing testimony in this controversy is that of Governor CURTIN, who was in the midst of the movements that brought about the formation of the Republican Presidential ticket in 1864. He co-operated with McClure in those stirring political events and fully sustains the latter's statement that JOHNSON was substituted for HAMLIN because Mr. LINCOLN desired it. To a Pittsburg interviewer the Governor is represented as saying: "I never heard of anything else but McClure's idea. I always regarded it as a settled matter that LINCOLN wanted JOHNSON as a matter of policy; and I never thought that prejudice, or anything of that sort, inspired LINCOLN in the least in any of his actions, so far at least as they relate to HAMLIN; and I believe the policy he pursued in desiring JOHNSON was a most commendable one."

"It was proper and advisable to recognize a state of the union from the southern section by selecting one of her prominent, loyal and worthy sons, as JOHNSON was, and not keep everything North, and thereby show a laudable disposition to settle the difference existing between the two sections of the country. I firmly believe that LINCOLN was considering only the interest of the nation, and not his personal feeling at all, when he favored JOHNSON."

"As far as I know, all the other loyal governors held the same attitude towards LINCOLN's policy as I did. It was an order of LINCOLN's to make the governors of loyal states ever preferred and always admissible into his presence, no matter what he was doing, because he always took it for granted that they called to see him on some vital and important matter; and so I had frequent confidential interviews with LINCOLN, and I must say I never saw either NICOLAY or HAY in the room."

"The position NICOLAY has taken in the controversy I think is absurd, and he will not be sustained in it by any men that have any truly personal knowledge of LINCOLN's policy and the motives that inspired it. I know very well that McClure went to Baltimore to work for JOHNSON and I approved the scheme most heartily."

Hail to the Farmer!

Hail to the farmer! The wheel of fortune is fast turning and he is to be king. Dame nature has at last turned a smiling countenance toward the tiller of the soil and will fill his lap with treasure. So say the wise men—the philosophers and thinkers of this era. The farmer will be dictator in the near future, Alliance monuments, high taxation, grasshoppers, etc., to the contrary notwithstanding. One of the aforesaid wise men has been delving into statistics—making notes and comparisons. Behind the clouds of adversity which have darkened the farmer's home for years he sees the sun still shining. This wise man is ERASTUS WIMAN and in the July number of the North American Review, in an article entitled "The Farmer on Top," he sends greeting to the farmer and predicts for him a glorious era of prosperity and good fortune. Mr. WIMAN declares that in spite of the apparent folly of making the assertion, there is nevertheless an impending scarcity of food products.

Notwithstanding widened agricultural areas and improved facilities for gathering and shipping their products, there is slowly creeping up a power to consume more than can be produced. This startling assertion is made after careful and patient investigation, and the result shows in statistics, not to be questioned, that "the power of absorption or consumption of food products has at length caught up to the power of production; and that the possible ratio of increase in consumption is much greater than the immediate possible ratio of increase in the growth of food."

Mr. WIMAN confesses that his researches have been so startling in their results as to be hardly credited. He mentions two important facts of surprising character which point to better times for the farmer. One is the extent of the exhaustion of arable soils, and another that no more new wheat fields remain unoccupied in the United States. In quoting Mr. WIMAN's closing remarks the farmers of this country can best gain an idea as to the opinion he has formed through his observations. He says: "Sufficient has been adduced to make it plain that the possibility of prices remaining at a low ebb is past. It is clear, therefore, that the farmer hereafter will realize a fair profit upon his operations. An increase equal to 40 per cent. in the paying power of the farmer of North America will make at this time a greater economic revolution than has ever yet been witnessed. The first thing that will happen will be that the farmer will get out of debt. The weary waiting for better times, the nights of sleepless anxiety, and the days of unrequited labor, the narrowness of resources, and the eager desire of the young people for better modes of living, have all been borne in expectation of the day that now dawns upon every industrious farmer in the land. It seems impossible to doubt from all that has been adduced that such a change is coming. This change will put the American farmer on top. It will make him, of all classes in the world, the most prosperous."

While the monopolistic tariffs are rejoicing over the alleged fact that the McKinley tariff is reducing European workmen to a condition of starvation, the "Central Labor Federation" of New York has sent delegates to the International Labor Convention at Brussels. It thus appears that laboring men do not sympathize with the effort of monopoly to antagonize the labor interests of the world.

Splendid Prospects.

We have the promise that this year's harvest will be the greatest on record, and the bins will fairly burst with the golden grain. There is a feeling of uncertainty as to the ability of the railroads running from the great grain centers to the sea board, to move the crop, but some of them are making ready by largely increasing the number of their cars. Short crops in Europe will widen the market and increase the demand. A good grain crop, with even lower prices, makes prosperous times, and with an abundance of fruit, as is the case this season, the health record is always higher. Altogether, the condition of the country is far from being as bad as it might be.

They Won't Investigate.

When the Bardsley defalcation was announced the State Legislature was in session and Representative WHERRY promptly proposed a legislative investigation, which was eminently proper, as the State was reported to be a loser to the amount of more than a million dollars through the negligence or incapacity of the Auditor General and State Treasurer. It was the State's business, and it was the Legislature's duty to inquire into it. But the Republican members didn't want such investigation as Mr. WHERRY would have instituted, for it would have been an investigation that would have investigated. There had been a roving investigating committee already appointed, with GEORGE HANDY SMITH as chairman, whose object was to look into nothing in particular and close its eyes to everything in general, and the leaders thought it more prudent to hand the Bardsley matter over to this committee, and there it is slumbering and will continue to slumber. The committee is paying no attention whatever to the heavy loss of State money in the Bardsley case, and HANDY SMITH, the chairman, has slipped off to Europe.

The people have a right to know the facts in this matter. It was their money that was stolen. A committee of which WHERRY would have been chairman would have got to the bottom and obtained the facts, but the Handy Smith arrangement is intended to cover up rather than to expose, in accordance with the treasury ring's way of doing things.

The sugar bounties will make a big hole in the revenue of the government. On cane sugar it is estimated that \$15,000,000 will be required to pay the bounties this year, and for maple sugar \$9,000,000 more will be needed. It is suspected that some queer stuff has been worked up into maple sugar in order to secure the government bonus. Consumers who believe that they have been benefited by the removal of the tariff on sugar will have to contribute to these bounties by paying increased duties on other necessities. The money to pay them can come from no other source than taxation.

Mr. Blaine's Condition.

Startling rumors were afloat this week in regard to the condition of Mr. BLAINE, there being one report that he had died. This fortunately was not the case. The intelligence concerning him is conflicting. From one source it is reported that he is physically prostrated, while from another it is announced that there is nothing very seriously the matter with him. The real fact in the case probably is that he is not in as bad nor in as good a condition as these conflicting reports make him out to be.

A dispatch from Bar Harbor to the Cincinnati Enquirer, on the authority of Dr. TAYLOR, Mr. BLAINE's physician, is to the effect that his trouble is not kidney disease and that neither his mind, his sight, nor his hearing is affected, as has been reported. His ailments are acute dyspepsia and gout; he has been put on a diet of baked apples and cream, on which he is thriving. Dr. TAYLOR promises that his patient will be in his usual health in a month—but he does not say that his usual health is good health. The President at Cape May on Saturday refused to say anything of Mr. BLAINE's health, and told his inquirer to go to Bar Harbor for information. This would indicate that the President is not taking much interest in Mr. BLAINE's physical condition.

Nine months have passed since the McKinley tariff law went into operation. In that time tin plate to the amount of \$24,298,927 has been imported. There has been an increased profit in this to those who have imported this article, as most of it came in under the old tariff rates and will be sold under the new. NEIDRINGHAUS and his associates will make more money on their imported tin-plate than they expect to make on the domestic production, to ensure a greater profit on which they are already clamoring for an increase of duty that will amount to four cents a pound.

Democrats Should Now Go to Work.

At the meeting of the Democratic State Executive committee, in Philadelphia, on Thursday, the time for holding the State convention was fixed for the 3d of September, and Harrisburg named as the place. The best of feeling prevailed, and cheering intelligence of the political outlook was received from all parts of the State. The fixing of the time for the State convention is considered the opening of the preliminaries of the fall campaign, and, from this time forward, the Democracy will be supposed "to set their house in order." Work cannot be begun too early. We do not mean the open, active, noisy work of the battle, but the quiet, and often the most effective work, that precedes the contest. It is an important matter to "clear the deck for action," and frequently judicious preliminaries have a great deal to do with success in the field. Much can be done in this line, and we call upon Democrats of the various townships and boroughs to look about them without delay. If the ranks are broken at any point, repair them; if there be any dissatisfaction, heal the wounds; any lukewarm in the great cause, incite them to action; and use all fair means to weld the great party of the people into a solid, compact body. The November contest will be an important one; as it were, a skirmish preliminary to the great battle of '92. The Democracy have great hope of carrying the State; the current sets in our favor, and, with the proper exertions, success will perch on our banner at the polls.

An Opinion as to Pennsylvania's Choice.

Ex-Congressman MAISH, of this State, was recently interviewed by a Philadelphia Times reporter on some of the prominent topics of the day, and among other things the ex-Congressman stated his belief that Mr. CLEVELAND was the most popular Democrat with the Pennsylvania voters and their choice for the Presidency.

As Mr. MAISH says, if Mr. PATTISON should desire the Presidential nomination he would get the support of the Pennsylvania delegation in the national convention, but notwithstanding this Mr. CLEVELAND would still remain the choice of the Pennsylvania Democracy. The ex-President possesses elements of strength that no other man in the nation can wield. The contest next year will be a tremendous struggle to inaugurate an era of reform, and, realizing the fact that their monopolistic privileges will be vitally endangered, the beneficiaries of high protection will utilize every method to win, and strain all their resources. To meet and overcome the influences that will be exerted to maintain monopoly interests, it is believed that Mr. CLEVELAND would be the most powerful champion of reform in that direction.

The Emperor of Germany has made a great success of his visit to England and will leave behind him an excellent impression on English opinion. The speech he made at the historic Guildhall, as the guest of the Mayor and Council of London, was really an admirable production, graceful in language, and breathing what seemed to be a sincere desire for universal and continued peace, that the nations may apply themselves to the development of science, art and trade.

Significant Action.

The session of the State Teachers' Association recently held at Bedford was the most successful in the history of the association, both financially and in attendance. The interest of the occasion was heightened by the addresses of Governor PATTISON and ex-Governor BEAVER, which were especially able and timely efforts. The drift of professional opinion was indicated by the fact that none but approving words are reported of the Governor's veto of the Compulsory Education bill. The efforts of certain outside persons to have resolutions adopted condemning the Governor's action were rebuked by ex-Governor BEAVER, who remarked, among other things, that teachers should interfere as little as possible with school legislation. The veto message has evidently shaped public opinion on this important question.

Spawls from the Keystone.

- An apple-jack boom is promised to Berks county distilleries.
- Mrs. Mahony, of Bellevue, was found asleep on her husband's coffin.
- The wheat yield in Berks is forty bushels to the acre in many places.
- Twenty-seven Italians joined the Presbyterian Church in Scranton on Sunday.
- Norway rats attacked and badly bit three children of John Rubright, of Temple.
- A pile-driver fell upon Frank Hartranft, of Williamsport and he will probably die.
- The State branch of the American Federation of Labor will meet in Lancaster on August 17.
- Dr. Thomas Hazzard, of Allegheny, is organizing a Sparrow League to kill the English pest.
- The Cataqua Iron Mills will start up on Monday without agreeing to the amalgamated scale.
- A fall of 600 feet down a coal mine instantly killed Isaac Paul, of Shemokin, Friday night.
- A dozen partridges have been hatched in an incubator by Dr. Hammond Nish, of Lebanon.
- Williamsport ministers earnestly protested against the Grand Army parade there on Sunday.
- The Green Ridge Iron Works, Scranton, have resumed with non-union men in place of strikers.
- Wibur F. Latrop, a well-known lawyer of Carbondale, was taken to the Danville insane Asylum.
- The District Assembly of Knights of Labor at Reading are booming the Constitution Convention.
- Over \$12,000 was raised on Sunday at the corner-stone laying of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Reading.
- Adam Munniger, of Butler, shot and fatally wounded his brother John. They had been on bad terms for years.
- Nazereth's new lace-mill, with a capacity of 84,000 yards daily, was started Monday by S. Freidberger, of Philadelphia.
- The body of Hugh Sharp, that has lain in the colliery at Summit Hill, Hazleton, since May 8, was recovered on Sunday.
- Philip Bevan, a Welsh miner, dropped dead in the street at Pottsville on Sunday night, on his way home from church.
- Friends paid the \$3000 which David Syger, of Lancaster, secured upon alleged forgery, and the prosecution was withdrawn.
- A freight car thrown into a switch by an express train killed Mrs. Jennie Sherman, of Scranton, while walking on the siding.
- Tallie Morgan, the Prohibition leader, says the coming Prohibition State Convention will protest against the Baker ballot bill.
- The Jermyn Post Office, in Lackawanna county, has been boycotted because of the appointment of Mrs. Walkey as Postmaster.
- A ten year old daughter of Frank Boggs, of Norristown, has been speedless for some days from the effect of an attack of malaria.
- The loss of a leg each was the penalty paid by Harry James and a man named Wooda of Lansford, for attempting to board a freight train.
- A Pittsburg doctor paid the fees to secure a divorce for a woman whom he intended marrying, but when she was free she fled with another.
- Detective John Shab, while taking a prisoner to Lancaster, was knocked down by another man and fearfully beaten by the rogues, who escaped.
- After once trying to commit suicide Charles Orlando, in the Ridgeway jail, cut a gash in his neck with a razor and now his arms are pinioned.
- Detective Jacob Shaub, while taking a prisoner to Lancaster, was knocked down by another man and fearfully beaten by the rogues, who escaped.
- Ellen Penn, of Lebanon, slashed her husband in the head and side with a butcher-knife and then frightened away the officer who came to arrest her.
- Elmer Shultz, of Springfield township, Bucks county, fell off a load of hay upon a fork, the prong of which ran through his body, and he will probably die.
- While shifting cars Monday in Himmelrich's boat yard, at Lewisburg, Silas Cornelius was run over by a loaded lumber car, and his body was cut in two.
- A band of White Caps near Litz sent a threatening letter to Kissel Hill, a well-known farmer, telling him to remain quiet or else they would burn his house.
- Livermyan Snyder, of Allentown, has just discovered that a horse he has sold to a Newark, N. J., man was stolen from there before he purchased it.
- Ella Stoley, of Allegheny, drank carbolic acid with suicide in view. She may recover, but the poison has destroyed her vocal cords, and she will never speak again.
- An unknown man, who had evidently committed suicide by cutting his throat and the arteries of his hand, was found under a tree near Schuylkill, Bucks county.
- August Achtenberg was buried by a fall of earth while digging a sewer in Hazleton. The earth was removed in time to save his life and he escaped with only a few bruises.
- As Broadax Smith's colored camp-meeting in Bunker's Grove, near Pittsburg, on Sunday there were, besides the regulation services such little interludes as a fight, a speak-easy and a poker game.
- Mr. W. H. Rogers, of Canada, is putting in a new fish way at the Columbia dam. The new way is of an improved style and will allow the fish to come above the dam more readily than the old one.
- Tillie Good, of Morrellville, became ill a week ago and was allowed to die from neglect of friends and neighbors. Physicians refused to attend her and neighbors refused to lend any assistance whatever.
- While a small boy named Horace Hunsicker, of Lebanon, with several companions, was playing in the Quittapahilla creek, he knelt down and a piece of glass in the bed of the stream cut his knee to the bone, severing a tendon.
- Charles Rolander, a Swede, employed at Grant's tannery in Ridgway, made a desperate attempt at suicide Sunday evening by cutting his throat with a razor. He had been drinking very heavily since the Fourth and was evidently suffering from delirium tremens.
- Mrs. Abram Skillman, of Hampton Junction was accidentally shot by Dr. George Fenwick, and is in a precarious condition. She was picking cherries in her garden, when the doctor, who lives next door, came out to shoot some troublesome sparrows. He did not see the woman and aimed in her direction. The shot took effect in her head and neck.