

HONEST, ABLE CANDIDATES

Light on Careers of Which Pennsylvania Democrats Are Proud.

WORTHY OF INDEPENDENT VOTES.

Commendation Which Shows the Hope of Anti-Quay Republicans For the Success of the Champions of Clean State Government.

Who and what are the Pennsylvania Democratic nominees, Stephen Leslie Mestrezat, for justice of the supreme court; Charles J. Reilly, for judge of the superior court, and William T. Creasy, for state treasurer?

What does the public press, particularly the formidable array of newspapers opposed to Quayism and Republican machine rule, say of them, and what is the prospect of their support from independent voters at the polls?

Can Mestrezat, Reilly and Creasy sweep the state outside of Philadelphia and Allegheny counties, and can the corrupt machines of the great cities be prevented from annulling the will of the remainder of the state?

STAND ON THEIR OWN MERITS.

Sketches follow which show that if faultless management had characterized state treasury rule throughout the many years of state finance domination by the Quay power, the Democratic candidates, on the merits of their own achievements and high character, and on the strength of what their candidacy assures for better home rule and reformed state government, would still stand worthy of the votes of all good citizens.

How much greater the reason, in view of only the state government scandals exposed during the last year or two, for expecting that independent



STEPHEN L. MESTREZAT.

votes will enable the Democratic candidates to overturn the Republican machine in November, and thus brighten the prospects for an honest majority in the state legislature to be elected next year.

This presentation of Democratic claims upon the honest judgment of a people not to be deluded by the throwing of irrelevant national issues dust into their eyes, will include testimony from the Republican press as to the excellence of the Democratic state convention's work. There can be no mistaking the purpose of the anti-Quay Republican newspapers to go as far as they can for the election of Reilly and Creasy. There is, of course, no doubt of the election of the candidates of the two great parties for supreme justice, under constitutional provision.

NEED NOT FEAR PHILADELPHIA.

With this basis of reasonable hope for routing the machine cohorts in "the country" we have unprecedented antagonism to Quayism in Philadelphia, while in Allegheny resides the chief of the insurgents, Senator Flinn, whose profession of support for the ticket the Quay managers regard as a joke, and another anti-Quay senator, Mr. Magee. Nearly all the principal Philadelphia Republican daily newspapers commend the Democratic candidates, and most vigorously condemn the Quay machine in expressions of hope for its annihilation.

The utmost confidence in the present honored management of the Democratic party has been voiced by the anti-Quay Republican press, particularly in Philadelphia. It was the well founded hope of "the country" for Philadelphia that made Pittston invincible in 1852 and in 1890. Philadelphia Democrats today are united and harmonious in consequence of the wise local leadership as applied to the present county ticket. The Democrats there are as one man, and the Quay machine is opposed within the Republican party by a power greater than ever before confronted it. Why, then, should the honest "country" fear this year for Philadelphia?

Let the rest of the story speak for itself.

JUDGE MESTREZAT'S CAREER.

By an unprecedented majority Judge Mestrezat was called to the bench of the Fourteenth judicial district, and for more than five years he presided with signal ability over its courts. He brought to the bench the ripe experience acquired by 20 years of tireless labor in the practice of the law in all its departments. He was equipped as few have been to assume and properly discharge the judicial duties in a district of varied industries, entailing litigation covering every branch of the law. His experience upon the bench extends to every section of the state where he has been called in the trial of cases which have attracted the attention of the profession generally. In all his judicial actions Judge Mestrezat has been fair, fearless and faithful.

He is a student of the constitution.

He understands the framework of the law and is familiar with every stream and current of authority. He is a close student of the history of legislation from its inception. He is thoughtful, profound, painstaking and conscientious. He is familiar with the boundaries of state and federal jurisdiction and acquainted with the decisions which are the "peaks and promontories, the headlands and beacons of the law." Knowing neither friend or foe, blind to every prompting of interest, a protector of the rights of all, Judge Mestrezat has become a commanding figure in the brilliant galaxy of jurists for which the bench of Pennsylvania is famed.

STRUGGLES OF EARLY LIFE.

Hon. Stephen Leslie Mestrezat is a comparatively young man, born Feb. 19, 1848, in Mapletown, a village of Greene county, Pa., near the Monongahela river. His people were and are still tillers of the soil. Aided alone by his untiring industry, Mr. Mestrezat began his struggle with the obstacles that usually beset the pathway of the young lawyer. He became a student at Waynesburg college, and was graduated from that institution with merit honors.

Having laid a foundation for a legal course, so far as a thorough knowledge of the classics could afford, he entered the law department of Washington and Lee university, when that famous institution was under the presidency of that distinguished southerner, General Robert E. Lee. Among Mr. Mestrezat's preceptors were two of America's foremost lawyers, Hon. J. Randolph Tucker and Judge J. W. Brockenbrough.

A DETERMINED STUDENT.

Here, among the hills of Virginia, young Mestrezat spent his hours in ceaseless toil, familiarizing himself with those great principles which form the anatomy of the law. He was graduated from this institution in 1871, at the head of his class of 22, and the same year was admitted to the practice of the law in Greene county, Pa. In 1873 he went to Uniontown a comparative stranger, and began the practice of the law at the county seat of Fayette. Twenty years later he returned to his native county as judge of her courts, Greene county being at that time a part of the Fourteenth judicial district.

Of Judge Mestrezat's success at the bar the profession in Pennsylvania is familiar. At the end of the first two years of his practice he was rewarded with a larger clientele than is usual with a young attorney. His success had been such that it attracted the attention of the late Chief Justice Charles E. Boyle, then the leader of the Fayette county bar, and in 1875 he suggested to Mestrezat the formation of a law partnership. The latter readily assented, and from that time Mr. Mestrezat became a prominent figure in the state and federal courts. The firm of Boyle & Mestrezat continued until President Cleveland appointed Mr. Boyle chief justice of the supreme court of Washington territory.

STANDING IN SUPREME COURT.

The reports of the supreme court of Pennsylvania show that he was engaged in nearly every important cause taken to that court from Fayette county during his practice at the bar. The Dawson Bridge company case marked the close of his career before the supreme court. This case attracted the attention of the profession throughout the state. In the court below Mr. Mestrezat was defeated, being unable to make the court see his position on the legal principles involved. They had not been passed upon by the supreme court of the state. A large verdict under the instructions of the court was given against the bridge company, Mr. Mestrezat's client. He directed his client to take an appeal to the supreme court, where he argued the many intricate legal questions involved in the case, and secured a reversal of the judgment of the court below. His position on the law was fully vindicated and sustained by the higher court.

In all the years of his practice no attorney ever came into court with his cases more thoroughly prepared. He was a ready and forceful speaker, and was prepared for every defense. He was true to his clients, making their cause his own. Feeling responsibility, he listened patiently to details, and to his industry there were only the limits of time and strength.

HE IS A DEMOCRAT.

Judge Mestrezat is a Democrat, possessing the Jeffersonian requisites of ability, honesty and faithfulness to the constitution. Prior to going on the bench he was active in the interest of the success of his party, though he never sought a political office. He comes from a long line of Democratic ancestors, and is in his political faith to the manner born. In 1877 he was elected district attorney of Fayette county on the Democratic ticket in one of the most remarkable and fiercely contested campaigns in the history of the county, and served a full term of three years from the first Monday of January, 1878. In 1884 and '85 he was chairman of the Democratic central committee of Fayette county. He was a delegate to the convention that nominated Black for governor in 1886. He was also a delegate to the Democratic convention at Chicago in 1892 that nominated Cleveland for president.

When Robert E. Pattison was elected governor in 1890 Mr. Mestrezat's friends asked that he be appointed attorney general in the governor's cabinet. While the appointment did not come to the western part of the state, the strong endorsement of his candidacy by the press of western Pennsylvania was a fitting tribute to his ability as a lawyer. His candidacy received the endorsement of the Fayette county bar. Leading lawyers and jurists in every section of the commonwealth also united in asking his appointment.

HIS FORCEFUL PERSONALITY.

Judge Mestrezat was married about 12 years ago to Eliza Wilson Ewing, daughter of Hon. John K. Ewing of Uniontown, his wife dying two years

later. He is a member of the First Presbyterian church of Uniontown, and makes his home at the West End hotel there.

He is most democratic in his manner. His nature is frank and open. He impresses you with the conviction that he makes no attempt to bridle his tongue or to control his natural feelings in his intercourse with his friends or acquaintances. This is because of his natural good sense and freedom from guile. He is one of the most approachable of men. There is an innate but quiet dignity, with not the slightest suggestion of loftiness in his manner, for he appears to have little personal vanity, but a proper appreciation of himself.

In a famous local damage case, in which he represented a well known railroad, he surprised the attorney for the plaintiff by the latitude which he allowed him in examining the witnesses. He allowed them to press the most surprising amount of damages, and the court was puzzled to account for the singular want of caution displayed to minimize the amount of loss shown. He was, however, careful in some apparently unimportant question as to the locality where the accident had occurred. The witness swore with great particularity.

Before the case was given to the jury Mr. Mestrezat had the court visit the scene of the accident, when it became apparent at a glance that the story of the occurrence itself was false. He had allowed the witnesses to swear too much for their own case.

A characteristic incident occurred on the train upon which he rode from Philadelphia on the evening of the adjournment of the convention. At Harrisburg it happened that his sleeper was hitched on to the train containing coaches in which were some of his home friends who had been "boosting his boom" at the capital. The judge was invited in to see them, and he readily did so.

Among the delegates was one very old gentleman, who had failed to get a berth and had promise of passing an uncomfortable night. The judge said: "Boys, I guess I will go along with you and the old gentleman shall have my berth," and he insisted upon this arrangement, landing at home in the midst of a throng of enthusiastic followers, who escorted him in triumph to his hotel.

TRIBUTE TO GREAT DEMOCRATS.

Accepting the nomination from the notification committee at Williamsport, Judge Mestrezat said:

"If it shall be ratified by the people at the polls in November I shall not fail to realize the great responsibility it imposes, and shall devote my time and best thought to the performance of the duties of the office, and this responsibility is doubly emphasized by the fact that the party, since the judiciary system for the state became elective, has named for the same position a Woodward, a Black, a Thompson, a Sharswood, a Trunkay, a Clark and a McCullum. For brilliancy of intellect, for integrity of purpose, for legal learning and judicial fairness, I may be pardoned in saying that their superiors have sat upon the bench of no state in the Union. These names are indelibly written in the history of our jurisprudence, and the party which gave to the state the services of such men need not, in this respect, fear the record of its past. It at least is secure."

REPUBLICAN AND INDEPENDENT PRAISE.

Some of the commendation bestowed by Philadelphia Republican and independent newspapers upon Judge Mestrezat's nomination follows:

"The nomination (Judge Mestrezat's) is a thoroughly good one, acceptable to all the people in every section of the commonwealth. The candidate's career, as outlined in our news columns, has been as creditable as it has been successful, and his reputation is a sufficient guarantee that he will be a useful and honored member of the court to which his nomination necessarily elevates him."—Phila. Evening Telegraph, Rep.

HAD A HOST OF COMPETITORS.

"The nomination of Judge Mestrezat of Fayette county for justice of the supreme court is, of course, equivalent to an election. What is known of him here is favorable to his reputation on the bench. His nomination was brought about after an unusually long and stubborn contest, with a host of competitors, but it has been accomplished without any strife or friction which has left the Democratic party the worse for it."—Phila. Eve. Bulletin, Rep.

HE IS WELL QUALIFIED.

"The Democratic nominee (Judge Mestrezat) is in the prime of life, and in the natural course of events can hope to serve out the 21 years' term to which he will be elected. He has had judicial experience that well qualifies him for the promotion."—Phila. Press, Rep.

STATE TO BE CONGRATULATED.

"The state is to be congratulated on the fact that the nominee (Judge Mestrezat) has a good reputation to start with. He has had 25 years' practice in the law, and has held his present judicial position since 1893, with credit to himself and honor to his district. Of his Democracy there is no question, and there appears to be none of his judicial acumen and personal integrity."—Phila. Public Ledger, Ind. Rep.

A MOST HONORED JURIST.

"The candidate for the supreme court, Judge S. L. Mestrezat, is one of the most honored of those who sit on the bench in western Pennsylvania. He remained away from the convention city during the sessions, and took no active part in the conduct of his campaign."—Phila. Times, Ind.

SKETCH OF CHARLES J. REILLY.

The following narrative of the interesting and honorable career of a conspicuously self-made man, Charles J. Reilly, candidate for judge of the superior court, is from the forthcoming publication of the proceedings of the Democratic state convention, compiled by J. W. Moyer, secretary of the state committee:

"One of the chief glories of our institutions has ever been the fact that, no matter how high or humble a beginning one may have had, they afford all persons an equal opportunity to rise in the scale of excellence from the lowest to the highest position of influence and power in the gift of the

people. The race is open to all comers on equal terms. Were I to attempt to enumerate the names and describe the lives of the great men of humble origin who have embellished American history with their achievements in all departments of human endeavor I would have to rewrite the greater and most brilliant part of it. Common observation may be epitomized in the statement that nearly all, if not all, our great statesmen, jurists, scientists and leaders in finance and trade, began life and acquired early learning and experience in the school of adversity. In the rude 'Mill Boy of the Slashes' we soon behold the polished orator; in the robust and muscular rail splitter the world is compelled to admire and acknowledge one of the greatest statesmen and benefactors of his race in ancient and modern times.

HIS EARLY STRUGGLES.

"So with our candidate, Charles J. Reilly, the subject of this sketch. We first find him removing from the city of his birth in order to engage in commercial pursuits. We note with ad-



CHARLES J. REILLY.

miration the difficulties he encountered and overcame; his struggles with adversity for light and education and final triumphant admission to the bar of his adopted county, under the guidance and tutelage of its eminent leaders; his elevation to honorable and responsible office in the community, and the record of his faithful and fearless discharge of his official duties, and finally we have this shipping clerk for a lumber firm of his adopted city, now become an eminent lawyer, nominated without seeking for the high and honorable position of superior court judge, a position of great honor and dignity. In the prime and freshness of young manhood, he is unanimously presented to the people by a great party for one of the highest and most honorable offices in the state.

"To the thousands of young men in state and nation who are struggling, as he struggled for fame, often almost in despair, his career and achievements will stand at once as a bright and inspiring example and incentive to devoted and courageous effort and continued industry. The keynote of his success is probably contained in the following extract from his speech before the convention which nominated him on assuming his duties as presiding officer, but which was uttered at a time when he could have had no thought whatever of such an event. He said: 'This is a government of the people, by the people, for the people.' All men are equal here. The law secures equal justice to all alike in their private affairs.

TO EMINENCE IN HIS ADOPTED CITY.

"The claim of excellence is also recognized, and when a citizen is in any way distinguished he is preferred in the public service, not as a matter of privilege, as in our older institutions, but as a reward of merit. Poverty is not a bar, and it matters not whether one is a rail splitter, or a male driver on the canal; all have equal opportunities.

"Charles J. Reilly was born in the Twentieth ward of Philadelphia, Sept. 23, 1856, and is the eldest in a family of 11 children, eight of whom are now living. He received his education in the public schools of that city and by private tuition. In his 18th year he removed to Williamsport, Pa., to take charge of the shipping department of the works of J. Bartles & Co. Subsequently he attended the Williamsport Commercial college, from which institution he graduated in 1875.

"He was then engaged to keep books for the said firm. While thus employed he conceived the idea of studying medicine, but after about a year's application to the science he changed his mind and determined to study law. In May, 1882, he passed his preliminary examination, and was registered as a law student with the law firm of Candor & Munson, with whom he remained six months, when the necessities of his family required him to earn means for their support. He became bookkeeper for George Bubb & Sons, of the city of his adoption, and while filling this position he devoted every spare moment to his legal studies. Having saved sufficient to permit him to resign his position, he entered the law office of Hon. John J. Metzger, now president judge of the Twenty-ninth judicial district, where he completed his studies June 4, 1884, and was admitted to practice in the several courts of Lycoming county.

"He was also a member of Chataqua college (C. L. S. C.), class of '90, having studied the four years' course. A MAJORITY THAT MEANT SOMETHING.

"He has since his admission been admitted to practice in the circuit and district courts of the United States and supreme and superior courts of Pennsylvania.

"In 1885 he was elected chairman of the Democratic county committee of Lycoming county, and demonstrating his ability as an organizer he was re-elected to the same position in 1886, also in 1887 and 1888, and, therefore, served four years.

"In November, 1889 he was elected district attorney by the largest majority ever received in the county for any county office up to that time. In the discharge of his duties in that office he showed an unflinching determination in the cause of justice and a

Continued on page 4.

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