

## THE WEST IN THE CAMPAIGN \*

I do not believe that the Eastern people have the faintest idea of the intensity and fervor with which the friends of honest government and sound money are waging the campaign in the West. I wish I could impress upon the men of the East the debt of gratitude that we owe to our brothers in the West who have fought this fight with so much courage. Here in the East the tide is all in one direction. There is not the slightest apprehension so far as the local result is concerned. But in the West, Bryan and Altgeld and all the evil forces they represent are at the very doors, and men who believe in the perpetuity of American institutions, whose very thresholds have been in danger, have fought them with energy and courage.

Never has there been a campaign waged on higher grounds than this. The appeal to the people of the West has been essentially one to the patriotism of Americans as Americans, to love of country, and to honest indignation at those who are menacing her honor. Bryan's and Altgeld's efforts to excite the West against the East have been met by the Westerners themselves. I have been told much by those who went to the Populist and Democratic conventions of the venomous hatred displayed in those bodies for the East. But I am certain that not a trace of such is to be found among the great masses of the vigorous and self-confident merchants, farmers, and working men who will control the destinies of these Western States.

Men who know that they have in them the capacity

\* Statement printed in *New York Sun*, October 28, 1896.

of success, and who feel the thrill of pride that comes with strong hands, stout hearts, and cool heads, do not see the necessity of being jealous of anybody. The strength of the Populists lies with the ignorant and vicious and also with the weak, who have not the intelligence to see that their failure in life is due not to others but to themselves, but who wish to put the blame of their shortcomings on some one else. If they live in big cities, they attack the people that are prosperous. If they live in some remote country district—like, for instance, the Populistic farming counties of Kansas—they make their bogie the Easterners instead of their prosperous neighbors.

In Chicago, or Detroit, or Minneapolis it is useless to try to appeal to the hatred of the East. They have too much comfort in their own strength and vigor to feel the need of being jealous of some other part of the country. It is only when we get among men who lack in courage and have an uneasy sense of their own failure that it is possible to preach the gospel of sectional hatred.

Heaven knows there is enthusiasm enough in New York, but it does not begin to compare with the enthusiasm seen in Chicago. Almost every respectable man, whether shopkeeper or laborer, is against Altgeld, and his strength is drawn purely from the lowest element of the community, the most incapable of self-government, the population from which are recruited the ranks of criminals and semicriminals. I have never spoken to more enthusiastic audiences than one in the Coliseum in Chicago, composed of twelve thousand or fourteen thousand people. They spent the first three-quarters of an hour almost as if they were in a camp-meeting, singing "America," the "Star-Spangled Banner," and

the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." But with all this enthusiasm it was astonishing to notice the closeness with which the audience followed what would be regarded ordinarily as a dry economic argument. It was this intense interest, this eager desire to weigh every word of the speakers' arguments, which has struck me the most this year, alike in audiences addressed in the East and in the West.

While I was in Michigan I spoke three times in cities on the same day as Mr. Bryan, and on one day the train I was on closely followed through four or five towns Bryan's special train, so that I had some opportunity to watch the effect of his speeches. Great crowds gathered to hear him, and here and there he undoubtedly produced some effect. But on the whole, what struck me the most was that the great bulk of hearers were people who had come to listen merely from curiosity, just as they would have gone to see any especially attractive circus or celebrity. In one place where he had a jammed audience a ballot was taken of a crowded trolley-car with a load of excursionists going to hear him, and out of the sixty-one persons in the car fifty-nine intended to vote for McKinley.

In another town where Bryan was speaking I went with the crowd. All of them were perfectly good-humored and didn't interrupt him, but after they had heard him for five minutes they lost all interest and began to talk among themselves, so that his voice could not be heard fifty feet off.

Undoubtedly Bryan has a great hold upon the unintelligent and the vicious. He attracts that type of farmer whose gate hangs on one hinge, whose old hat supplies the place of a missing window-pane, and who is more likely to be found at the crossroads grocery-

store than behind the plough. He attracts still more the professional laboring man of the type that labors as little as possible, and continually strives to delude such working men as are ignorant and foolish enough to be misled into some movement which cannot but end in disaster. But the thrifty, intelligent, and resolute are in the majority, and it was my invariable experience that men of this stamp, even if somewhat predisposed in favor of Bryan, were repelled by the cheapness of the man. I do not like to use such a word in reference to a presidential candidate, but there is no other which describes him so well.

I believe his trip through Michigan materially aided the party of sound money. It would be impossible to speak in words of too high praise of the sound-money and honest-government Democrats in this campaign, and in no State have they done more than in Michigan. I was in towns where one-fourth of the entire Democratic vote had been polled by name in favor of McKinley.

The success of Mr. Bryan would be so terrible in its results, a disaster fraught with such immeasurable evil for Americans, and would be the source of such bitter humiliation to every right-thinking American, proud of his nationality, that we cannot help feeling uneasy until the victory is actually won; but were the stakes not so large we would trouble ourselves very little over the matter, for it is difficult to see where there is any possibility of McKinley's defeat. Prophecy is a dangerous game, but I think it safe to say that in the Middle West will be seen a landslide for honest government almost like that in the East, and that we shall win nearly one-half of the extreme Western States and one-half of the northern tier of Southern States.