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Irby Talks to Gantt.

THE GOLD BUGS WILL BE THE BOLTERS.

Free Silver Democrats Will Control the Chicago Convention—Laurens County a Unit for Irby.

The irrepressible Larry Gantt, of the Piedmont Headlight, has been on a political scout in Laurens County, and was the guest of Senator Irby, who drove him over the upper section of the county, and gave him an opportunity to talk with the people. Here is the result of his investigations at the storm-centre in political matters:

Laurens County is now looked upon as the seat of political war in our State. So The Headlight editor decided that he would visit that section, and let our readers know the true situation.

We found Laurens as placid as a spring morning, without a ripple of excitement. Their new cotton mill has just been started up, and the people were of course happy. They are now talking about water works supplied from an artesian well, and other enterprises. There is no doubt about Laurens being aroused from her Rip Van Winkle sleep, and she has a bright future ahead.

Senator Irby met us at the depot with his fine South Carolina raised team. The Senator is looking better than we have ever seen him, and was in fine spirits. He said he had been busy since his return home planting a big corn crop, and had not devoted any time or attention to politics. He rested his cause in the hands of the people, and if they did not want him to serve them in the Senate he would be content either to retire to private life or work anywhere they put him.

We asked Senator Irby his views about the proposed bolt at Chicago.

"Did you ever know a bolter to accomplished anything?" was his answer. Bolters can tear down, but they never build up. They weaken or destroy the party from which they secede, but if you will examine the political history of the world, you will not find a single instance in which bolters have ever been successful. And another thing you will see: Bolters eventually return to the party from which they seceded. Take the Kansas Populists, for instance. They slushed off from the Republican party, but after the spasm had passed returned to their allegiance; and were Populist Peffer to run for the Senate today he would not receive a half dozen votes. I am as strong a free silver advocate," continued Senator Irby, "as any man in South Carolina. But we must bear in mind that the free silver plank is not all that constitutes the Democratic party. The Democratic party is the friend of the South, and when we destroy it, to fuse with Western Republicans, we are simply paralyzing our own prosperity. Why, even under the Cleveland administration the South has been favored. The force bill was repealed, and other laws passed that were beneficial to our section. But let the Republican party elect the President and control both houses of Congress, and you will see the prosperity of the South strangled, and the most obnoxious laws passed. I believe that the free silver men will control the Chicago convention. It is admitted in Washington that the so-called 'sound money' advocates cannot secure enough delegates to nominate a ticket or prevent the adoption of a platform endorsing bi-metalism. I believe that there will be a split when the convention meets, for the gold standard delegates will bolt should they fail to accomplish their ends. Then they will be the bolters, and not our side. This is just what we want."

"Senator, what do you think will be the action of our State Democratic committee?"

"I do not know, but feel assured that the member will not countenance anything that looks like a bolt. I have simply published my views, and have made no attempt to influence any one. When the committee meets, I shall state my position, and of course the other members will act as their judgment and patriotism dictate. South Carolina is prospering above all other Southern States, and I attribute it largely to the fact that we have remained in the Democratic party. Our white people rule their State, and the negro is eliminated from politics. We owe it to the poor white voters of South Carolina to protect them from the political power of the negroes, and this can only be done by remaining in the Democratic party. We must remember that the colored vote largely outnumbers the white vote in South Carolina, and when our people split up and divide, you will see a scramble made for the colored vote, and negroes will be enfranchised by the thousand. Then where will poor and uneducated white men be? I have never advised my people wrongly, and never will. I have fought for the rights of the poor man, and shall never counsel anything that threatens his political sovereignty.

"Of course you are in the race for Senator?"

"I am. I see that an effort is being made to do away with our white primary. The people will not countenance this. It would be a step backward. I am ready and willing to trust my chances with the Anglo-Saxon voters of this State, and will obediently bow to their decree. The people have been given the right to name U. S. Senators at the ballot-box, and this right shall never be taken from them if I can help it. A man who is afraid to face his people is not worthy to represent a brave and free people. And it has been reported," continued the Senator, "that I cannot carry my own county of Laurens. After dinner I will have my horses hitched up and take you to ride over a portion of Laurens, going in any direction you desire, and I will let you see for yourself how I stand at home. I have my enemies, like every other public man who takes a strong position in politics, but the great mass of the voters of Laurens are with me. I have not entered into a political coalition with any man, and neither will I do so. I am a candidate on my own account. I am fighting no one. But I am not a straddler, and the people will always know just where to place me."

Senator Irby then branched out and discussed straddlers and fence-riders. He said he freely conceded the right of any one to oppose him, but he did not want any two-faced business. "A straddler," he explained, "is a weak man, who has not talent enough to defend his cause, and therefore resorts to double-dealing and hypocrisy. A man of brains has other weapons, and you will always find him taking a decided and firm stand on all public matters."

After dinner, sitting behind the Senator's fine team, we started out on a ride through the western portion of Laurens County, taking the old Greenville road. This is a beautiful section. While the land is thin, it lies well, and with the use of manure, produces fine crops. Farmers are well up with their work, and small grain far advanced over Spartanburg County. We saw five acres in cotton to one in corn. There are numbers of beautiful farm houses in this section and every few miles is thrifty railway villages. We passed through Barksdale, Gray Court, Owings and Fountain Inn, besides taking in Mr. Chris. Owings, who is one of the most successful planters in that county. We took supper with Mr. Owings, who is a staunch friend to Senator Irby. Mr. Owings has a pen of six Chester hogs for next year's killing, and which will now average 225 pounds each. He says he will make them go to 500 or 600 pounds by next winter. Mr. Owings raises a yellow corn and he says for stock feeding eight ears contains as much nutriment as ten ears of the white variety and it is less susceptible to drought. We met several friends at Mr. Owings' and spent a delightful evening.

After supper we hitched up our team and started for Fountain Inn, to spend the night with Mr. John W. Kellett. Fountain Inn is one of the most prosperous towns in Laurens County. It is about the size of Woodruff, and buys 4,000 bales of cotton a year. And speaking of cotton, we saw in front of many farm houses great piles of bales. During our trip we must have passed at least 500 bales yet in hands of farmers.

Mr. Kellett is one of the most hospitable of men, and we met a warm welcome. He has a beautiful home and delightful family. His eldest daughter is a first-class artist, and has ornamented the house with handsome paintings and portraits of the family. Kellett showed us a patch of two and a half acres, on which he last year raised 2,500 pounds of lint cotton, and says he intends to bring it up to three bales per acre. This shows what the land around there will do with the use of fertilizers and scientific culture.

The good people of Owings are rejoicing over the fact of at last having a post office given them, and which has been named "Rapley," as there was another Owings in Laurens County, and it would have confused mails. Owings has three stores, a church and school, and until this office was established her people had to send a long mile into the country to Powers for their mail.

During our ride we traveled forty miles, going one road and returning by another. If that section is an index to the political sentiment of Laurens County, it is a waste of time to try and defeat Senator Irby at home. We stopped at a number of houses, talked with the people, and they all report the country as a unit for Irby. The people have named their babies for him, and every man or lady he passed on the road would halt him and have some kind word to say. We never saw such unanimity and enthusiasm for a candidate. And parties tell us that the other sections of Laurens are just as strong for Irby as this. So those who are predicting that Senator Irby will be turned down by his own people know not what they are talking about. If they will go into the county, and talk with the farmers, they will find that J. L. M. Irby is firmly anchored in their hearts.

And another thing we noticed: While the people are all strong advocates of silver, every man we saw repudiated the idea of going into any independent party. They believe that the silver delegates will control the Chicago convention, and have no idea of following the Populists.

We met Col. Crews, editor of the Laurenville Herald. He tells us that the new paper to be started by his son will be printed on the Herald press. Both Col. Shaw and Sheriff McCravy deny having any stock in "The Silver Democrat." In fact, a friend of Sheriff McCravy's told Senator Irby that he (McCravy) says it was a false report that he was fighting him. So it will be seen that the opposition to Senator Irby in Laurens is largely imaginary, and the work of outside parties.

Congressman Wilson is strong over Laurens, and the manner in which he handled Boutelle has made him many new friends. He will have no opposition for re-election. It was reported that Mr. Patton, of Columbia, would oppose Mr. Wilson, but it would be folly for Patton to make the race. We heard in Spartanburg that there was ill feeling between Senator Irby and Congressman Wilson, and we asked the Senator if there was any grounds for such a report. He replied that there was not, so far as he knew; that just before he left Washington Mr. Wilson and himself had a talk, and parted on kind terms. He also said there was no truth in the story that Tillman and himself did not speak as they passed. "Why," he remarked, "Senator Tillman frequently comes over to my seat, and we talk together. Of course our relations are not as close as they once were, but we always speak when we meet, and freely discuss any measure relating to the good of our State. I tell you I am not making war on any one. I intend to discharge my duty by my people, and think and act for myself. I am no coat-tail swinger. The people elected me to the Senate, and they are the only masters I own."

Senator Irby's enemies have put out the report that he has been absent from nearly every roll call. To answer this story, he refers to the proceedings of Congress. Senator Irby says that as soon as the committee meeting is over he will return to Washington. He thinks Congress will adjourn in May, as all important business has been transacted which could be hoped for at this session, and only the appropriation bills are now in the way. Senator Irby says he will make a campaign of the State next summer, and meet the people face to face and give an account of his stewardship.

The Headlight is not an organ for Senator Irby or any other man. This paper is free and untrammeled, but will keep the people posted. If Senator Irby was guilty of reprehensible conduct, we would denounce him as soon as any one. Personally he is our friend; but the editor of this paper wears no man's collar. We went to Laurens not for the purpose of booming Senator Irby, but to study the political situation in person, and then tell our readers the facts. This we have done.

—Turpentine is the friend housekeepers have, and a supply should always be kept on hand. It is good for burns, excellent for corns, good for rheumatism and sore throat and a quick remedy for fits or convulsions. It is a sure preventive against moths, a few drops rendering garments safe from such invasion during the summer. It drives away ants and bugs from storerooms and corners by putting a few drops on the shelves. It effectually destroys bugs and injures neither furniture nor clothing. For cleaning paint add a spoonful to a pail of warm water. A little in the suds on wash day makes washing easier.

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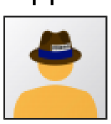

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