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AN IMPORTANT CASE BEFORE THE
U. S. SUPREME COURT.

An important and interesting case is now engaging the attention of the Supreme Court of the United States, it being a test of the celebrated Miner electoral law of Michigan. A couple of years ago the Democratic party of the Wolverine State, finding itself for the first time since the war in possession of every department of the local government, cast about it to discover where political advantages might be had and utilized, and about the first thing that occurred to the leaders was the enactment of such a law as would render it impossible for the Republicans thereafter to have everything their own way as formerly. Armed with such a purpose, a legislator named Miner thrust his shining harpoon into the waters of inventive diplomacy and pulled forth a scheme to secure to the Democracy a proportion of the electoral vote of the state for President and Vice-President; this to be accomplished by having the electors chosen by Congressional districts instead of in bulk by the people of the whole state, the party receiving more votes than any other thus taking all the electors. The Democrats can nearly always, and generally do, carry a fair proportion of the districts, but carrying the state itself is a feat which, as previously set out, does not happen to them so frequently, say once in thirty years or thereabout. Michigan has eleven members of Congress and a corresponding number of electors, besides two more at large, corresponding with the state's representation in the Senate; these two the Miner bill proposed to also separate, having one part of the state, which was described, elect one and the rest of it the other. It is only stating the case fairly to say that the bill aimed at fairness in this, no matter whether its author so intended or not; for it had one of the sections as hopelessly Democratic as good judgment based upon past political experience could make it, and the Democracy being thus huddled together for election purposes in one of the grand districts, would of necessity make the other one just as hopelessly Republican. What could be more impartial than that? A perfectly equal division—who had any right to complain of so equitable an adjustment? The districts were to be fought for each by itself, and each would have to look out for itself; but if the Democrats held the ones they carried two years ago they would have nine of them and the Republicans two, making the electoral vote of the state stand ten for Cleveland and three for Harrison, instead of thirteen for the latter, as would undoubtedly be the

case under the old plan. Now the mind that could devise so excellent an arrangement as that deserves something better than rebuffs and harsh criticisms, but Mr. Miner is getting and has got from his friends the enemy an abundant quantity of both.

Well, the Republicans are so thoroughly dissatisfied with the "deal" that they have carried it, as suggested, to the highest tribunal in the land. They had previously tested it in the highest court of the state, and the case had gone against them, that body holding that the law was constitutional. It is perhaps proper to observe that while the law was passed purely for political advantage and in the interest of a political party, it has been and is being resisted on precisely the same grounds and with the same objects in view. In fact, Attorney General Miller, of counsel for the Republicans before the Supreme Court, admitted as much in his argument yesterday. Said he: "I am perfectly well aware that the people have been robbed by unjust apportionments by the party to which I belong as well as by the party to which I am opposed, and it is high time the courts should say to those worthies that it is just as much larceny to steal political rights as to steal private property." Very true, Mr. Miller; the people of Utah would applaud you for that statement if you were near enough to hear them do it.

Viewed and considered simply as a question of law, we are unable to see how the United States Supreme Court can do otherwise than did the Michigan Supreme Court, by affirming the constitutionality of the law. In construing a case of this kind, of course all consideration of this, that or another party being favored or injured will be set aside and the adjudication had upon the broad ground of whether or not the enactment is or is not in consonance with the express terms of the great charter of the country. This instrument, it would seem, makes it a very plain case; it says the electors (or President and Vice-President) in each state "shall be appointed in such manner as the legislature thereof shall direct." This places the whole matter within the control of the local law-making body, and it may properly direct that all the people elect all the electors or that the choice thereof be confined to districts, each electing its own. This is precisely what the Michigan legislature did, and if it did wrong the fault would seem to be with the Constitution and not with the power acting pursuant thereto. The only ground on which the national court could interfere, it would seem, would be where inequality or unfair tests in the matter of voting were precribed, and this does not seem to have been done in the Michigan case, even if the practical results aimed at were more favorable to one party than they previously were.

However, as an authority has it, "the Supreme Court is presumed to know something," and before settling down to a conclusion on the subject, it would perhaps be as well to wait and see what this august tribunal has to say in the matter.

A new paper has sprung into existence at Richfield, published by the S. S. academy.

WITH INTENT TO DECEIVE.

The people in the railroad interests are giving it out that if shippers do not accept compromises it means endless litigation; that is, it will necessitate a lawsuit on every shipment to get the advantage of any decision that might be obtained from the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The facts are the very opposite of this. If a case is tried before the commission and the suit is favorable, they will make a schedule of maximum rates; should the railroads ignore their decision, the Chamber of Commerce would then apply to a United States circuit court for a restraining order to prevent the railroads from collecting more than the rates set by the commission. It would be heard as a case of equity, and the findings of fact and the decision of the commission would be taken as prima facie evidence. The injunction would be granted and the railroad would then have to appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. Pending the appeal they would be compelled to accept the rates fixed by the commission.

ANOTHER FAMINE IN RUSSIA.

The horrors of the late Russian famine were no sooner dissipated by relief than from the same source come ominous forebodings of still further distress from the same cause. These portents have grown apace as to frequency and materialization, and it would seem as though the peasantry in some portions of the empire, like those of Ireland, were foredoomed to ceaseless hunger so long as they remain where they are. Whether it be through bad management, poor soil, overpopulation or what not, we do not know; the unwelcome condition itself is known and threatens to become even more familiar than hitherto.

A recent number of the Boston Herald, in an article discussing this important and distressing subject, gives a report of Major Law, commercial attache of the British embassy at St. Petersburg. It throws some important light on the future of Russian tillage farming and points out what are claimed to be the reasons why the famine of last year is likely to be repeated in time to come. He bears abundant testimony to the excellent spirit in which the nation as a whole met the famine of last year, and commends the wealthier classes for the "magnificent self-sacrifice and devotion" displayed in relieving it, but the evils which threaten tillage farming in Russia are such that no amount of care in the near future can prevent the repetition of the famine. "The reasons for this are several," says the report; "one is that the land is held in common by each village community, and that the soil is periodically distributed among the villagers, usually for a term of three years. The holding is for so short a time that no villager expects to spend money or labor in improving his allotment, and the land constantly deteriorates in its productive power. Then the severance of the ties between the great land owners and their peasants has allowed the village owner to come