

have a prolonged and an able advocacy at his hands.

It is a rather peculiar condition of things that prevails in Ohio. This applies measurably to the Republican party, whose Presidential platform of last year (which is also endorsed) called for bimetallism, while Major McKinley is an cut-and-cut gold standard man; but most strongly does it refer to the Democracy, who are in the curious position of upholding monometallism by endorsing the President, a compromise between the extremes of the silver question by endorsing the Chicago platform, and absolute and unrestricted free silver because of their candidate for governor. It tends to show how completely the silver question is for the present at least disrupting the parties and how absurd is the disposition of either to charge the other with being responsible for the prevailing situation.

Personally Mr. Neal is a very strong and altogether capable man. His record is singularly free from many of the objectionable features which attach to the average politician's career and as a private citizen he is without reproach. As the same can be said of his competitor in the race, it follows that the Buckeye state is in great good luck this year, for she will have as good a governor as could be, found no matter who is chosen. This is as it ought to be.

GONE HENCE.

Bolivar Roberts, one of our old-time citizens and an excellent one, has gone to the shadows which conceal the majority of our race. He was not a very old man, not yet so young that it could be said of him that he had not enjoyed a full share of the world and the things which it contains. His history is filled with incidents relating to the earlier days of this Territory, during which and at all times he was one of the busiest and most enterprising among the many of that class who realized that the race against forbidding nature could only be won by such means, coupled with bravery, hardihood and perseverance. Our communication with the outside world was the subject of much of his attention in the days when there were no railroads or telegraphs—when the arrival of a wagon train from the Missouri river was an event of great consequence and the hurry-scurry of the pony express—the only “winged messenger” we could boast—was looked for with the most eager anticipation.

The Old Guard are thinning out fast and soon at the furthest the roll call will evoke no response; but the work that they accomplished, the monuments which they erected and which greet us wherever we may turn our eyes, are not doomed to pass away. Like the recollections enshrined in the hearts of their successors, the achievements and the worth of the vanguard of our civilization can only perish when memory is no longer the warder of the brain.

Dr. White's new work on school management will soon be issued, and should be in the hands of every teacher in the land.

AN IRRELIGIOUS AGE.

The Episcopal Bishop Huntington is reported in the *Churchman* as exploring the signs of the times, as showing the tendency of our age towards disregard of religion. He says:

It is impossible to regard the popular drift, and especially the ordinary tone of the public press, as otherwise than sympathetic with irreligion. With rare exceptions, secular newspapers and magazines are on the side, not of affirmation, but of doubt; of a religion that is of man and not of God; of hostility to the standards, institutions, oracles, laws of the Christian faith as they have been hitherto held from the first.

The *Catholic Sacred Heart Review* thinks these statements too sweeping and makes the following observation:

The age presents strong contrasts. It is intensely materialistic, yet full of thought upon spiritual things. It is irreligious, yet deeply religious. It doubts much, yet it believes much. The apparent breaking up of faith may be, after all, more the drawing of different lines and taking new bearings, for doubt and faith have always been in the world and always will be. The irreverent age may be made reverent. It looks for something honestly to revere.

A great deal might be said on both sides of this question. Each observer is likely to decide it from his own point of view.

That Protestants looking at the religious status of the dissenting churches have reason to complain of a drifting away will hardly be denied; nor should it be a matter of surprise. The very essence of Protestantism is to regard the books of the Bible as supreme authority in all matters relating to doctrine and discipline. And it explains the Scriptures not on the basis of tradition or the interpretations given by the early fathers, but by means of itself—its own language and the context. Thus Protestantism in theory denies the operations of the Holy Spirit through the minds of men for the discovery of truth and confines them to the dead letter.

And yet, it requires of its followers, also theoretically, to be guided by the Spirit and to develop a “apiritual” life of which the German Pietism in its best days may be regarded as a pattern. But the inconsistency is greater still. For although the Protestant churches profess to regard the Bible as their supreme authority, they also have their confessions of faith as still more supreme, heresy being a deviation from the articles of faith rather than from the Bible. They refuse the decision of councils, synods and popes of the early ages on the plea that the “word of God” is higher than “that of man,” but they insist on accepting the words of their reformers and framers of creeds as if these were not also the words of men, at the same time disclaiming Divine inspiration for these men. The result of this confused mass of theology is seen in endless divisions in the Protestant world, where sect stands arrayed against sect and the idea of Christian “unity” is virtually unknown. Is it any wonder that such conditions invite doubt and that the doubt ripens into infidelity? Were there no more consistent system of divinity than that which Protestant-

ism offers, theology would have to be abandoned as a disabled ship, a mere wreck on a stormy sea. This is what is being done, and the good bishop may well deplore the tendency of the age towards irreligion. His statements are more than the moanings of a despondent individual.

Catholicism, as represented by Rome, on the other hand, presents striking contrasts to Protestantism, and its votaries view the tendencies of the age in a different light. In this system everything depends on the outward adherence to the institutions. As there is “no salvation outside the church,” there can be no damnation within its precincts. To Catholics the great irreligious age was the era of reformation. The present age has shown decided symptoms of approach toward Rome and consequently toward religion as understood by Romanists. It may be true that a vast multitude of Catholics are atheists at heart and look upon the church ceremonies as a pleasing humbug, yet this is not commented upon as an alarming fact as long as no formal separation takes place. Look at the performances of France! For political purposes influential disciples of the scoffer Voltaire visit the churches. Pilgrimages are instituted. The sailors of the Mediterranean fleet receive orders to follow in the wake of the devotees who bend their knees in sacred places and laugh in their sleeves, and prelates in gorgeous robes join the procession while the pope applauds the fares from his box in the Vatican. Indeed, where so little is required as a sign of religious devotion, no complaint can be raised against this age. For not even atheists spurn hypocrisy, if by it they can gain a political end.

The thoughtful, unprejudiced observer of the signs of the times will probably come to the conclusion that the existing religious systems of the world have by this time proved their inability to supply the needs of mankind, as they have failed to fulfil their greatest promises, to make of men a universal brotherhood. Catholicism failed, because it left the road of Christianity in the early centuries and became what it is today. Protestantism did not succeed because it reformed instead of built anew. The age feels this intuitively and expects but little from these sources. It is resigned to the work of tearing down and leveling, which is being performed by the elements of doubt and infidelity and indifference and scoffing criticism.

But even in this there is hope. For as once the decline of the patriarchal era preceded the dawn of the Mosiac age; and as the decay of this age was the signal of the commencement of the Gospel dispensation, so does the disintegration of the present systems of religion predict the speedy approach of a new epoch, more glorious than any the earth has ever seen. It will come as surely as the darkest night must give way to the light of the following day, when the sun again breaks forth in brilliant splendor. The signs of the times tell of the approach of the glories of a millennial dawn.

George W. Jones is acting-mayor during the absence of Mayor Lundy, who has gone to Denver on business.