

LETTERS WRITTEN BY JOHN P. IRISH  
TO GEORGE F. PARKER

The letters published in this number were, with three exceptions, printed from copies presented to the State Historical Society by Mr. George F. Parker in 1926. They were written at irregular intervals and cover a great variety of subjects. Many of the references to men and events which were, of course, perfectly clear to the men concerned, now require explanation, which has, wherever possible, been given in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated the letters have been printed exactly as they were sent.

John Powell Irish, the writer of the letters, was a native Iowan, born at Iowa City on January 1, 1843. In 1864, at the age of twenty-one, he became the editor of the *Iowa City Press* and his pungent style of writing soon made it one of the best known Democratic papers in the State.

The young editor soon became interested in practical politics and in 1867, 1869, and 1871 he was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives. In the legislature he sponsored the bill which removed the election of school officials from the general election to a special election for that purpose. He was also interested in the development of the State University and served as a member of the Board of Regents from 1868 to 1870. While in the legislature he favored the building of the new Capitol.

In 1882, Mr. Irish removed to California, where he acquired the *Oakland Times*, later disposing of that to edit *The Alta California* of San Francisco. In 1894, President Grover Cleveland appointed Mr. Irish Naval Officer of Customs at San Francisco, an office he continued to hold under Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft.

By appointment on the Governor's staff, Mr. Irish ac-

quired the rank of "Colonel" which became his usual title. As the letters indicate, Colonel Irish was an opponent of "free silver", a supporter of the Japanese side of the racial dispute in California, and opposed the extension of the suffrage to women. He died on October 6, 1923.

George Frederick Parker, the man to whom these letters were written, was not born in Iowa but came to this State as a boy. He was born at Lafayette, Indiana, on December 30, 1847, his parents moving to Warren County, Iowa, in 1854. After the usual common school education, Parker attended the State University for two years, 1868-1870, and in 1873 he founded the *Indianola Tribune*. Three years later he purchased an interest in the *Iowa State Leader* at Des Moines and edited it during the exciting Hayes-Tilden campaign. Soon afterwards, Mr. Parker went to Europe and when he returned in 1880 he became editorial writer on the *Indianapolis Sentinel*, later working in the same capacity for the *Washington Post*, the *Manchester Union*, and the *Philadelphia Times*. From 1885 to 1887, he was assistant postmaster at Philadelphia and upon leaving there became managing editor of the *New York Press*. In 1888 he became a close associate of Grover Cleveland and had charge of the literary department of the Democratic National Committee in 1888 and 1892. From 1893 to 1898 he was United States Consul at Birmingham, England, and from 1898 to 1904 he was commissioner in the United Kingdom for the World's Fair at St. Louis. This absence abroad seems to explain the gap in the correspondence. From 1905 to 1910, Mr. Parker was secretary of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. His *Recollections of Grover Cleveland* was published in 1909. From 1910 until his death he was chiefly engaged in historical writing, many of his articles appearing in *The Saturday Evening Post*. Mr. Parker died at his home in New York City on May 31, 1928.

November 8th, 1879.

My dear George:

Your very kind letter is at hand. My defeat<sup>1</sup> was in a certain sense a victory since it came through my refusal to go into the market and buy back votes that traitors had bought away from me. I prefer self respect and the esteem of friends to personal victories gained in that way.

Let me congratulate you and all sturdy upright Democrats in principle that the storm of folly before which you refused to bend has gone by and that we are again to have a genuine Democracy. But remember my friends that this [victory?] brings to all of us exalted duties and grave responsibilities. Heretofore, silence, explanation, apology and criticism have occupied us, as we have seen the party pulled from its anchorage by a lot of thoughtless fellows led by a few political pirates. Now there comes to us leadership in its best sense, leadership in ideas, in principles. It comes by reason of the very exhaustion of those who have put the party in a garment of motley. We must take this responsibility and hear it with prudence and modesty, with subtlety and wisdom, and you will see that as we straighten the Republicans will begin to bend.

The New York result adds to the intensity and interest of next year's fight. 1879 has been full of the kind of discipline our party needed, it is our task to see that the cure is permanent and that there is no relapse.

If our common friend Welker<sup>2</sup> comes here I hope we will have a good enough pair to draw you down occasionally.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

<sup>1</sup> John P. Irish had been the Democratic candidate for State Senator in his district at the election held on October 14, 1879. He received 2508 votes, his successful rival received 2581.—*Daily Press* (Iowa City), October 13, 20, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly this was Welker Given, editor of the *Marshalltown Times*.

Iowa City,  
March 23, 1880.

I take pleasure in commending Mr. George F. Parker late of the Des Moines Leader as a journalist of the rarest ability and one worthy to rank with the small number of American publicists who have given to practical politics a philosophic study.

His pen is capable of the finest service and I hope to see it employed in a field worthy of his genius, his experience and and his manliness.

Jno. P. Irish

Iowa City,  
Sept. 4 1880

Dear George:

I have been awaiting marching orders from Indiana for some time and just now learn that Mr. Hendricks<sup>3</sup> objects to my coming into the State. His objection is that in a speech in Columbus, Nebraska, last March I treated him improperly. Now I don't know what report was made to Mr. Hendricks by his personal agent, Mr. Cooper, who heard the speech, but I do know that it was not possible for me to have said anything there that was disagreeable to Mr. H. as you will see when I tell you that the speech was based upon a strong conviction that the old ticket was to be nominated, and I never had it in my heart to speak ill of Mr. Hendricks under any circumstances. Dr. Miller of Omaha<sup>4</sup> a personal friend of Mr. H. heard the speech, had it taken by his shorthand reporter, praised and published it. I have never seen

<sup>3</sup> This was probably Thomas A. Hendricks of Indiana who had been the candidate for Vice President in 1876. He was not nominated for that office in 1880, but was nominated and elected in 1884.

<sup>4</sup> The Dr. Miller mentioned in this paragraph was doubtless Dr. George L. Miller, said to have been Omaha's first physician, who was then editor of *The Omaha Herald*.

it as published and did not, of course, revise the text but know so well the spirit in which I made it that I know Mr. Hendricks must be the victim of a misrepresentation by Mr. Cooper or of an error made by the stenographer, printer or proof reader.

I do not write this in order to ask a pnyz<sup>5</sup> in Indiana, for "the stump" is at my service in Pa. or N. Y., but to explain myself and remove a false impression. Be good enough to show this to Mr. English,<sup>6</sup> to whom make my regards.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal., Jan. 30th, 1885.

My dear Parker:

Yours was forwarded to me here from Washington and of course too late for me to respond to the kindly intended attention of which it notified me.

I am getting ready to return East and will perhaps be in Philadelphia for a day between the 20 February and March 1st, but as Mrs. Irish will be along there can be no high pinks [jinks?]

Make my regards to Col. McClure<sup>7</sup> who is the only man I know that can say anything bad enough to be called a libel of a lottery swindle.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Cal., Dec. 3d, 1885.

My dear George:

Sickness in my family and daily occupation at long hours

<sup>5</sup> So written in the copy of the letter furnished, but probably pnyx is the word in the original copy. The Pnyx was the public meeting place in Athens.

<sup>6</sup> Probably William H. English who was the Democratic candidate for Vice President in 1880.

<sup>7</sup> This was apparently Colonel A. K. McClure, editor of the *Philadelphia Times*.

have joined to prevent my acknowledgment of your kindly letter of last September. I have not yet completed the commission in relation to the Bret Harte first edition, which it brought to me, but will do so soon.

Accept my sympathies, perhaps, upon your elevation to office.<sup>8</sup> I know the public service has therein gained much but I feel that you have gained nothing. Have said as much in *Alta*, of which special is mailed.

Please give my regards to Col. McClure.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.,

July 26th, 1888.

My dear Parker:

I will send to you at once a ground plan and front elevation of the Chinese question, with such testimony in the newspapers of 1882 as bear upon the feeling rife here then against Hoar, Hawley, Harrison, Allison and the rest of the pro-Chinese Senators.<sup>9</sup>

Don't raise the wage question, for Chinese are paid more here than white labor gets in the East, and it will involve too much explanation. You know, at bottom, this is a race question, purely, only the whites who feel its friction and not its pinch don't carry their analysis far enough to know that it is. In dealing with it in politics we must take it for what it is thought to be—a labor issue.

I will mail to you the material from this stand point from which you can "fill" in the textbook.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Parker had been appointed assistant postmaster at Philadelphia by President Cleveland.

<sup>9</sup> George Frisbie Hoar, of Massachusetts; Joseph R. Hawley, of Connecticut; Benjamin Harrison, of Ohio, elected President in 1888; and William B. Allison, of Iowa, were probably the Senators referred to here.

<sup>10</sup> At this time Parker was working on the compilation of the Democratic campaign textbook.

I am daily touched by the expressed friendship of patriotic Republicans for the President. Thoughtful men in that party constantly tell me that they are unable to find a single act in all Mr. Cleveland's official career that is not in the interest of good government.

I feel very hopeful of California. Unfortunately the machinery of the Democratic party is in the hands of ex-convicts and professional and amateur criminals, else there would be more inducement for conservative, independent and decent people to vote with us. But these infirmities are the common taint of all parties.

Did you read my screed in the March North American Review? It would make a good campaign document. I am very glad that you are on the campaign text book for it will be in good English and that is some comfort.

Make my regards to Col. Lamont<sup>11</sup> to whom I enclose a letter which please to deliver.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal., July 27, 1888.

My dear Parker:

After much search I find the report of the Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 1885, on the Chinese and China Town. The whole document would make a splendid campaign paper and I regret that the distribution made at the time of publication exhausted the edition, so that I found it difficult to get this single copy. It is the best and most important statement of the peculiar and grotesque vices and habits of the Chinese that has ever been made here. I enclose also a statement of wages, from the report of the California Labor Commission. As I told you in my

<sup>11</sup> Probably Daniel Scott Lamont, private secretary of President Cleveland from 1885 to 1888 and Secretary of War in Cleveland's second administration.

former letter, many in the East will not recognize this scale as low, though it is low here.

If I knew just what shape and style you need I would reduce all this matter to text ready for you. In default of that knowledge I send it *in extenso*. Read it and digest according to the space you allot.

I enclose also a memorial to Congress adopted by a mass meeting of labor unions here this week, in which the President and Congress are thanked for their efforts to suppress Chinese immigration. The chapters on Chinese Prostitution in the report are true. Those people regard it as a legitimate calling, a rather public occupation and soon as a woman begins it she is looked upon as having taken a step forward in the social ranks.

I don't know whether your campaign book will adhere to dry and dessicated facts, or like Wegg lapse into poetry or like Tristram Shandy into anecdote.<sup>12</sup> If the latter please submit this illustrative story to Col. Lamont. It is true:

A Chinese thief had served two terms in San Quentin penitentiary. Not long after his last enlargement he appeared, shaven and shining, in the Presbyterian Mission Sunday School, taught by Miss Culbertson, on the borders of Chinatown. He was devout and attentive, asserting in tuneful voice and good pigeon English that, "Jesus di foh me," and Miss Culbertson was so delighted with him that she said "I glad you catchum Sunday School now and be good man, Ming Rip." Ming smiled and his yellow face shone with the unction of uprightness as he replied: "Yes, Missy, me no stealum any moh. Me good man now, me keep bawdy house."

What a pity that this reformed Mongolian could not be in Ben. Harrison's Sunday School class in Indianapolis.

<sup>12</sup> See Silas Wegg, character in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, and Tristram Shandy, nominal hero in Sterne's novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.*



I hope you will find all the material you want in what I send. If not, wire me and I will get it for you.

We ought to carry California, but so far our State Central Committee has not lifted a hand and the Republicans are on the stump getting men committed by an *ex parte* [ex parte?] and false statement of the tariff issue and I am getting nervous over the prospect. I go out at my own cost and appointment once or twice a week and preach the gospel of reform, and that is about all that is going on.

Make my regards to Col. Lamont.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, April 27th, 1892.

My dear George:

Enclosed find what you may call an interview with me in San Francisco. I hope it will do some good.

*The Expositor*, Fresno, Fresno Co., Cal., *The Mail*, Stockton, San Joaquin Co., Cal., *The Democrat*, Woodland, Yolo Co., Cal. are good County dailies for you to use in this state. There is no Democratic paper in San Francisco.

Remember me to Mr. Cleveland. He is the hope of his country.

Truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Cal. Aug. 23, 1892.

Dear Sir:

Carl Schurz<sup>13</sup> speech on the tariff before the Reform Club of Boston, delivered in 1890, is an admirable campaign document and would be especially useful in German. I find that Germans here are very friendly to Mr. Cleveland and I believe this to be the case throughout the Union.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Schurz had been an émigré after the German Revolution of 1848, had served as an officer in the Civil War, and had been Secretary of the Interior under Rutherford B. Hayes.

The campaign here opens on the 27th and the State Committee requests me to make the opening speech at Sacramento, the State Capital, which I shall do.

Scores of requests come to me from all over the state for speeches. The party managers, with their usual virulent idiocy put on the ticket for electors men who can't make a statement clear enough to order a good dinner, and, as usual, I am expected to go out and make the speeches they can't make.

The county press has been roasting the *Examiner*-Foot-English gang.<sup>14</sup> I send you a sample from the *Stockton Mail*.

Your Review of Reviews article was superb.<sup>15</sup> I have given it three readings and find it flawless. Mr. Cleveland is the most fortunate of all our public men in commanding such a service. Beyond personal considerations, the country is happy in producing such a character for such a chronicler.

I hope to be able to come on in September. Some work has to be done here first, for I will not forget my own State. If all conditions were right in California we would carry it. This state is erratic and unstable politically and this year looks like a wobbling year.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

New York, Nov. 8th, 1892.

My dear George:

I leave at 10 a. m. for home per Chicago Limited, tired but

<sup>14</sup> The San Francisco *Examiner* had been owned by Senator George Hearst, father of William Randolph Hearst, who had died on February 21, 1891. His son had taken over the newspaper interests. The Foot to whom reference is made here was probably Lucius Harwood Foote.— See *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. VI, pp. 501, 502. The English referred to here seems to have been William D. English, also mentioned in letters dated June 25, 1893, and August 29, 1893.

<sup>15</sup> *The Review of Reviews* for August, 1892, contained Parker's *Grover Cleveland: A Character Sketch*.

hopeful. I made four speeches yesterday,<sup>16</sup> Haddam, Middletown, Milford and Bridgeport, closing at ¼ past 12 this morning, at 3 o'clock was at Harlem river and at 4 asleep in my hotel after the hardest day's work I ever had.

Sorry I couldn't accept your invitation and that I am not to see you before leaving. Make my regards to Mr. Cleveland, who remains the one leader no matter what fate befalls to-day.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Nov. 25, 1892.

My dear George:

I enclose to you a copy from the Legislative Journal of my memorial oration in joint convention of the legislature in response to that body's invitation conveyed by joint resolution. Pay me the compliment of wasting some minutes in reading it.

The pushing and crowding here for control of patronage is something frightful. Its peculiarity is that the fellows who are at it were the virulent enemies of Mr. Cleveland. Of course they hope to use the patronage to build up the Hill<sup>17</sup> machine for 1896. As a sample of their methods I enclose you an editorial which appears this morning in the Oakland Times, edited by Frank Moffitt. As you see it was provoked by the editorial in the Stockton *Mail* which I sent you yesterday. It is instigated by Foote and English. Of course no decent man here can afford to pay any attention to or make reply to anything published by Moffitt, but the significance of the whole mess is in the paragraph I have marked. You will see that it distinctly breathes the spirit of

<sup>16</sup> This was part of the Democratic campaign to elect Grover Cleveland.

<sup>17</sup> David B. Hill. For his political connections see *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. IX, pp. 28, 29.

murder. Almost identical talk was heard at Fresno against Louis B. McWhirten, from the same gang of men, for weeks prior to his assassination, and it ended in his midnight murder. That they intend to kill me I have no doubt, and I wish you to observe and to remember that my sole provocation is in going my way decorously and decently, standing by my friends and my ideals, and having a vast majority of the decent people in this state steadfastly on my side.

I wired you the other day that Max Popper's<sup>18</sup> telegram should be answered. It was to the President announcing the result in California. Dick Hammond, who flourishes as President of a useless Society of State Clubs, originally organized here by Chauncey Black and Senator Faulkner of West Virginia, as a Hill machine, boasts that he has a telegram from the President thanking him for carrying the State and instructing him to thank the State Committee for whatever it did. Popper is chairman of the State Committee and really made the fine organization and fight that gave us the State. I desire to avoid such feeling as might finally be caused by Hammond's folly, and a line wired or written to Popper would be good.

I hope you dined yesterday with a thankful heart and appetite equal to the plenty on your plate.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Dec. 17th, 1892

My dear George:

I send to-day some more newspaper comment. Up to this date forty-six papers, including the entire Democratic press of the State except four, have made favorable and friendly comments of this character. I am aware of the indelicacy of

<sup>18</sup> Max Popper of San Francisco.

a candidacy for such a place,<sup>19</sup> and therefore of the harm done by the good intentions of my friends, so I send them to you as the voluntary uninspired utterance of the real organs of the party here in order to prove the truth of my declaration that no man in the party has a larger personal following in the State.

My good brother Tom<sup>20</sup> has just returned to me Marble's<sup>21</sup> original letter (note the date) inviting me into the Hill camp and a copy of my reply. Marble and I had frequently corresponded before but he has not written me since. Perhaps it was an ungracious response to such an invitation, but his position angered me and I thought he should have known me better than to have asked me into such company.

I have been called into council by our friends in Wyoming and the steps taken there have been under my advice. We will get our rights in that state and have the legislature by a dear majority over Republicans and populists.

Here the populists hold the balance of power. We can elect White,<sup>22</sup> because when it comes to a free fight in the joint convention the Southern California Republicans will vote for him. The Southern Pacific Railroad is supporting Foote<sup>23</sup> but so far he has only one vote sure.

The Western field presents very interesting features for future treatment. I wrote Mr. Cleveland describing them

<sup>19</sup> Mr. Irish was suggested for appointment as Secretary of the Interior. See his letter to Grover Cleveland below, p. 439. The appointment went to Hoke Smith of Georgia.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas M. Irish, principal of one of the Dubuque public schools for many years. He is still living (1933).

<sup>21</sup> Probably Manton Marble, New York, who was said to have written the Democratic platform of 1884.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. White, Senator from California, 1893-1899. Senators at this time were, of course, chosen by the legislatures.

<sup>23</sup> See note 14.

and hope that the letter reached him. I have got my rush of work out of the way and will shortly renew my editorial exposition of principles in the country press.

I have been addressing you at 139 - 5th Avenue. Perhaps your personal address would be better.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Jan. 4th, 1893

My dear George:

J. Sterling Morton<sup>24</sup> is one of the oldest Nebraska politicians, who has confined his efforts exclusively to his own state. When I lived in Iowa I used to go over there and help him. In 1880 I was sent for to induce the state convention of Nebraska, held at Columbus, to make him a delegate to Cincinnati, which was accomplished after much trouble, an all night session and a speech by me for Tilden, for the making of which I incurred the bitter hostility of Mr. Hendricks. Later on Mr. Morton became very inimical to Tilden and used language concerning him which alienated Dr. Miller. Now I believe he and Miller are friendly and I suppose the Dr. will urge him for the cabinet. Mr. Morton has had no executive experience, so that I cannot say what are his abilities in that respect. We have always been personal friends and I have often been called to help him, but never had occasion to ask a return.

If a Western man goes into the Cabinet, he should be from this coast. I say this as a matter of judgment entirely, and free from any feeling of immediate and personal interest, since in your last I read my epitaph.

A Nebraska man is an Eastern man. His face is turned eastward always, and his familiarity is with the space that

<sup>24</sup> Julius Sterling Morton. In addition to his interest in State politics, Morton was interested in history and was the author of a three-volume history of Nebraska. He became Secretary of Agriculture under Cleveland.

lies in front of him. He has no eyes in his back. But behind him unobserved lie 8 states, and three that are to be. All of them concerned in Federal politics, many of them gone astray far and of great representation in the Government, all capable of political regeneration. I know the whole 11, their men and motives, and I know that they can be made Democratic and that by that change their local government be reformed and their people benefited. I have done a great deal of work in them all and believe that I know when to touch them. A man on this coast faces Eastward also, but under his eye and in front of him lie these 11 states and states to be. They are not alien to him, but they are behind a Nebraska man's back. But you asked information and instead I sent an argument. Soon I will write about Robert A. Johnson,<sup>25</sup> who was the aggressor in a fight in which he seems to feel worsted because he keeps it up apparently in temper entirely.

When Foote tried to be Senator he found but two votes for him in the legislature and made a grandiloquent retreat.

Truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Cal.,  
January 9th, 1893.

Dear Sir:

In 1889 Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson made a tour in California. He fell in with John Muir, a pseudo naturalist who used to work in a saw mill in the Yosemite Valley when men who had been squatters there were sawing the trees for commercial purposes, and were stopped by the State. He also kept company with a man named Robinson<sup>26</sup> whose lack

<sup>25</sup> Apparently the Robert Underwood Johnson mentioned in the following letter is the man referred to here.

<sup>26</sup> Probably Charles D. Robinson. For some of his work see *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 77-97.

of the sense of harmony and color had incapacitated him as a house painter, and who therefore set up as landscape artist and painted pictures of the Yosemite which found no buyers. In company with these and Mr. Wm. Oge, Supt. of the Dewing Printing Company, publishers of "Picturesque California," Mr. Johnson visited the valley. There he consorted with a man named McKenzie,<sup>27</sup> a fellow of education and the master of some style in composition, but morally debased, a drunkard and a man of forbidding morals.

After a sojourn in the Yosemite in this company Mr. Johnson was emitted by the usual route and published in the "Examiner" an interview, ample in length and picturesque in vituperation. The Yosemite Commission has always at its head the Governor of California and consists of eight citizens chosen by him, whose services are uncompensated. Amongst the eight were Frank Pixley, of the "Argonaut", Mr. Eastland and others including myself, and excluding myself all men of wealth and many of them of special experience and trained taste in forestry and landscape engineering.

In his interview Mr. Johnson charged the Governor and these gentlemen with official acts which are felonies under the laws of California. His charges were not merely an impeachment of taste and judgment, which would have been tolerable, but were accusations of crime. He may think that men who get to be Governor out here don't mind a little thing like that, but they do, and so do gentlemen who are giving their unrequited time to a public trust. To this interview I made the enclosed reply on July 15th, 1889. I admit that it was not the soft answer that turneth away wrath, but

<sup>27</sup> For letters on the Yosemite situation signed by George B. Mackenzie and others see *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 475, 476, and Vol. XLIII, pp. 154, 155. The Yosemite Valley was granted to the State of California in 1864 with the provision that it should be a public park. It was made a national park by an act of Congress dated October 1, 1890.



its asperities seemed warranted not only by his attack on my integrity and that of my colleagues, but by his treatment of my state as a cuspidor in which to eject his intellectual phlegm.

Since then the controversy has gone on. The "Century" has acted like a country daily pursuing a delinquent subscriber and determined on revenge in lieu of cash. I can't begin to traverse the false and foolish things it has published, but I forward to you my reports for the last four years; read the senior report for a fair statement of the results of the controversy.

Mr. Gifford Pinchot, a friend of Mr. Johnson and a forester of great repute visited the Valley to get information based on personal examination, to "burn up" the Commission. After a month's sojourn there he called on me to express his gratification at having found the "Century's" charges entirely without foundation. He was enthusiastic over the State's fidelity to its trust, and promised on his return East to make public his approval. Instead of this he wrote me that he had learned that the "Century" was simply making the attacks in order to compel California to employ an expert forester as landscape engineer, and as he recognized the propriety of this he did not wish to hamper the means used to secure it!

To return to Johnson's interview, — after my reply to it, he sent a note to all the papers here denying that he had been interviewed, whereupon the "Examiner" published the statement of the Mayor of San Francisco and several other men well-known who were present when he gave the interview, and who stated that it was published correctly except that some of its grosser charges of crime and personal asperities were toned down in the paper.

This of course left Mr. Johnson's veracity standing in a light dim but not religious.

His friends here are my friends and intimates, — Joaquin Miller, John Vance Cheney and Charles Howard Shinn, and I am willing to let them and you arbitrate between us: Will you ever forgive my prolixity!

I read you in the "Forum." Enclosed find the bill upon which the People's party goes to bat in the next Congress. Show it to Mr. Cleveland. If you don't want to write a review or magazine article on it send it back and I will. It is paternal pottering and idiotic doddering gone to seed.

I enclose a personal note on other matters.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Jan. 20th, 1893.

Dear Sir:

The election of my friend White is accomplished, against the influence of the *Examiner*, Foote and Englishes. It is the beginning of a new era in Democratic politics in this State. Mr. Cleveland will find White a man of brains, not influenced by prejudice and capable of reasoning. He has not made concessions to the political empirics and will be found in line with the great purposes of the coming Administration.

When the tariff of 1846 was framed its inspiration was in the report of Robert J. Walker, Secy of the Treasury and it was properly known in history as the Walker Tariff. Let us identify the coming tariff in history with the Administration, by omitting to name it for the man who happens to (be) chairman of the Ways and Means. If it be thoroughly reflective of his views I would like it to be called "The Cleveland Tariff." Anyway its radix in his Administration can be preserved by naming it for his Secretary of Treasury.<sup>28</sup> A little persistence in this line by those who write and talk would settle the question.

<sup>28</sup> John G. Carlisle, Secretary of the Treasury.

I hope to see you in a few weeks, when the earnest work begins.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, Cal.,

Jan. 25th, 1893.

Dear Sir:

Friends in Salem, Boise City and Cheyenne have written me recently that Democrats in the legislatures of Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming on their own motion, have addressed you in my behalf for the position of Secretary of the Interior in your coming Cabinet. To-day I am informed that friends in the California legislature, of both parties, propose, with my assent, to indulge in some more formal action in the same direction. I have declined assent to this and, as the action taken in other states may reach you, it seems proper to say that I have felt that candidacy, in the current meaning thereof, for a place in your official family is not becoming, and that the discussion of my name in that connection by the press here and elsewhere and the other acts, no doubt suggested thereby, are volunteered entirely, and so far as they seem to make me a candidate are not in line with my own sense of propriety; though as evidences of confidence, good feeling and friendship they impress me as they should any man who loves appreciation of his efforts for a good cause.

Fifty and more years ago when the western prairies were untracked, the way across them from one post to another was sometimes marked by a deep furrow, plowed under contract by some stout pioneer. Half a century later I have found these furrows still plainly marked, and there has risen before me again the team, the plow and the plowman drawing the guiding mark through a wilderness.

After we are all gone men will pause by the furrow you are to make in the history of our country and will say, "here the plowman passed and time toils in vain to conceal his furrow."

My friend you are selecting your team, but you and no other must hold the plow. If I should go into history as one who helped to pull it I would be glad, but I shall have always the pleasure of believing in the plowman and knowing that the furrow is to endure.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Grover Cleveland.

San Francisco, Jan. 25th, 1893.

Dear Sir:

I enclose a letter, which I beg you to read and if you think it proper, seal and deliver, otherwise destroy it. I wrote it because I fear that I am becoming too much identified with efforts made by others that make me appear as a candidate.

Since White's election the rage against him and me on the part of the small gang here is intense. They will spend much money in bribery, subornation and conspiracy against us, and if you hear any morning that I am killed or that attempts to scandalize White or me are sprung, you will know the reason.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Iowa City, Iowa

March 27, 1893.

My dear George:

We are here in the mud and misery of a March break up in Iowa, of which you are well advised by experience.

I had talked early with Col. Lamont, who told me that Tripp<sup>29</sup> was staked out for Land Commissioner, a place that was undesirable any way. I told him that if a first class place was intended for me, the Collectorship was the one. I was led to believe that he communicated with the President for word came back through Don Dickinson that if White would stand in the place was mine. I sent White at once to the President who met his mention of the Collectorship with the information that he had a candidate himself, Mr. Jno. H. Wise, and asked White to have a delegation endorse him. Of course, that ended it. White came to me and I advised that the delegation endorse Wise which was done. I then sent a note to the President asking for the Naval office in San Francisco,<sup>30</sup> a place that carries neither power nor responsibility, and is entirely secondary. I asked for it simply because I saw that the Examiner was announcing that I could get nothing in California.

Mr. Wise is my friend, but he is an old man, of very infirm habits and in no way a factor in California politics. But he is a Southerner, a brother of Geo. Wise, M. C. from Virginia, and there is no doubt that his appointment will get Virginia and some other Southern support in Congress and I have no wounds in the matter for I know such support is very needful in the next Congress.

I have every reason to believe that the President will respond to me, but I was unconquerably sensitive about approaching him for an appointment. To do what I did was revolting and cost my self-respect many a pang.

For years I have supported him, propagated his ideas

<sup>29</sup> This proposed appointment, if it refers to the United States Commissioner, was apparently not made, for Silas W. Lamoreux became Commissioner of the General Land Office.

<sup>30</sup> Mr. Irish received the appointment as Naval Officer of Customs at San Francisco, California, an office which he held for the next sixteen years, in spite of Republican victories in the elections.

and promoted his leadership, using my own judgment and apparently always in line with his approbation. I confess that I would have liked to have been placed in a position of national prominence by him. Maybe it is vanity, but frankly I felt that way. He chose however to lift from obscurity Hoke Smith, Morton and Olney,<sup>31</sup> and as to the men he did not err in judgment. After that I would have liked a first class place at home, but the seat had been reserved for another, so I salute Fate.

Now let me tell you what must be done. The next Congress is rotten on finance. It will go one way and the President another, and something must break. The thing that must be done is to begin at once whipping Congress into line by creating a public opinion on the silver question that will back the President and whip Congress into line.

I sent you a sketch of a speech I made in Dubuque<sup>32</sup> last week. It has set the Iowa press in a flutter. It has set the Herald right as you see by an enclosed editorial. I print from here an interview in the same line which I will send you. I think the best work I can do this summer is to keep this up in the West. The California press can be mostly brought into line and I can help in Iowa, Wyoming, Oregon, etc. But these bricks which I make are made without straw.

I go home thankfully and cheerfully, and from there will write you. Will you show the speech, editorial, etc. to Mr. Cleveland?

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

<sup>31</sup> Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Julius Sterling Morton, Secretary of Agriculture; and Richard Olney, Attorney General. Apparently Mr. Irish had been suggested for one of these positions.

<sup>32</sup> A brief account of this speech is given in the *Iowa State Press* (Iowa City), March 29, 1893.

Oakland, Cal.

June 25th, 1893.

Hon. Geo. F. Parker,  
U. S. Consul,  
Dear Sir:

Yours of the 6th inst. with enclosure from Messrs. Davis & Hile is at hand.<sup>33</sup> These young gentlemen indicate a wish to settle in California.

There are very fine English settlements in Placer County (part hill country) and in Fresno and Kern Counties, in the San Joaquin Valley. Many of the immigrants are on profit producing plantations and are employers of labor. With them these young gentlemen can undoubtedly get self supporting employment during novitiate in the state. Both wages and cost of living differ so in different sections of the state that it is difficult to say more than that they may expect self supporting employment, while they become informed as to our peculiar industry and methods in agriculture and horticulture.

The best results from tillage here have so far been reached on raisin plantations and orchards of the apricot, peach and French prune. By taking time to study the state, ranches may be had with orchards already planted, and with supplies of spring water which enable a bit of dairying, strawberry and small fruit culture, the growing of forage and so on, in other words plans fitted for variorum farming.

I would not advise resorting to the Los Angeles district. It is the most arid part of the state and the costliest to irrigate, with less adaptation to a variety of products. The fact is not generally known that the earliest deciduous and citrus fruits are marketed from plantations 100 miles north

<sup>33</sup> This letter was apparently written after Mr. Parker had been appointed consul at Birmingham, England, and the young men mentioned were from that country.

of San Francisco and over 500 miles north of Los Angeles. In fact the latter region is supplied by us with these early fruits just as we supply the East.

I will forward herewith some information supplied by our State Board of Trade. If Messrs. D. & H. wish to come and so inform me I will endeavor to secure places for them to work, in advance, and will take pleasure in giving them assistance and information. Please assure these gentlemen that I have no interest except the settlement of my state with good people. I have no land to sell, but on the other hand am a constant land buyer. When they come they must be prepared to find California a contrast to all the physical features with which they are familiar in England.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

My dear Parker:

I enclose letter of information and advice for the young men who want to come here. I will forward other matter for their use.

I note what you say of White. He is a native of California. This has always been the field of selfish, sinister and covert politics. On such a field he has grown up, and has absorbed its characteristics, so fixed in the habit of doing nothing except as part of a programme or in pursuance of a bargain, that quite a majority of our people think my open and frank and necessarily aggressive support of Mr. Cleveland was undertaken only after I had him committed in a contract to reciprocate with control of power and patronage.

So I have not expected much of White, and am not disappointed. He is a man of brains and capacity and I hope will make a good figure in the Senate where the State has long needed a man of active intellect.



He and the Representatives have recently met and apportioned out the remaining patronage by endorsing candidates. Five of the men so endorsed were active leaders of the Hill machine in 1891-2,—they are Bill English, for Surveyor of the Port; Capt. Ed. Hackett, for Receiver of Public Money's; Pat. F. Walsh, for Pension Agent; Sam Bramhart, for Chief Appraiser (he is a Jew sand lotter)<sup>34</sup> and John P. Dunn, sand lotter, who voted for Blaine in 1884 because he wanted a war with Great Britain.

If the President appoints these people it will be putting all the plans of political power in the hands of his enemies to be used in punishing his friends. Shall I tell him so? When Congress meets I will be in Washington to help what I may to get sound action on finance. Did you see my silver debate with Stewart? When the notes are written out I will send it to you.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.  
April 6, 93.

My dear George:

Since arrival last Monday I have been held a close prisoner by illness, and hear nothing from no one. Last I saw you were going to Birmingham—a very interesting old city and I suppose ranking with Liverpool in trade with this country and therefore a snug consulship.

The Hill movement for 96 seems to be on. I have just received a pamphlet of his speeches, most of which seem to have been written by Morton [Manton?] Marble. Well, I am not in the Hill movement for 96 or any time, and I don't want to see it get impulse here by giving places to Hill men.

<sup>34</sup> The term "sand lotter" was used in California to designate one who supported the Constitution adopted in 1879, which was considered radical by its opponents.

When you go abroad remember me with a letter occasionally. Pardon this scratch for I am ill, on my back and out of form.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco, California

Aug. 29, 1893.

My dear George:

I have been in Washington a month doing what I could to aid the splendid result of yesterday in the House. The Iowa Democrats<sup>35</sup> were about to go wrong and I went to Des Moines to right them. I sent you an imperfect report of my speech, and wish you to note my construction of the platform.

Did you get my Ogden speech? If so please send it to Mr. Bayard with my compliments.

If the Senate act promptly and rightly now and we then speedily crystallize our tariff policy, the country will rise rapidly from this depression and its readjustment will be felt simply as a part of the commercial convalescence.

Of my own matters I know nothing. The street and Custom House here are filled with men whom I had to overcome to get a Cleveland delegation and neither I nor any one who stood by the President, can get even a laborer employed in either. One [Our?] congressional delegation has endorsed W. D. English for Surveyor of the Port. His appointment, after his six years of public blackguard abuse of Mr. Cleveland would be grossly improper.

I hope that you are enjoying your residence abroad. Write me.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

<sup>35</sup> For a brief resumé of Irish's speech at the Iowa Democratic State Convention see *The Des Moines Leader*, August 24, 1893.

San Francisco,

Jan. 18th, 1894.

My dear Parker:

Your letters bring to me a picture of peace. In your far exile from current scenes at home you miss much of that torment with which one looks directly upon weakness, selfishness and treachery in places where noble sacrifice, manliness and fidelity should lift a heroic front.

Last month I had an hour with the President at his invitation, devoted entirely to public matters. The lack of leadership in Congress is the feature of the situation which spreads misgivings through the party ranks and distresses the Chief. When Jackson was asked his opinion of Congress at the end of his 8 years battle with that body for the independent treasury and a specie basis, he said "Congress is a curious body." The present one is something more than that. Laggard when it should be prompt, hasty when it should be deliberate and thoroughly diseased with disloyalty to every idea represented by Mr. Cleveland and endorsed when the people elected him. The metropolitan press has deserted the flag unanimously, as it did in 1885, and the President is left without means of reaching the people vicariously and when he goes to them directly in his messages, myriad pens, inspired by malice, substitute evil construction for the actual text and so spread evil and discontent.

What has been needed is a leader in Congress to make such a statement of the financial, tariff or Hawaiian question as Schurz made of the military organization of the Louisiana legislation or Sumner of Grant's San Domingo scheme. Instead of this we have had the rank straddling of Voorhees and the petty sparring over Hawaii.<sup>36</sup> In this

<sup>36</sup> Senator Daniel W. Voorhees, of Indiana. The Hawaiian Islands were finally annexed in 1898.

state the country press which I inspired has stood nobly steadfast, but the Federal appointments have mostly gone to the enemies of the Administration, and some of them its vile defamers. The situation grew so tense that the letter, of which I enclose a copy, was signed by the country press and a large number of loyal and well-known Democrats and sent to the President. My appointment followed and I fear was in a sense forced by this statement.

But I am ashamed to suggest personal considerations in the midst of this pitiful situation, in this pitiless storm of adverse circumstances which is pelting the country and the party.

Now let me show you the other side. I am an optimist. Supply of the physical needs of our people goes on, food and shelter must be had. No matter whether the supply is a charity, appetite returns as soon after a meal given as one bought, and the sleeve of one's coat or the seat of his trousers will wear out whether the garment was given or bought. But while consumption has gone on production has rested for nearly a year. Business gets on its feet again any way, but the first condition of prosperity is stability of conditions. If Congress promptly pass the tariff bill, production will start and by 1896 our industries will be in full swing and the voice of business and hand of labor will be against any party that proposes another change.

We have suffered from this aversion to a change. Blaine<sup>37</sup> used it in his Philadelphia speech in 1876 when he said a change in the politics of the Executive had become as portentous to the public welfare as a change of dynasties in a monarchy. Conkling<sup>38</sup> used it with crushing effect in 1880. Now in 1896 it will be on our side, and if the South will negative Solomon and prove that braying in a mortar

<sup>37</sup> James G. Blaine, of Maine.

<sup>38</sup> Roscoe Conkling, of New York.

has benefited her a bit,<sup>39</sup> so that the sectional cry cannot be started again, we will win.

This view I elaborated to the President, evidently to his gratification but he said with bitterness "If Congress would do its duty."

However I bugle the forces and propagate this view, and above the mists and clouds can see and above the clamor can hear the clearer welkin and the shouts of victory. As we pass on in present humiliation the enemy can *vae victis* but I can hear the rumble of our conquering chariots.

When the fight comes I will resign if I have to and go into it.

I am getting some Yosemite pictures for you. If those young Englishmen have the California fever yet, show them the enclosed circular. This is a splendid opportunity to get land and water in the very best part of the State. If they or any others want further information I will send it.

My wife and children send greetings to your family and are quite impressed with the idea of going abroad. Lamont spoke highly of you when I met him last month and if you want an exchange of places I should say it would be easy.

Very Truly,

Jno. P. Irish

San Francisco,

Jan. 19th, 1894.

My dear George:

I mail to you to-day one large panoramic view of the Yosemite Valley and smaller views of El Capitan and Glacier Point. The elevations given are above the floor of the Valley and 4000 feet should be added for the height above sea level.

<sup>39</sup> Proverbs 27: 22.

Accept them from me. The Commission has no pictures. They may serve to adorn your office.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco,<sup>40</sup>

Feb. 1st, 1897.

My Dear George.

The last eight months have been so filled with far and near demands that I have passed you by repeatedly to a more convenient season.

You have had all the campaign news. The emergency presented by Bryan's nomination was great. It combined all the vagrant policies and people, put them in one pot and under one lid, where we succeeded in doing them to a turn. Had it not been for the patriotic action of the real Democracy, he would have been elected. As late as mid-October the poll showed a majority for him in Iowa, Ill. Ind. and Mich. The puerile position of the Republicans on silver made them defenseless. When Bryan said they confessed free coinage was a good thing, but not to be enjoyed without the consent of Europe, they had no answer and he had no opposition until we entered the field on the Indianapolis platform. We made the fight and it was a ceaseless attack.

I intended last May to have a quiet summer and keep out of the campaign entirely. But Bryan challenged me to meet him on July 4th in Nebraska, and debate the silver question. I met him and that started the fight which I kept up in the seven pivotal states and closed in his town of Lincoln, on the night of Nov. 2nd.

I have just been East. The feeling of the most thoughtful Republicans is that their party will go to pieces before

<sup>40</sup> This letter is printed from the original letter included in the Parker papers deposited in the Historical, Memorial and Art Department at Des Moines.

1900, and they must rally, with the constitutional elements of the country, on the Indianapolis platform.

It is apparent now to all but the infuriates that the false leaders of the Democracy at Chicago, lost to the party a great opportunity.

I enclose a letter from the Atty. to whom I referred the Blythe papers. He is of opinion that the finality reached cannot be disturbed.

I see that consular and diplomatic appointments are not to be taken up very soon, and of course you will have no plans formed now.

I am thinking of a project for a sort of Pacific Review, that will absorb Bret Harte's old Overland Monthly, and seek for its field this West coast, using the city and country press for material and dealing in the first instance with wider questions on the plan of the Review of Reviews. I confess that daily journalism wallows where I have no stomach to follow.

The nasty ambitions of Hearst and Pulitzer have worked a decadence from which there is no recovery except in the financial failure of their papers as business enterprises. This seems not far off in Hearst's case.

Present my regards to your family.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Oakdale, Cal.,<sup>41</sup>  
Feb. 14th, 1900.

My Dear George.

On my return recently from a trip to Washington I found yours of January 1st. Yes, it was my birthday, a fact im-

<sup>41</sup> This letter is printed from the original letter included in the Parker papers deposited in the Historical, Memorial and Art Department at Des Moines. Clipped to this letter was a printed copy of a speech delivered by John P. Irish at the National Democratic Convention held at Indianapolis, Indiana, on September 2, 1896.

pressed upon me by my wife's continuance of a household custom founded by my mother, who always made it the occasion of a family gathering. In this far land all kin and collateral relatives within reach gathered to remind me that I had entered my 58th year, though white hair and an occasional twinge of rheumatism had not waited upon the sociable proclamation, that age is upon me.

I have often thought of you, and having no notice of your address was content to know that wherever you were you were doing some good thing.

The political situation in this country is as deplorable as it could be made, if the confusion were designed by its authors. Bryan and his gang of desperadoes, who usurped the control of the Democratic organization in 1896, cannot be displaced except by another crushing defeat, which they will get.

The country since the beginning of the Spanish war has needed a strong opposition party, with a leadership of courage and character that would inspire popular confidence. But no such opposition has been in existence. The Bryanites meet in conventicle and in the list of names is none that you and I recognize. Populists, kids, cranks and political Dugald Dalgettys<sup>42</sup> gather to fine comb public questions in search of some expedient issue, with no more idea of principle than an Iowa hog has of the Roubiayat [Rubáiyát] of Omar Khayyam. There is a widespread and earnest sentiment against imperialism and the afflicting policies that have their radix in the Spanish war. The declaration of Moorfield Storey<sup>43</sup> in 1896 that our institutions would not survive victory in a foreign war, seems to have been prophesy. The Germans especially are against expansion in the tropics, but they and sturdy Republicans who

<sup>42</sup> A soldier of fortune in Scott's *Legend of Montrose*.

<sup>43</sup> Moorfield Storey was president of the American Bar Association in 1896.



follow Hoar, Wellington, Hale and Mason<sup>44</sup> say that they will not trust Mr. Bryan on these issues, because he went to Washington and urged his followers to nag on the Spanish war as "it would be good politics" and when Republicans had the Paris treaty beaten, he went to his senators and persuaded McLaurin, McEnery, Bacon<sup>45</sup> and others to vote for it and ratify it. Without this the treaty would have been amended and the Philippines would not have been bought. There is coming a great reaction against imperialism, but it will not be manifested this year. Our people cannot live in the tropics. Our institutions are racial and cannot be planted where our race cannot perpetuate itself from generation to generation. To all the overmastering physical facts of the new situation the country will awaken and in 1904 there may result a political revolution, but even then the Democracy must be in different leadership to win.

Tilden told me twenty-three years ago that the Democratic party would rally again and elect one man to the Presidency and then pass away, because the Southern politicians had not the sense either to follow or to lead. In 1896 they took leadership, and the carefully cultivated confidence of the North in the Democratic party, due to Mr. Cleveland's matchless tactics, has been sacrificed, and there is not left a single Democratic Senator, Governor nor legislature in a Northern state! Yet Bryan, Tillman and the unspeakable Morgan<sup>46</sup> plume themselves on their leadership!

As far as I am concerned, this year I will do what I can

<sup>44</sup> Probably the following Senators: George Frisbie Hoar, of Massachusetts; George L. Wellington, of Maryland; Eugene Hale, of Maine; and William E. Mason, of Illinois.

<sup>45</sup> Probably John L. McLaurin, of South Carolina; Samuel D. McEnery, of Louisiana; and Augustus C. Bacon, of Georgia.

<sup>46</sup> The men mentioned here, in addition to William Jennings Bryan, are perhaps Benjamin R. Tillman, of South Carolina, and, possibly, John T. Morgan, of Louisiana.

to add to the defeat of Bryan. As far as principle goes the Republican party has adopted Mr. Cleveland's financial ideas and has more than half swallowed his tariff views, so that it represents more of my original Democracy than any other existing party. Wherein I differ from it, on expansion, I can wait, for I intend to be here in 1904.

This letter is too long on politics to leave room for other things. Write me again. Present us all to Mrs. Parker and your family.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

Jan. 30th, 1903.

My dear George:

I was East when your letter and the Vallandigham<sup>47</sup> enclosure came. Last year I was so constantly away attending to a large international law suit in which I am the attorney of Americans despoiled in Central America, that my correspondence was wretchedly neglected. I brought my case to arbitration and won it and am now watching the enforcement of the award. So, as I grow old I keep busy, and I think that is the proper way to keep up the perspective and make the horizon recede as we approach it, just as it does in our youth.

I agree with you that the history of 1892 has not been written. The situation required that Mr. Cleveland reach the people over the heads of the politicians. The people were with him, the machine was against him. I adopted the policy here of having the districts instruct their delegates for him and order them to enforce the unit rule. This scattered the Foote-English force on everything, except the

<sup>47</sup> The reference is probably to Clement L. Vallandigham, Representative from Ohio, who was banished in 1863.

choice of delegates at large, and when the delegation was completed, Mr. Cleveland's enemies found themselves bound and gagged by the majority of the delegation. It was the same everywhere. The people found means of impressing themselves upon the Convention, in spite of the politicians, and he won against the most formidable combination ever known in American politics.

Of course Mr. Whitney<sup>48</sup> is credited with the action of the Convention, but he would have been powerless had not the people supplied him with the situation which needed thereafter only direction.

The old party is fatally wounded I fear. It has gone vagabonding until first class men shrink from undertaking its leadership. It vainly sought to win in 1896 a battle which it began by shooting down every one of its successful commanders, and deliberately spilling its brains. It has learned nothing since. Gov. Hill lost its chance in New York, when Coler<sup>49</sup> would have won but for the socialistic coal plank, which he put in as a piece of smart politics. We will not live to see the party regenerated or winning a victory that will do any good. I look back, as do thousands of others, upon a life time spent in accumulating a heritage of principles for the party, at last to see it traded for Populist pottage by Bryan and his gang. The only pleasure left me in politics is in fighting them.

Will you be in the United States next year? If so I hope to see you. Present me to your family.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

<sup>48</sup> William C. Whitney of New York who was Secretary of the Navy in Cleveland's first administration and manager of Cleveland's campaign for reelection in 1892.

<sup>49</sup> Bird S. Coler was the Democratic candidate for Governor of New York in 1902.

Port of San Francisco,<sup>50</sup>

Dec. 1st, 1903.

My dear George.

I am glad to hear from you and that you will return to your own country. I can see no cheering signs of Democratic revival. The party has lost the confidence of the country, and many evils seem bearable rather than trust it again with power. When it seemed sure that Tilden was to be President, he said to a few of us that the future was full of difficulty, for we had no men in the party accustomed to administration and trained in executive duty. On the other hand, he said we had plenty of first class parliamentary material, trained in Congress, and reliable, that could be depended upon to do well in actuating Democratic purposes by legislation. But when we got power it turned out just the other way. Mr. Cleveland was able to fill his two Cabinets with first class men, who in administration were the peers of any here or in Europe, while Congress had but few qualified to lead, and these were soon deserted by the rabble sent there to represent the party. There is no assurance, absolutely none, that if we should win on the tariff our promises would be kept, for they were not when we had the chance to redeem them. But, leaving that out, if the party had simply held its historic ground on the money issue and followed Mr. Cleveland, we would have won in 1896 and would have remained in power. The victim of hysteria may be pitied, but is not preferred as a trained nurse. The party exists now only because an opposition always exists in a republic, but it is without light and without hope in the world. It looks as if the unspeakable Hearst will lead it to a fusion with the labor unions and be nominated next year, when the entry of the devil into the swine and the loss of pork by drowning will be repeated.

<sup>50</sup> This letter also was printed from the original in the Historical, Memorial and Art Department at Des Moines.

Mr. Cleveland stands higher than ever. His fame is secure and his countrymen hail him as they greet no other private citizen. I enclose an article<sup>51</sup> on him which I wrote recently. It may violate good taste in its reminiscent feature, but I could not otherwise illustrate my idea of the signs of character.

When you come across let me know. Present me to your family, whom I hope to meet.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

Oct. 9, 1905.

My dear George:

I have had in mind a letter to you for a long time. Since I heard from you last, you have become connected with a matter that is in some respects greater than an affair of government. To reinstate the Equitable<sup>52</sup> and the great life companies in popular favor and confidence is a work of genuine reform and of great difficulty. It is however such a work as is congenial to the great qualities of Mr. Cleveland, and in Mr. Morton<sup>53</sup> he has the ablest of coadjutors. It is amongst the pleasures and gratifications of my old age that Mr. Cleveland has sturdily survived to know that he has the affectionate and cordial endorsement of his countrymen, whose view of his career was dimmed for a time by the frenzied treachery of Bryan and his followers.

<sup>51</sup> Attached to this letter was an undated clipping from *Town Talk*, published in San Francisco.

<sup>52</sup> Parker returned from Europe in 1904 to become Secretary of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, a position he held until 1910. Grover Cleveland was one of the three trustees in charge of the reorganization of this company which had been investigated by Charles E. Hughes. Morgan J. O'Brien and George Westinghouse were the other two.

<sup>53</sup> Probably Paul Morton, President of the Equitable.

If we had had a Cleveland in the House and one in the Senate, during his last term, a different history would have been written. But the spirit of demagoguery fell upon Congress like the confusion of tongues upon the builders of Babel, and we will not see again a Democratic party as you and I knew it. Lamartine,<sup>54</sup> describing the banishment of Rouget de l'Isle, after he wrote the Marseillaise, says: "France has gone mad. In her delirium she knew not the sound of her own voice." So, the American Democracy went mad and the sound of its own voice was as that of a stranger. The opportunity was lost in 1896 and will not come again. The Socialistic control of the party, fostered by creatures like Bryan and the unspeakable Hearst,<sup>55</sup> will continue, and if it win a National election it will mean the gradual abolition of representative government, and finally the accomplishment of what is meant by the cry that "everything belongs to everybody."

I by no means underestimate the malign influence, towards such an end, of the financial transgressions and business dishonor like that rebuked so fittingly by Mr. Cleveland in accepting his hard function in the affairs of the Equitable. Those things are all water on the socialist wheel. I am not pessimistic, but resigned. I can take but little active part in the affairs of the future and must rest content in the reflection that my part in the past, covering nearly fifty years of active life, was intended for the best for my country.

The death of Mr. Lamont was a great shock to me. I had been so accustomed to look upon him as a young man, destined to long survive the generation to which I belong, that his sudden death made a sad impression.

Will you ever come this way? I would be glad to enter-

<sup>54</sup> Alphonse Marie Louis de Lamartine, French poet.

<sup>55</sup> William Randolph Hearst, son of Senator George Hearst.

tain you. I am East several times a year and when in New York again will find you.

If you have opportunity present my respect and appreciation to Mr. Cleveland.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

Jan. 15, 1906.

Geo. F. Parker, Esqr.,  
Equitable Life Insurance Co.,  
New York City.

My dear George:

Can you tell me whether Surgeon General O'Reiley of the U. S. Army is the doctor so frequently mentioned as the friend of Mr. Cleveland? I will be much obliged for any information you can give me about the Surgeon General and the way of reaching him.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco

Oct. 16, 1906.

My dear Parker:

Because of the references in my letter to the attitude of Southern politicians towards Mr. Cleveland and the prophesy of Mr. Tilden,<sup>56</sup> I think its public enlargement would not be politically prudent. There are evidences abroad that the dish of radicalism, which the South assisted in cooking in 1896, has turned to crow on the Southern palate, and that section is turning towards the conservative element that may be of the highest value in the next Presidential campaign. My advices from several sources in the State of

<sup>56</sup> Samuel J. Tilden, Democratic candidate for the presidency in 1876.

New York incline me to the opinion that Hearst will be beaten. I have this morning a letter from Mr. Bainbridge of Brooklyn, a Democrat and formerly county chairman, who asks me for information about Hearst, and declares himself determined to do everything possible to defeat him. I am very glad if the private circulation of my letter to you has caused people to resist the pretensions of that vicious demagog. If I were footloose, I would go to New York and take part in the campaign against him.

Present me to all my friends.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco  
Nov. 10, 1906.

My dear George:

The defeat of Hearst, as it appears now, alone on his ticket is gratifying and admonitory. It may mark a turn in the tide of radicalism and the reappearance of such a party of opposition as the interests of the country require. But such result is hopeless as long as Hearst and Bryan remain foremost figures in the Democracy. I think if there is ever to be a palingenesis of the party it must be on and around the Gold Democratic platform of 1896, and the movement must be led by some of the great comeouters who guided that convention. In California the Democratic organization this year held a convention, adopted Hearst's socialistic and radical platform and then denounced him and read him out of the party. The candidate of course was beaten, since the inconsistency of his position was apparent. He took his principles from Hearst and in every speech denounced their creator.

The election of Hughes<sup>57</sup> was obviously secured by the votes of Democrats who prefer decency to party.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Evans Hughes was elected Governor of New York in 1906.



I was amused during the campaign by the numerous magazine articles on Hearst, the "Man of Mystery" written by several sorts and conditions of people. I am inclined to write the real story of the beginnings of his career in this State, which differs widely from these various narratives. He is a very common person, at base a black-guard.

In 1903 I was asked to write an appreciation of Mr. Cleveland. Recently I found a copy of it, which is enclosed. It is not long and you may like to read it.

If I am in Washington this winter, I hope to find time to run over to New York and meet you.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Jan. 24, 1907.

My dear George:

I have received the invitation from Gen. Dodge<sup>58</sup> to attend the annual dinner of the Iowa Society of New York on the 15th of February and was compelled to decline, because on that day I have to deliver the Mid-winter Commencement address to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. From there I may go to Washington and only lack of time will bar me running over to New York, where I hope to see you and other friends.

Out here we have no politics just now except the hoodlum howl of ninety-five clean, decent and studious Japanese pupils in the public schools. The attack on them is led by a lot of aliens who have no other sympathy for the United States than that which the louse has for the calf on which it feeds. Of course all the politicians are out-jumping each other to see which can attract the most attention

<sup>58</sup> Probably Grenville M. Dodge, formerly of Council Bluffs.

as an endorser of every lie that is put in circulation by these alien blatherskites, and the papers pursue the same course, so that there is but little chance for the truth to be made known to the country. I have written an article on the subject for publication in the New York Independent, which you may see.

Present me to Mr. Morton, Mr. Cleveland and my other friends with whom you are in touch.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

Mar. 7, 1907.

George F. Parker, Esqr.,

Sec'y. Equitable Life Trustees,

New York.

My dear George:

I made a pilgrimage East last month, stopping at Lincoln and making a brief sojourn in Iowa City, where I met again my two surviving brothers and my sister,<sup>59</sup> and we were at table together for the first time in many years. I then went to Washington city and remained three days in consultation with my law partner, Judge Penfield, over business matters. I did not find time to even call at the White House or the Treasury Department, nor did I have time to go over to New York. The weather was beastly and made me glad to get back to California.

I inclose an article on the Japanese school question and the subject of Asiatic immigration generally. It is intended to correct a false impression produced by the misrepresentations of the alien born leaders of the labor unions here. If this State is denied Asiatic labor, a great misfortune will follow. For physical reasons which are

<sup>59</sup> These were Thomas M. Irish, Charles W. Irish, and Ruth Elizabeth Irish.

insurmountable, vast and valuable lines of production here depend entirely upon the Asiatic labor, which does not compete, and never has competed with white labor at all. I want to get this article published, if possible, in the New York Evening Post, and send it to you hoping that you will favor me by procuring such publication. If the Post will not take it, use your discretion about placing it, upon the sole condition that if printed it is not to be cut.

I was very glad to see the courtesy and evidence of appreciation with which Mr. Cleveland was met on his recent visit to Chicago. His countrymen have come to their senses and are again clothed and in their right mind concerning his invaluable service to the Republic. Impartial history will place him where he belongs—foremost amongst men and in the first rank of American Presidents.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Treasury Department

March 8, 1907.

My dear George:

Since mailing to you article on the Japanese question, some things have occurred here which may make the article embarrassing to the government. Therefore, *do not* have it published. Read it and write me what you think of it.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

May 14, 1907.

My dear George:

I countermanded publication of the article sent to you because the Japanese matter had gone into diplomacy and an officer of the Government would not probably discuss it

publicly. Now I wish you to use the article as your own. That part of it relating to the extirpation of civil liberty from this city, is especially timely now when San Francisco is ruled by a union mob.

Roosevelt's letter on undesirable citizens shows in him the Cleveland manhood. The claim of union labor leaders to license American labor must be effectively denied or liberty is an empty thing. Recently a meeting of 4000 labor unionists in this city hissed and trampled on the Stars and Stripes. They are traitors and unionism is assuming everywhere a treasonable attitude.

I would have written sooner but have been very busy. I was impressed by the country's recognition of Mr. Cleveland on his 70th birthday. May he see many more, and enjoy as now the respect and love of his real American countrymen.

I will be glad to furnish you material for your own use about matters here.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
July 17th, 1907.

My dear George:

I am in receipt of a copy of the New York Post of the 5th instant, in which is published my letter on the Japanese and labor union questions in San Francisco. I thank you for procuring its publication, because I think it may do something to enlighten eastern public sentiment as to affairs here. The condition of San Francisco is constantly growing worse. The simple remedy for it all is not discussed by the pulpit, the press or other instruments of publicity. That remedy is the restoration of civil liberty. When that is done all things necessary to community life

and progress will be added. It is the habit of our cowardly people to send committees to the labor leaders begging of them to grant a small measure of the privileges and liberty which belong of right to American citizens under the constitution of their country. This cowardly policy only increases the arrogance and strengthens the influence of these alien born agitators, who neither understand nor care for our institutions; indeed, they hold them in contempt for the very good reason that they defy them with success.

I am disturbed by the frequent reports of Mr. Cleveland's illness. I hope that he suffers but the ordinary besetments that come to us all as age advances, and pray that he may live many years to enjoy the kindly feeling and profound respect of all his countrymen whose opinions are worth considering. Present me to him and to Mr. Morton.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco

Sept. 18, 1907.

Geo. F. Parker, Esqr.,

20 Broad Street,

New York City.

My dear George:

I was very much depressed by the report, in last Sunday's papers, of the serious condition of Mr. Cleveland's health. The next day these reports were contradicted apparently on his authority. When Secretary Straus<sup>60</sup> was here he told me of the serious digestive troubles which have affected Mr. Cleveland, and I was glad to see in Monday's report that these had passed away. As long as the nutritive organs exercise their proper functions the inroads of old age are immaterial, therefore any form of indigestion

<sup>60</sup> This was, apparently, Oscar S. Straus, Secretary of Commerce and Labor in President Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet, 1907-1909.

is to be carefully noted and averted, if possible. There was one illumination in the midst of these disquieting rumors about his health, and that was the universal expression of kindness toward him and the highest appreciation both of his majestic public services and the fine example he has set to the manhood of the country.

I read with very great pleasure and much amusement your speech for Mr. Bryan delivered to the Winnisook Club. It is fine as a bit of humor and sarcasm, and is of exceeding merit as being just such a speech as Mr. Bryan himself could truthfully make. Since his second candidacy for the presidency some statements were made public in regard to the immense advance in his personal fortune. He felt called on to make explanation in his newspaper, and it was to the effect that his earning power had been greatly increased by his two candidacies for the presidency. This is the same as saying that he made use of the publicity afforded him as a candidate to advance his private business of lecturing for pay and publishing a newspaper for profit. In some publication here I commented on this statement. It means simply using a presidential candidacy for advertising purposes and the advertising ought to be paid for. I suggested that Mr. Adolph Busch of St. Louis might with equal credit and propriety seek the presidential nomination for the purpose of advertising his beer and increasing his profits, or that Dr. Pierce, the nostrum manufacturer of Buffalo, had an equal right to ask the party to nominate him for the presidency in order to advertise his patent medicines. I think Mr. Bryan will be a candidate again, and of course I intend to fight him. I see no indications that the Democratic party as you and I knew it is ever to be restored. Under normal conditions a party should arise from the masses of the people to defend the necessary doctrine of strict construction of the Constitution and the use

by the co-ordinate branches of the Federal Government of the powers delegated to them, and no others. But conditions are not as they were when we were young. The press of the country no longer discusses constitutional questions; the spirit of socialism in its many forms is abroad amongst the masses of the people, and any movement arising from them is more likely to carry the doctrines of Karl Marx than those of Mr. Jefferson.

When you see Mr. Cleveland give him my love and every expression of my high appreciation.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Feb. 3, 1908.

George F. Parker, Esqr.,  
120 Broadway, New York.

My dear George:

I have deferred replying to yours of Dec. 9th hoping that I would be able to go East in March and meet you all at the banquet of the Iowa Society of New York. This now appears to be impossible and I am compelled again to decline and have written General Dodge to that effect.

I received and read with great interest the copy of your address delivered in Iowa in September.<sup>61</sup> The subject and its treatment were both of interest to me, for I am interested in anything you may choose to treat from your standpoint of sober and exact observation. I see nothing inspiring in the political situation, and while I do not wish to seem pessimistic, I am unable to see any indication of the return by the country to the old standards and the old ideals in government.

<sup>61</sup> On September 11, 1907, George F. Parker delivered the convocation address at Simpson College, Indianola, on the subject, "The Age of Concentration."—*The Des Moines Capital*, September 12, 1907.

Please present me to Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Morton.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Applegate,

Placer Co., Cal.,

June 25, 1908.

My dear George:

My family is here at our summer place in the mountains, and here at 7 o'clock last night I heard of the death of Mr. Cleveland, and sent to Mrs. Cleveland a telegram. At his age no great prolongation of his life could be expected, but, in the case of our public men, especially when they are also our personal friends, we come to feel that they are to be always with us. We who knew him and to whom close contact and observation disclosed only more and more of his unconscious strength and greatness, have found our judgment of his qualities to be adopted by his countrymen.

He made a creditable, heroic and enduring mark upon the history of his time, and leaves an impression which as part of the story of men and of nations takes a foremost place.

He had the happiness to live through a period of detraction and defamation, finally to be understood for the hero he was and to receive the love and loyalty of his countrymen and the admiration of the world.

It is the greater part of one's intellectual wealth to have known, understood and appreciated him.

You are at hand and can join in paying the last honors, a privilege that distance forbids me to share.

Now that he is dead, it is proper to say many things of him and of the pack that yelped at him in 1896, that could not be said while he lived. None is better qualified than you to say these things and I hope you will do it.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.



Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Oct. 9, 1908.

Geo. F. Parker, Esqr.,  
The Equitable Life Assurance Society,  
120 Broadway, New York City.

My dear George:

I return the matter you sent me, hoping it may serve to clarify the judgment as to Mr. Cleveland.

I appreciate the interest that has grown upon you as you have proceeded with this work.

Mr. James Creelman, in Pearson's for August, has an article entitled: "Is the Party of Jefferson Still Alive?" largely devoted to Mr. John Bigelow, and Mr. Tilden. He seems to quote Bigelow for the statement that Mr. Tilden disliked and distrusted Mr. Cleveland.

Now I do not know what occurred between them in the time that elapsed between my last meeting with Tilden and his death, but I do know that in that last meeting Mr. Tilden expressed the highest admiration for and confidence in Mr. Cleveland.

Speaking of the campaign of 1884, Mr. Tilden said that except for the Maria Halpin story Mr. Cleveland would have carried New York by 50,000 majority, and that had he treated that attack in any other way than the method he chose, he would have lost New York by 50,000. Continuing Mr. Tilden said, "When that story came out we were thrown into a panic, and even I did not know what to do. We wired Mr. Cleveland and at once came back the answer, 'Tell the truth about it.' " Then the lawyer came up in the old man and he said, " 'Irish, did you ever stop to think that answer was neither an admission nor a denial?' Yet it appealed to the country's sense of fair play and put Mr. Cleveland in immediate contrast with Mr. Blaine who was

shuffling and equivocating about the personal charges that were made in retaliation against him."<sup>62</sup>

Now, this conversation is vividly impressed upon my memory, for it was the last talk I had with Mr. Tilden. But Mr. Creelman (see page 145 of Pearson's) says, "It was not until Mr. Tilden gave the unwilling signal—for he distrusted the man—that Mr. Cleveland's nomination was possible."

I am unable to believe that this is true, for Mr. Tilden was not so covert and furtive as to have distrusted and disliked Mr. Cleveland in 1884, and make to me such high ascription as he did in that last meeting on Jan. 1st, 1885, in the presence too of Andrew H. Green.

Mr. Bigelow is ninety years of age. I know not what defects of memory or personal prejudices may color his statements now, and less do I know the motives of Mr. Creelman nor the bias against Mr. Cleveland that is so plain in his article, I only know what was imparted to me by Mr. Tilden in apparent frankness and friendship.

I shall look with great interest for the appearance of your book.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Nov. 4, 1908.

My dear George:

Well, Mr. Bryan has ended his career and it is to be

<sup>62</sup> For information about the Maria Halpin story, see the *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 23, 1884; Lynch's *Grover Cleveland A Man Four Square*; *Harper's Weekly*, August 16, 1884, p. 528; and Ford's *The Honorable Peter Sterling*. Irish is probably referring to the charge that Blaine had received favors from the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad in return for legislative assistance. Connected with this charge were the famous "Mulligan Letters". Such arrangements were not uncommon during the years following the Civil War, and many public men of high standing accepted financial favors. There were, however, apparently whispering charges of a more personal nature.

hoped that a Democratic party will rise again and command a degree of public confidence. Surely it has tried Cleon the leather seller as a leader long enough to be admonished. Cleon the Athenian had at least the victory of Sphacteria to his credit, though he fell at Amphipolis. Bryan has no Sphacteria, and I hope has met his Amphipolis in American politics. In this state the lapse of Democrats from his support was greater than in 1896.

I think that this country will have a strong but amiable administration under Judge Taft. I am convinced that the complexity of our civic issues requires a sound lawyer in the White House, of sober and judicial mind, and I believe Taft to be of that quality.

I am greatly relieved by Bryan's defeat. After my debate with him at Crete, Nebraska, July 4th, 1896, I made up my mind that he was unfit for the Presidency, and decided to do my utmost to spare Mr. Cleveland the humiliation of riding up Pennsylvania Avenue to his inauguration. That sentiment has remained with me, and come what may, I rejoice that he is done for. I suspect that you share this feeling. With regards to Mr. Morton,

Very truly,  
John P. Irish

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Jan. 25, 1909.

George F. Parker, Esqr.,  
Equitable Life,  
120 Broadway,  
New York City.

My dear George:

I have read with very keen interest the first of your series of articles on Mr. Cleveland in the February McClure's. Your style and treatment are admirable and I

think the series will be widely read and as widely appreciated. I hope that you will be able to shed some light on the relations between Mr. Cleveland and Tilden, a subject upon which I have already written you.

I received your admirable address delivered in Chicago upon the industrial situation, and have loaned it to several friends who express the highest approval of its searching analysis and philosophical tone. The country greatly needs sober minded expressions of that kind.

Your Cleveland articles are going to be an invaluable contribution to our current history, and will place their subject where he belongs in the estimation of his countrymen and the annals of his time.

It is entirely unlikely that I will be able to be in New York in March. I have interests here which at this season require the closest care and attention and do not feel that I will be able to withdraw oversight for the length of time that would be required to make this journey.

With regards to Mr. Morton and to you and to your family.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco, Cal.,  
Feb. 24, 1909.

Geo. F. Parker, Esqr.,  
120 Broadway,  
New York City, N. Y.

My dear George:

I have read the section of your series on Bryan and Bryanism. I like its tone as it presents facts and interesting inside history without drastic comment or criticism. The debauchery of the party of Mr. Bryan is one of the marvels of history. In this State the State committee, and others

who have been diseased by the Bryan virus, met the other day and solemnly declared that Democracy insists upon direct legislation, the election of all judicial officers, with the power in the people to recall any judge whose decisions are counter to the popular fancy. Of course, this means a complete revolution in the Government, total abolition of its representative form, coupled with the claim that the people are to pass upon all issues of constitutional construction at the ballot box. This is, in slightly modified form, the adoption of government by revolution as practiced in the Latin-America States. You will see at once that it removes from a minority the judicial protection of its rights and establishes an ochlocracy.

Before you close your series you might well devote a section to a statement of these new ideas and a comparison of such a government with the one founded by the Fathers, showing how Cleveland stood inflexibly for the Constitution, for orderly representative government and the independence of each of the three coordinate branches.

Make my regards to Mr. Morton.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Port of San Francisco, Cal.

August 18, 1909.

George F. Parker, Esqr.,  
120 Broadway,  
New York City.

My dear George:

I return your manuscript with one interlineation. The discussion of Mr. Cleveland's selection of members of his Cabinet reminds me of a conversation with Mr. Tilden, which discloses on his part a mistake in judgment. After the election of 1876, when it was known that he had been

fairly chosen as President and had received a popular majority, Mr. Tilden considered the future with great gravity. He said the trouble would be found in the lack of men in the Democratic party fit for Cabinet positions by reason of want of training amongst our public men in executive duties. He said that leaders of the party had had legislative experience only, and that we were entirely safe in having Congressional leadership, and our difficulties would appear through having no men trained in executive functions. When Mr. Cleveland was elected he called into his Cabinet men of the greatest experience and highest qualities, who proved to be admirably qualified for executive duties, and our Congressional leadership in both of his terms proved to be such a miserable failure that it became responsible for the permanent wrecking of the party. It turned out that our Congressional leaders were so fixed in the habit of opposition that they used it against their own Administration and robbed it of its natural and legitimate leadership. It was this that left Mr. Cleveland and his Cabinet standing alone: on one side meeting the natural and legitimate antagonism of the Republican party, and on the other, faced by the bitter, foolish and almost criminal opposition of Democratic leaders in Congress.

This painful situation however was the means of bringing into action the highest qualities in Mr. Cleveland's character, than which there have been no higher nor greater in the history of our public men. To this he owes his great and unassailable position in the world's history. The American President who bravely meets the great crisis of peace involving the preservation of the public credit, and going direct to the material interest of every citizen, high and low, executes a more difficult duty than is put upon any president in time of war. In war the patriotic sentiments and unselfish impulses of the people are in high

activity, and they are ready without question to back up every position taken by the President, and to make every sacrifice he demands of them, and his task is made easy compared to that which was put upon Mr. Cleveland. In his case it was easy to persuade the people that they were injured in their fortunes by the policy which was their sole defense against wide-spread ruin. It was a policy which maintained the sacredness of contracts and stood for honesty in every financial transaction, great and small. That policy, endorsed by the election of 1896, after the greatest campaign of education known in our politics, carried on by our Gold Democracy and the Republican allies, was the foundation of any real and general prosperity which the country is to know in the future.

In dealing with Mr. Watterson,<sup>63</sup> I would advise that your treatment be as general as possible, making plain, however, his erratic disposition and his habit of subordinating everything to personal pique.

In regard to Mr. Tilden's opinion of Mr. Cleveland, I recollect his definition of a leader, which he applied to Mr. Cleveland. He said that a leader is a man who always knows what to do next, and is never caught in a corner with no resources beyond. I hope you will not forget due ascription to Mr. Cleveland for his Venezuela message, for that was a case in which he knew what to do next, and by doing it gained the hegemony of the hemisphere. When you reflect that England ever since the battle of Hastings has been striving unsuccessfully for the hegemony of Europe, the magnitude of Mr. Cleveland's achievement will appear. England's striving went on by way of the crusades, through the headship of the Protestant Alliance by William Third and in her leadership of the allies against Bonaparte, induced by the necessity for resisting

<sup>63</sup> Henry Watterson, prominent as a journalist and political writer.

the Berlin decree, and yet she still stands far from the achievement of her ambition.

I look forward with great interest to the appearance of your article.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Port of California, San Francisco  
Oct. 11, 1909.

Geo F. Parker, Esqr.,  
The Equitable Life Assurance Society,  
120 Broadway, New York.

My dear George:

I received your Iowa University<sup>64</sup> address and read it with lively pleasure. It started a procession of old memories.

I thank you for copy of the Cleveland book.<sup>65</sup> It will have the place of honor in my library.

When I was a Regent of the Iowa University, 40 years ago, I led in establishing the Law and Medical Departments, partly because as the representative of the institution in the Legislature, I felt the need of the support of the active men in those professions to help in its rehabilitation after the exhaustion of the Civil War. My idea about the conduct of those Departments was to progressively raise the initial requirements and extend the courses, so as to graduate fully equipped men. I fear, however, that the lure of numbers has superceded this purpose.

I sympathize with the effort to rescue the Democracy, but fear that only a final break-up of parties will lead to any results. When Bryan marched into the National Con-

<sup>64</sup> Parker had delivered a convocation address on "The Student's Obligations" at Iowa City on September 22, 1909.

<sup>65</sup> Probably this was Parker's *Recollections of Grover Cleveland*.



vention behind the silver banner, it seemed to me that he was carrying the pall of the old party, and so far this sinister vision has been justified.

Present me to your family, and make my regards to Mr. Morton.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.,  
Jan. 26, 1910.

Geo. F. Parker, Esqr.,  
20 Broad St.,  
New York.

My dear George:

Thanks for your remembrance of my birthday. I find myself at 67 with the horizon still receding as I approach and with a forelook as wide as in earlier years.

The consequences of the crime of 1896 are now fully upon the country.

President McKinley told me once that if the Democracy in that year had stood by its ancient faith in sound money and nominated Carlisle, or some statesman in whom the country had confidence, we would have stayed in power and he would not have been President. If the evil spell of Bryanism could be exorcised, the party under a great leader would win. But think of it! Champ Clark, the minority leader of the House, a few days ago made a speech in Ohio, and what was it? A statement of enduring principles and high purpose? No, a petty, nagging personal attack on Cannon, and some cheap wit.

I'm glad your book is selling well, for not only does it deserve it as a prime contribution to history, but it shows the undying confidence of his countrymen in Mr. Cleveland.

I may come East this year, though my private affairs will

much engage my attention. I am a farmer with nearly 1000 acres to take care of. My son Jack,<sup>66</sup> who greatly to my happiness took to land and livestock, is Superintendent of one of the Government experiment farms, and spends two months every winter in the Agricultural Department in Washington, where he is now. After some more experience in that service he will share with me the management of the land.

Do you remember in Indiana, years ago, while I was campaigning there and you took care of my mail, you received for me a photograph of my little daughter<sup>67</sup> and admired it, saying you always liked the pictures of an old bachelor's children? Well, I enclose a photograph of that little daughter's boy, my grandson, at about the same age as she was then. It was taken by my wife last April, while we were on one of my ranches in Kern County, and he was dressed to help me in the hay field.

Be sure if I come East I will see you and your family.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.

Nov. 18, 1910.

My dear George:

I have been ill for 5 weeks and only just now have found my clothes where my wife and the doctor hid them, and am clothed and in my right mind.

Monday I go to St. Louis to try and prevent the Water Ways Convention endorsing N. O. for the Panama fair. With me will be the men interested in the project here and I will tell them of you.

In politics the unexpected has happened. Roosevelt is

<sup>66</sup> John P. Irish, Jr.

<sup>67</sup> His daughter Frances became Mrs. F. L. M. Hus. The grandson was Francis Hus, Jr.

unhorsed for good, though 1912 may see his party split into radical and conservative wings, as Bryan split us in 1896, and if we have sense Harmon<sup>68</sup> or a good man like him can be elected. The election was an unmixed delight any way, for what pleasure equals seeing a cock sure smart aleck get it in the solar plexus.

I hope Mr. Parker will take Depew's<sup>69</sup> place.

I'm writing hastily and defer a longer screed.

Regards to your family,

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.,

Aug. 27, 1911.

My dear George:

It has been such a strenuous summer with me that distant friends have been neglected. I farm 1000 acres here. My Semi-Tropic ranch in Kern County is a 1/2 section and the rest of it is my Caliova ranch on an island in the San Joaquin river. These places are 325 miles apart. At Semi-Tropic I had the finest ranch house in Kern County and last month it burned, and in the fire my foreman's mother was burned to death—a sad tragedy. I have just finished rebuilding.

Your friend the Professor called when we were all at the Casa Rio, my house on the river, and only the housekeeper was home. On my return I called at his hotel and he was away foregathering with the Indians in Mendocino County. I left him a note and invitation to dine at his convenience, but he went South when he found interesting things abori-

<sup>68</sup> Judson Harmon, who had just been elected Governor of Ohio with a plurality over Warren G. Harding of over 100,000 votes.

<sup>69</sup> Chauncey M. Depew was at that time Senator from New York. "Mr. Parker" may refer to Alton B. Parker, who was the Democratic candidate for President in 1904. The successful Democrat was James A. O'Gorman.

ginal in Tulara County and we did not meet, much to my regret.

I am watching the signs political with some interest, hoping that the country will tire of radicalism and of the disciples of Cleon the leather seller, and turn to some conservatism in constructive statesmanship. The fads and follies of Populism are no more agreeable to me when advocated by Roosevelt and Champ Clark than they were when expounded by Calamity Weller and Bryan. Governor Wilson<sup>70</sup> has been here, advocating the initiative and referendum, popular election of U. S. Senators and the recall, except as to judicial officers. Why the hell he revolted at a gnat after swallowing a camel I don't know. If we are to destroy representative government let us make a complete job of it, and at once install an ochlocracy in place of the institutions devised by the founders. I would have some confidence in the candidacy of Governor Harmon and an appeal to the common sense of the people. But what are we to think of a political situation that inspires the unspeakable Hearst to again aspire to the Presidency. I fear that I am still destined to find my fields and flocks more interesting than public matters.

My wife and I leave for Iowa next week, to drive over the old roads and see the old places once more.

Regards to you and yours.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.,  
Oct. 4, 1911.

My dear George:

Thanks for the slip from the *Sun* in re Aked.<sup>71</sup> I suspect

<sup>70</sup> Woodrow Wilson, afterwards President of the United States.

<sup>71</sup> Probably Charles F. Aked, clergyman and reformer, at this time pastor of the First Congregational Church in San Francisco.

it was sent by his procurement, for it contained the lie that I am a "paid lecturer" against woman suffrage. When I returned from the East I found my state alarmed by the open alliance between the suffragists and socialists, with Dr. Aked and J. Stitt Wilson, Socialist Mayor of Berkeley, on the stump supporting it.

I immediately took the field against it as an unpaid and independent volunteer.<sup>72</sup> Aked has been very nasty.

Will you do me the favor to see the *Sun*, and ask a correction for me?

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.

Casa Rio  
Oct. 22, 1911.

My dear George:

Your letters reach me here in my island house, in the San Joaquin delta, where my family are taking an outing. My campaign against woman suffrage was of necessity confined to the populous communities around the bay, and those in San Francisco, San Mateo, Maria and Alameda counties, it was beaten by over 20,000.<sup>73</sup> I was alone and arrayed against me were a half dozen Jewish Rabbis, a dozen Catholic priests, and a hundred Protestant parsons, and all of the daily papers. Unfortunately I could not cover the whole state alone, and so the work of the county clergy had none to oppose it. It was a special election at which 23 amendments to our Constitution were voted on.

<sup>72</sup> In this connection it is interesting to recall that John P. Irish, in 1870, introduced in the Iowa House of Representatives the first equal suffrage amendment to the Iowa Constitution.—*Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1870, p. 95.

<sup>73</sup> These figures refer, apparently, to the districts mentioned. In the State as a whole the equal suffrage amendment carried by a small majority of some 3500.

They were all revolutionary, extending from woman suffrage, through the initiative and referendum to a recall of all judicial officers. What we may expect from the scheme of direct government was shown in the fact that of the 600,000 voters in the State only one-third voted, and a majority of that third struck down representation government and destroyed an independent judiciary. The result of my single handed fight against woman suffrage in the district where I was able to make it, convinces me that with the means to make a campaign and a half dozen able men to assist me, all of the revolutionary amendments could have been beaten.

What has happened discloses the future we are to have under direct government. A turbulent and fanatical minority will vote and rule the indifferent majority, till, as in the Greek democracies, a mob governs, and public order and security are destroyed.

We have been approaching this condition for some time. The last pronounced stand made against it was that we made against Bryan in 1896. Since then the cheap magazine literature and the wild yelping of the demagog, have spread the socialistic cult, and it may be that our representative institutions are about to pass away. They were founded in Wisdom, and in the full knowledge of the fact that in direct government only the few, the minority govern, while in representative government a majority takes part.

The one-third vote here in the most important referendum that has gone to our people, shows that men have not changed since the Greek democracies, and affirms the wisdom of our fathers.

The people of the East may as well take notice that the contagion is spreading and that there was no specific local cause here for this result. The woman suffrage leaders

made an open alliance with the Socialists, and this alliance seems to have suited the mood of the clergy. I look for startling political success by the Socialists here in coming municipal elections.

I have carefully considered the situation and can see only one way to bring the people to their senses and arrest this destructive wave. The nomination of Judge Harmon and his election on a platform declaring for the integrity of American institutions, would swing the country back to its constitutional moorings.

Present me to your family.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Washington, D. C.

June 3d, 1912.

My dear George:

To-day I received the enclosed from San Francisco. Mr. Catlin is a lawyer, without experience in the publicity field. It shows that Mr. Watters of which we talked is coming out for consideration and I will try and get it in my hands to such extent as to control it, when it is ripe. I will be here a week longer.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Washington, D. C.

June 6, 1912.

My dear George:

I have read with pleasure and keen interest the enclosures, which I return. Vast interests which affect the fortunes of countless investors, large and small, have left the field of publicity to be occupied by the agitator and demagogue. Unless they move into it and make wise use of its possibilities, their last state will be worse than their first.

I will be here Saturday, and hope to see you.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.

July 3, 1912.

My dear George:

I see that Mr. Bryan is in a bloviating mood this morning, while Mr. Clark<sup>74</sup> is showing post convention rancor and resentment.

The only escape from Hearst seems to have been by running into arms of Bryan, so two men who are not Democrats prove to be the evil genius of the party.

I wrote you to do me the favor to write me in confidence the inside of the Baltimore convention and the meaning of the nomination of Wilson. It meets with a very passive reception here.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Were you surprised by the resignation of our friend the Lord Chancellor?<sup>75</sup>

Oakland, Cal.

July 10, 1912.

My dear George:

The Convention at Baltimore permitted itself to be taken by surprise and had no leader on the floor to oppose Bryan, or expose him.

The Ante-Convention situation was very bad, with Champ Clark in the lead and Hearst behind him, and Bryan representing the other side.

<sup>74</sup> Champ (James Beauchamp) Clark, candidate for the Democratic nomination for President in 1912.

<sup>75</sup> Apparently this refers to Earl Loreburn who had been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain from 1905 until June, 1912.



The net result will probably be that the party has thrown away another chance as it did in 1896.

So far I have been too busy to think much of politics. I wish you would write me at length of the inside of the convention, and also of the attitude now of men who think as we do.

A campaign can be made that will again consolidate the conservative sentiment of the country. Whether any Republican can make it is doubtful.

I enclose an estimate of Mr. Bryan that might be of interest in the East if turned loose in the press.

I may have to be in the East again this summer and if so may have the pleasure of seeing you in New York.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Casa Rio,  
Aug. 13, 1912.

My dear George:

Thanks for information about Chinese affairs. I am waiting for things to settle down and the new Government to reach the angle of repose, but meantime am in evidence there. The strong American Chinese are anxious to get rid of Jno. W. Foster,<sup>76</sup> and have me in his place, and as they are in constant contact with affairs in China I let them run it.

Since my return I have been here on my insular estate and my political information is much confined to your letters. I find many Republicans who will vote for Wilson and many Democrats who will vote for Roosevelt. Wilson's acceptance speech is a singular composition. Non-virile, and lacking in strong notes. It is such a speech as a Professor

<sup>76</sup> John W. Foster, a prominent lawyer and diplomat, had represented China at the Second Hague Conference in 1907.

might make to a committee of old ladies, met to found a "settlement in the poorer quarters of our city."

When I have time to get off the river I will give you an estimate of the outlook here.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Casa Rio,  
Oct. 4, 1912.

My dear George:

There is an evident reaction here toward President Taft, though it is ineffective locally, since Hiram Johnson's primary election law was so framed as to deprive voters of the right to vote for Taft. But as a psychological indication the reaction here may be instructive as indicating a nation-wide change. I wish you would tell Mr. Hilles<sup>77</sup> that in my judgment enough is not being made of the third term. I found here that Republicans who have followed Johnson heretofore and burned incense to Roosevelt, desiring to return to the fold, discover that they are opposed to the third term and use that as a plank to walk back on. My impression is that an appeal to that sentiment will be of great benefit. I by no means despair of Taft's election, remembering the many changes I have seen in apparent public sentiment during the last 50 years.

If Taft cannot be voted for here of course shoals of Republicans will vote for Wilson to keep the state from Roosevelt. The same men will also vote for Democratic candidates for the legislature in order to deprive Gov. Johnson of control of that branch of the government.

You kindly sent me the report of Johnson's speech in

<sup>77</sup> Charles D. Hilles, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, 1912-1916. The third term objection, of course, applied to Theodore Roosevelt, who had succeeded President McKinley and been once elected.

Syracuse, in which he became sentimental about visiting the city of his parents.

Hiram had all of his father's tricky qualities, without his eminent ability, except his gift of speech. He was at feud with his parents for years. When the report of his Syracuse speech reached here his father was at lunch with a company in the Palace Hotel. Asked about Hiram's speech, he said: "Yes, the city of his parents. He has not spoken to me for twenty years and would not speak to his mother, nor recognize her on the street for years before she died. His conduct was so resented by the other members of the family, they requested him not to attend her funeral. Yes, the city of his parents must impress him greatly."

Fine family!

Hiram has loaded the state up with commissions of all kinds and with other commissions to watch them, and has increased the cost of the state government by many millions, but the multiplication of paid officers was necessary to the construction of his political machine.

Do you know the editor of the N. Y. Times? I have sent him a letter in reply to a malignant slander of the women who opposed suffrage here, which he published from the pen of Rev. Alice Stone Blackwell of Dorchester, Mass. If you know him, it will be a favor if you will give me such an introduction as will give credit to my letter, which he already has. I can supply him with interesting facts concerning the working of the initiative, referendum and recall here, and the effect of putting those weapons in the hands of political women, and the emotional mass added to our electorate by woman suffrage. It all spells Hell for California.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.  
Oct. 29, 1912.

My dear George:

It would have been good policy to send Taft Republican speakers, like Gov. Gillette,<sup>78</sup> Sam Shortridge<sup>79</sup> and Judge Short<sup>80</sup> east to explain the absolute disfranchisement of the Republicans and Taft people of California by the primary law passed by Hiram Johnson's hog tied legislature. It would have exposed Johnson's high pretensions very effectively.

Wilson will probably carry California by the votes of Taft Republicans. The Democratic campaign here is a puerile farce, but in the present condition that makes no difference.

If Wilson is elected I shall look for the influence of the South to prevent the downfall of our constitutional system, and to hold our institutions in place until the fool fever for their destruction runs its course.

It is to laugh! The Democratic State Committee has put on the stump as *the* leader for Wilson, Mrs. Gertrude Atherton! If you have read her biography of Hamilton "The Conqueror" you will appreciate her appearance as an advocate of Jeffersonian democracy, for in that book she holds Jefferson up to contempt as a liar, poltroon, charlatan, and scout his political principles and philosophies. But in these times everything goes and Mrs. Atherton appears on the platform, smoking while she waits an introduction.

<sup>78</sup> Apparently this was James N. Gillett, Governor of California from 1907 to 1911.

<sup>79</sup> Samuel Morgan Shortridge, Senator from California, 1921-1933.

<sup>80</sup> Frank Hamilton Short, of Fresno, California, was a prominent lawyer, frequently employed by the irrigation interests. Mr. Irish was apparently bitterly opposed to Roosevelt and Johnson.

Your request for a photo has been referred to Mrs. Irish who considers it favorably. I would very much like yours.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Casa Rio,

Nov. 9, 1912.

My dear George:

I am up here on my Caliowa ranch, at peace, in the Casa Rio, where my garden is still rich in all the good things of summer.

The election was no surprise to me, and should not have been to anybody. The people always turn from a party when its leaders are quarreling. This happened to us in 1848, 1860 and again in 1896, and now the Republican party has fallen under the decree of this universal law. Of course the result will be ascribed to every other except this plain, old reason. There will be those who in the name of this political revolution will demand the overthrow of representative institutions, others will cry for laws that say murder is not murder, and arson is not arson, when committed by union labor.

In the newer woman suffrage seats that have also the initiative, referendum and recall there will hatch all sorts of nondescript measures, as is the case here, where our ballot was loaded to the Plimsoll<sup>81</sup> line with initiation changes in the constitution, all of them idiotic and destructive. Now a leading suffrage woman in Los Angeles wishes to settle judicial and eugenic problems by putting all such criminal cases as the McNamaras to vote, and leaving the right to marry and the right to divorce to a vote of the precinct!

<sup>81</sup> The Plimsoll line was the mark on British vessels to indicate the maximum submergence of the vessel permitted by law.

I look to the South to stand by our institutions. It is supposed here that Mr. Bryan will be Secretary of State, for which he is unfit. Why not make him Secretary of the Treasury, for which he is also unfit. Whether in the Cabinet or out, I expect a break between him and the President, for he is so inflated that he will not advise, he will dictate, and no self-respecting President will submit to that.

The party in California is in the hands of pismires [ants]. With regards to your family.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.

Nov. 16, 1912.

My dear George:

Jno. Hays Hammond can surely promote your interests with the exposition<sup>82</sup> people, who sadly need the sort of work you can do. Get him at it. I have received your photo, and it is excellent. My wife will see that you get mine in exchange.

It is surely disquieting that the candidacy of Wilson brought out no evidence of growth in Democratic sentiment in the country. Whether such results can be wrought by the Administration as to secure permanent accretion to the vote, remains to be seen.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Jan. 7, 1913.

Oakland, Cal.

My dear George:

We are both at the age of the sage and yellow leaf and yet I am sure that we feel it but little. I find that work,

<sup>82</sup> This was the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco.

manual and mental, is the best means for avoiding the burden of years.

I have just written Fred Lehmann<sup>83</sup> about Iowa University affairs. Last Fall when the new State Board of Education began disintegrating the institution I wrote Prest. Bowman that it was a violation of the constitution and I am glad to see that in a recent publication Fred agrees with me. "University" is not a mere empty title. It is descriptive of an assemblage of colleges. I think that some citizens of Iowa should invoke judicial protection for the institution.

I notice a growing feeling in the East of uneasiness caused by the many "talks" of President Wilson. Even the Brooklyn Eagle begins to shy. I look for a deal of trouble caused by trying to bud the Democratic tree from the Roosevelt sapling.

How does it look to our friends East?

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,

Feb. 28, 1913.

My dear George:

I am sending you a paper with a sort of report of the Memorial service here in honor of Joaquin Miller.

He died alone with his wife. His daughter had come down after me and I reached the house five minutes after he passed away. Conforming to a pact we made 30 years ago, I had his body cremated and in a little while the Bohemian Club will hold final memorial ceremonies and dispose of his ashes at the mausoleum on the Heights. I had

<sup>83</sup> Frederick W. Lehmann, formerly an Iowan, then Solicitor General of the United States, had been asked to give an opinion as to the constitutionality of the proposed removal of the engineering school from the State University at Iowa City to Ames. See *Iowa's Educational Problem*, published in 1913 by a committee of which James B. Weaver, Jr., of Des Moines, was chairman.

his confidence and friendship for nearly a third of a century, and had great affection for him as a man. He never lost the pioneer habits and the savor of the frontier was in his life to the last.

Last month I was in Washington three days putting my cases in the State Department out of reach of Bryan, and then urgent business here called me home. With best regards to you and yours,

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Mar. 11, 1913.

My dear George:

Perhaps there has never been more uncertainty about what an Administration will do, than now. For the most part the President's utterances are cryptic, and when otherwise they run in line with the magazine literature of the last few years, which has taught that if anybody has to work somebody is to blame for it, and should be punished. In my early life I did about all the hard manual labor that men are called to do now in the same occupations, and yet I read that those who with equal health, strength and better pay, are coming on up the road I trod, are wage slaves, whose cries of agony fall upon the deaf ears of capital. Since 1896 we have been approaching a reconstruction of society, with the purpose of rebuilding it on its diseases and failures, and treating its health and successes as crimes.

The inaugural has too much of that cadence. Let us hope that the responsibility of power and the enlightenment of its use, will lead the President to see something worthy in our institutions, and that enterprise is not a crime and work is not slavery.

I sympathise with my brother practitioners and Mr. W.



E. Curtis,<sup>84</sup> in their distrust of the State Dept. under its new head. But let us not mourn as those without hope.

When Mr. Bryan would a soldiering go in the Spanish War, he procured appointment as Colonel of a regiment. Then he clothed his neck with thunder, girt his belly with a brass sash and posed before a camera. The wise Governor of Nebraska, mindful of the situation, commissioned Col. Victor Vifquain, a trained French soldier, as Lieut. Col. of the regiment, to drill the men and discipline them for war. In all his career Mr. Bryan has worn the comb, wattles and tail feathers of the cock of the walk, but has left the actual work to some one else.

To-day I read in the press dispatches that Mr. Jno. Bassett Moore is to be assistant Secy. of State. He has twice held office in the State Dept., is profoundly learned in international law and would make it possible to do business in the Dept. while Mr. Bryan poses to the nations and gorges water at the Diplomatic banquets.

I wish you would show this letter to Mr. Curtis and see if he agrees with me.

To-day we are rejoicing in the arrival of a little granddaughter, the second child of my daughter Frances. The young lady would be glad to send her compliments to her grandfather's old friend, but has not yet had time to get acquainted with the facts.

Regards to your family.

Very truly,

Jno P. Irish

Oakland, Cal.,

May 27, 1913.

My dear George:

I am sending you under separate cover an article which discloses the amusement and occupation of my old age.

<sup>84</sup> William Eleroy Curtis, prominent newspaper writer.

In the same issue the editor discloses his ignorance on the Japanese question. If he publishes an answer I will write I will send it to you.

I see signs of revolt in the class rooms in Washington, and the Professor may wake up some morning and find that the boys have put his bicycle out of reach on the Capitol down and have hung some of Mrs. Wilson's choicest landscapes in the cow barn.

It is proving a happy day for the political pismires in California, for so far every appointment has gone to them, and the state would grin, if it did not feel like the fellow in Memphis that was being taken to be hanged by the sheriff and weakened when the sheriff said "here, stiffen up and grin and bear it," and the condemned answered "I'll bear it, but I'll be d——d if I'll grin."

I hope you have in prospect a pleasant spring and summer.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Jan. 22, 1914.

My dear George:

I had an awful jolt on the 2nd of Jan. by an Associated Press wire that Geo. F. Parker had been found asphyxiated by gas. Though I never knew you to do such a trick I wired Judge Parker<sup>85</sup> and got the reassuring reply that it was quite another man of the same initials.

I read with great interest and approval your address in West Virginia. It raised again the standards approved by the experience of all ages, but I know not through what agony and bloody sweat we will return to them. At no other time in our history have the politicians been so cowardly

<sup>85</sup> Probably Alton B. Parker.

and craven and ready to surrender our birth right of constitutional order to any impudent and noisy army that chooses to march upon Washington and use the tactics of intimidation.

I had intended to go East this month but am confined to my room by a stubborn attack of bronchitis, so that my future movements are uncertain.

If I do make the journey I will write you.

With regards

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Mch. 24, 1914.

My dear George:

Thanks for your note of the 19th and the kindly solicitude which prompted it. I went to my house, the Casa Rio, on my island plantation, and there dropped bronchitis and all ills of the flesh, and took on all sorts of capacity for work.

My partner in Washington, Mr. Walter S. Penfield, describes affairs in the State Department as a condition of pathetic chaos.

I did not endorse the toll exemption of our coastwise ships, but Bryan put it in the platform and Wilson endorsed it in the campaign. Now they reverse and lay upon members of the party in Congress the heavy responsibility of reversing with them. If Wilson had been content to send in his message asking the repeal, leaving Congress to independent action, it would not be so bad. But he is applying to it his system of beating Congress into submission, something that Parliament would not tolerate from a King.

The press seems to be loosening up a little and criticism has a free run.

The test comes in the West elections. Here the registra-

tion of voters shows the Republicans to outnumber Democrats and Progressives combined.

I thank you for Mr. Stetson's admirable address.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish

Casa Rio,

Nov. 12, 1914.

My dear George:

It is seldom that the ballots, at one shot, bring down such a variety of game.

The slimy hypocrisies of the Administration seem to be getting plainer every day to the people who think straight, and they, joined to the mass who think only in prices, profits and wages, have refused to "thank God for Woodrow Wilson." Really, when you think of the pious whims of it, the rebuke seems almost brutal in its common sense.

I was in Des Moines last March to attend the home coming of Iowa artists and authors and old newspaper men. I was the only one there who dated back more than half a century, Clarkson and J. J. Richardson being unable to come.<sup>86</sup> I missed them. The occasion was made very pleasant, and you would have enjoyed it. I had not been in Des Moines, except briefly since 1893, and was impressed by the beautiful expansion of the city.

I am up here on my island enjoying the fine Indian summer.

With kindest regards to your family.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

<sup>86</sup> This was probably James S. Clarkson, popularly known as "Ret" Clarkson. J. J. Richardson was for many years connected with the *Davenport Democrat* and also served as regent of the State University. He was a personal friend of Grover Cleveland.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Feb. 15, 1915.

My dear George:

I am working on an account of the Gold Democratic movement of 1896, and am in need of the record of proceedings of the Convention of Gold Democrats held in Indianapolis. Can you, by seeing Mr. Geo. Foster Peabody, find a copy for me? He was our Treasurer.

Henry Watterson and others, have compiled the history of the liberal Republican movement of 1872, with its interesting personal touches. That convention by the nomination of Greeley rendered an important service, for it changed parting angles and somewhat assuaged the hatred and bitterness left by the Civil War. The Gold Democratic convention did a service, the importance of which cannot be computed, for it saved our national credit and restored the private credit of our people and established permanently the single gold standard.

I took part in the conferences held in Chicago during the Bryan convention and after the nomination of that charlatan, and wrote and introduced the resolution which crystallized the purpose of the conferences upon the calling of a national convention.

In that conference were J. Sterling Morton, General Bragg, Governor Flower, Jno. R. Fellows, Gov. Waller, Frederick Condert, William C. Whitney and many others.<sup>87</sup>

I wish to prepare the matter in magazine form and will send it to you.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

<sup>87</sup> These men were probably the following: J. Sterling Morton, of Nebraska (see note 24); General Edward S. Bragg, of Wisconsin, author of the famous phrase applied to Cleveland, "We love him for the enemies he has made"; Roswell P. Flower, Governor of New York, 1892-1895; John R. Fellows, Representative in Congress from New York; Thomas M. Waller, who had been Governor of Connecticut; and William C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy in Cleveland's first administration. Frederick Condert was not further identified.

Oakland, Cal.,  
March 11, 1915.

My dear George:

I fear I am putting you to too much trouble in getting proceedings of the Gold Democratic Convention of 1896. Mr. Peabody was Treasurer of the Committee and greatly interested in the movement. I have known since that he thinks that an act entitled an act can recreate society, abolish evil and introduce the millenium. Do you know Mr. Frederick Condert? He was one of us in 1896.

I know Hensel<sup>88</sup> quite well. He was much esteemed by Mr. Cleveland who will properly analyze the manifestations of Wilson's mind as indicative of his character.

Note his constant use of such phrases as "I trust I may venture to congratulate you," is a sign of that mock humanity [humility?] which is evidence of hypocrisy. That he can retain any hold upon the people indicates their moral decay.

In the history of the Gold standard movement of 1896 I desire to make some things plain that may set people thinking about him.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish

Boston, Oct. 19, 1915.

My dear George:

I enclose exact copy of my remarks at Albany to Miss Shaw.<sup>89</sup> She replied last Saturday night, limiting herself to comments upon my telling her to "go hang herself." That was a reporter's lie. I used no such language.

I will be in New York a good deal worn, and keenly regret that any outdoor meeting is appointed for me. A bit of

<sup>88</sup> William W. Hensel, who had served as Attorney General of Pennsylvania.

<sup>89</sup> Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, well known suffrage leader.

thoughtfulness ought to have seen the impropriety of it at this time of year.

I hope the Times will publish my Grey review.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Boston, Oct. 22, 1915.

My dear George:

I have just received yours with enclosures. I feel so indignant that perhaps I ought not to write. I enclose a letter to Miss Chittenden,<sup>90</sup> which you will please show to Mr. Carter,<sup>91</sup> and then send to her, if you think best.

I will reach New York so utterly tired out that I will not be fit for any entertainment beyond a visit at my hotel.

I am closing 4 weeks of the most arduous campaign work of my life. As to what is thought of it here Miss Chittenden may write to Mr. Turner.<sup>92</sup>

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,

Nov. 5, 1915.

My dear George:

I arrived home yesterday and had the election news at 9 a. m. Wednesday en route. It looks as though the East had as decisively rejected suffrage<sup>93</sup> as it did silver 19 years ago, and it is interesting that I survived to take part in both campaigns.

<sup>90</sup> Alice Hill Chittenden, president of the New York Anti-Suffrage Association.

<sup>91</sup> Franklin Carter was secretary of the Man Suffrage Association of New York City.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Turner was chairman of the Massachusetts Man Suffrage Association.

<sup>93</sup> Equal suffrage was defeated in New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania.

If convenient will you please send me ms. of my review of Mr. Justice Guy.<sup>94</sup> I go to my ranch to-morrow to put business in shape and then will open correspondence with Colorado when I am sure a death blow to suffrage can be struck.

The elections look as though President Wilson is receding from the focus.

Defeat of the N. Y. constitution puts Senator Root out of the running, which I regret, and marks Hughes or Burton<sup>95</sup> as the winner.

Please present me to your family.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Nov. 16, 1915.

My dear George:

No law was required to secure the reading of your admirable account of your tour to visit the great dead who rest in the scenes upon which their vision opened and closed. It brings the landscape and sky very close to me, and I wish I could have been of the company. It made me feel that I had always known the Judge who was your companion, and I ask that you present me to him as an old friend.

The sketch should be published that many may read it and receive the calm and inspiring impression it left with me.

I have written Boston that the Eastern anti-suffrage must permanently organize, with ample supplies of war and be ready to take the field whenever battle is offered. I will continue this advice and get a move on them.

<sup>94</sup> This may be a typist's error for Gray. Horace Gray was a Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1881 to 1902.

<sup>95</sup> Theodore E. Burton, of Ohio.



The talk of repeal of suffrage here is increasing and becoming bolder.

Looking to next year's election Wilson stock is getting weaker on this coast, and even in his pose as Ajax defying the war lightning I don't think he can get a coast state.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,

Dec. 31, 1915.

My dear George:

A committee from Colorado came here to consult me. I agree with them that the matter must be left solely to the people of that state and that outsiders must not go there to advocate suffrage repeal.

All that they want is financial assistance to start the necessary organization. They assure me that when this is done aid will come from all over the State and from men and women.

Now I have written to the Boston people of this situation and am led to believe that there will be action. I have also urged them to throw an organization into Iowa.

Our anti-cause is much strengthened by the failure of the Congressional program of Call<sup>96</sup> et als. The growing independence and resentment of members of Congress is good.

I enclose copies of a speech, one of which I wish you would send to Ret Clarkson with my affectionate regards.

A shorthand report of the speech was taken for the Iowa University and that institution has just published it and sent some copies to me.<sup>97</sup>

With the compliments of the season, shining with old memories, to you and yours.

Jno. P. Irish.

<sup>96</sup> This is not clear. It may be a typist's error for Catt, referring to Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, suffrage leader.

<sup>97</sup> This speech has not been located.

Oakland, California,  
January 31, 1916.

My dear George:

I think Iowa is gradually getting organized against woman suffrage. Mr. Thoner wrote me that he would go there and get the men together and Miss Dorman<sup>98</sup> has already formed a very good organization of women.

Here we are getting the fruits of suffrage. At meetings of women in Los Angeles and San Francisco promoted by leading woman politicians, the demand was made for the repeal of all laws which deny to women "freedom in indulging the mating instinct, and the right to select fathers for their children if they choose to have any."

Wilson is evidently determined to use his preparedness programme for re-election. On his present tour he gets more scared the further he comes west. By the time he reaches Cleveland he will not know "what a day may bring forth"; when he gets to Chicago he may be afraid to go to bed in the dark.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Feb. 7, 1916.

My dear George:

The report you send from Iowa is just the same as we have in all the states where suffrage lost last Fall. In Massachusetts all the newspapers, politicians, labor unions were for it, but it was beaten in every precinct but two small ones; in one it had a majority of one, and in the other of three. I should add that all the preachers were for it

<sup>98</sup> Marjorie Dorman, who campaigned in Iowa against equal suffrage preceding the vote on the proposed constitutional amendment, was a New York anti-suffrage leader. At one time she was secretary of the Women Wage-earner's Anti-Suffrage League of New York City.

also. I know it can be badly beaten in Iowa, if the means for an organization and campaign are provided.

In Iowa I would have a majority of the women on my side, as every where, except in the Mormon States.

You can give your friends this assurance for me.

We have had a very stormy year so far in California but the destructive floods have been 500 miles south of me. The rivers that concern me are the Sacramento and San Joaquin, which have had high water but no floods.

Wilson has become quite warlike. As usual he is busy pretending to do something and not doing it. His tour is not for preparedness but for politics. Now I suppose Bryan will go to bat.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
March 30, 1916.

My dear George:

Thanks for your letter and interesting enclosure. I am satisfied that a month's campaign in May will defeat suffrage. My articles in opposition have secured considerable publicity there.

We had just a month in Massachusetts, with the press, politicians and preachers against us, but we shelled them elegantly.

The nomination of Mr. Root is too good to hope for. The Kaiser and Mexico are making Wilson a laughing stock and this country contemptible.

The organization of the German-American opposition to Wilson is ill-advised and should be stopped. It is unnecessary, since that element is against him any way and if continued it will drive to him votes he would not otherwise get. If you can say this where it will be heard, do it, for it is of the highest importance.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Nov. 4, 1916.

My dear George:

My corn and bean harvest has kept me too busy for correspondence.

The pigmy and pismire campaign will soon be over. When I think of Seymour, Tilden, Cleveland, Carlisle, and the public men with whom we were associated, my gorge rises at the contrast with the brawling, bellowing gang now at the front in both parties.

The only fun I have had here is in watching the fights between the two crowds of female politicians. They meet, rival banners and hair streaming in the wind and make howls and call names. Men stand aloof.

. . . . .  
As far as I can judge it looks now as if Wilson will win. The Republican campaign has been extremely torpid. Roosevelt has stirred it up a bit, but of the vote making character of his speeches I am in doubt. All good things be for you and yours.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Nov. 21, 1916.

My dear George:

I enclose an analysis based on investigation.

A Republican friend here says that he talked much at home about his business prosperity depending on the election of Hughes. When he met his wife on the evening of election day he asked if she had voted for President. "Oh yes" said the lady, "I voted for Wilson." "My God" he exclaimed, "why did you do that?" "Because" she rejoined "Mrs. Wilson is about to be confined and I thought it would be such a pity to beat him."

A lady tells me that one of her female intimates voted for Hughes because he looked like her dead husband, and another voted against him because he looked like her divorced husband, and a third voted against him because she did not like for a man to wear whiskers.

Can you beat it? Thus do the dear things decide great national issues.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Jan. 22, 1918.

My dear George:

What was inevitable has happened. Congress and the country have tired of the occasional descents of Jove from Olympus. The partial exposure of things have caused the President's own partisans in Congress to remember that they have responsibilities also for which the country will one day demand an accounting. They seem to realize that this is not even a party war, but is regarded as a personal war, in which the President and his family only are concerned.

I am watching the test of character with great interest. By using vituperation to Senator Chamberlain<sup>99</sup> I think the President lost the first heat in the race.

My impression is that the incident will speed up the real work needed to help win the war.

I fear that Wilson is obsessed that he can end the war by inducing a revolution in Germany and that this obsession is responsible for the lack of energy in military preparation.

<sup>99</sup> George Earle Chamberlain, Senator from Oregon, was chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs during the World War. In a speech early in the war he had severely criticised the War Department and this public criticism was resented by President Wilson.

Such a revolution would be a natural result, but Germany is unnatural.

Any way Washington will be more interesting when the Great Gawd Buddah is compelled to put on gloves and trunks, enter the ring and scrap like an ordinary mortal.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Casa Rio, Cal.,  
May 24, 1918.

My dear George:

The President proposes to investigate himself, and all is well. The extension of this principle will save much time and trouble, and when the findings are accepted by the people why not let the self-investigated official re-elect himself to the position in which his conduct has deserved inquiry?

I am glad to see indications that we are speeding up a bit. Senator Chamberlain did get some pep into things, though the President did make snoots at him.

I have been much amused by the Post articles on and by Colonel House.

A mere change in the form of government has not banished the devout courtier.

I enclose some photos taken by my good Japanese farmer who has been with me 10 years.

Up here I have peace and pleasure, watching the green things grow.

Just one item bearing on domestic economy. I go out to a fishing boat in the stream and buy an 8 lb. shad for 10 cents, and beat the high cost of living.

With my best regards to you and your family.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
May 13, 1918.

My dear Parker:

This introduces my friend Mr. Chapin, principal owner of the Oakland Enquirer, and a gentleman worth knowing.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
March 3, 1919.

My dear George:

I see that the N. Y. World and Times both oppose prohibition and open their columns to its discussion.

If you can do so I wish this letter to Bryan would appear in one of those papers.

I am watching the Wilson capers with interest and anxiety. It seems to me that England is going to win the greatest diplomatic stroke in her history by the League of Nations and the payment of her war debt by Germany.

If we pay our own war debt, we release the assets of Germany for application on the war debt of England, so in effect our tax payers will pay the war debt of England!

Added to this the League of Nations obligates us to defend the British Empire.

Fine business!

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Oct. 2, 1919.

My dear George:

I am sending you, under separate cover, the Argonaut of Sept. 27th, with two remarkable articles, "The Freedom of the Seas," makes blood letting use of the worshipful bio-

graphy of Col. House. That from The Nation you may have seen.

Senator Johnson is here, speaking to immense crowds and walloping hell out of Wilson and the League of Nations.

But all the same Johnson will not be nominated for President. As I forecast next year, the Republican candidate will not be a Senator. By that time, the treaty and war sentiment will be out of focus, and the Republicans will nominate a man, not for his share in past controversies, but for his promise to extricate the country from the bag of Socialism, anarchy, fanaticism and lawlessness in which Wilson has placed it.

They will [illegible] the nomination of Gen. Wood, Gov. Lowden, or some one willing to make the test to determine whether this country is ruled by Sam Gompers, or the law.

I would be glad for this strike to go on until it ties up every activity of the whole country. That will make the test Wilson has from the start encouraged, the arrogance of union labor.

In this state all water transportation is tied up by strikes and has been for five weeks. As 75 per cent. of our tonnage is affected by water transportation you can see the result.

My warehouses at my ranch are piled full of perishable foodstuff, the product of my land, that cannot be moved to the consumer until Sam Gompers raises the embargo over shipment. I will not attempt to express my feelings.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,

Aug. 31, 1920.

My dear George:

I have read with the keenest interest and pleasure your article in "The Saturday Evening Post," on the early life



of Mr. Cleveland. In admirable style it sketches the laying of the foundation of a character that will brighten our history and grow brighter as the years go by.

When we remember that he never used his origin, nor the incidents of his childhood for political effect, but at every stage of his useful and remarkable career, stood for what he was and for what he believed, and for the right as he saw it, how striking is the contrast between him and the public men of to-day! Each pleads some tawdry element, some common incident, some preference for something unimportant as an index of character, in his craze for expediency and sordid prostration for votes.

The campaign here is dead as Lazarus, and no touch is in sight that can raise the dead. A few bawling women are yowling about measures which if adopted would undermine the government, and local candidates are slobbering their approval and that is about all.

I think the perjury of the Tennessee<sup>100</sup> legislature has finished the destruction of state rights and slaughtered the element of personal honor. What a pity that the great dust of Andrew Jackson has to rest under the sod of a state so craven.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Feby. 28, 1921.

My dear George:

I read with keenest interest your article in the January

<sup>100</sup> The Tennessee legislature ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution on August 24, 1920, at a special session called by the Governor. Opponents of equal suffrage claimed that this was illegal since the Tennessee State Constitution, it was asserted, provided that the legislature should not pass on ratification of amendments until after a popular election. The Supreme Court of the United States, however, in the Ohio referendum case, had held that a requirement for a referendum was unconstitutional and Tennessee went ahead with ratification.

“Forum”.<sup>101</sup> It is the finest job of psychological surgery that has appeared.

The country has been so be-devilled for the last eight years that no one can foresee the immediate future. Here the conditions are what might be expected from the rule of demagogues. Since 1910 the politicians before every election have raised an anti-Japanese howl to divert the attention of the people, and succeeded again last November. Now the legislature has met and sprung the trap. The people have hastily organized when it is too late and are begging the politicians for mercy.

The enclosed slip discloses the situation. Following up the increase in the cost of state government local taxes on farm land now amounts to 12 per cent. on the gross income of farm property. The people have lost the power to think straight. I am still fighting the anti-Japanese agitators and at least get occupation and amusement out of it, and also anonymous letters threatening my life.

Well I seem to have been born to face the storm. I hope you are in health and vigor. It is 53 years since we first met and the world was young.

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,

July 30, 1922.

My dear George:

I expect to leave soon for Japan and to be there during September. My address will be always at the American Legation. I expect to meet my partner Mr. Penfield in Tokio and also to meet you. It will be a new and rare experience to me for I have never been out of the country before.

I am disturbed by Harding's<sup>102</sup> inconclusive and rather

<sup>101</sup> *Cleveland View of 1920.*

<sup>102</sup> President Warren G. Harding.

cowardly settlement of the R. R. strike. The only object of government is the equal enforcement of the law. If that had been done and mob murders and injury to property promptly punished the strike would have stopped in a week. The settlement may make some votes but it should lose 1000 to one gained.

Very truly,  
Jno. P. Irish.

Oakland, Cal.,  
Aug. 25, 1923.

Dear George:

I am trying to make one plain, straight issue on the Japanese question, upon which all other possible issues will impinge and which will permanently settle them all, if adopted, or leave them all unsettled, if rejected.

The Japanese children who are born here, are citizens of the United States, and require no naturalization. Our California politicians propose an amendment to the Federal Constitution denying birthright citizenship to Japanese. If adopted that could affect only those born after the adoption, as it could not be retroactive. Such a foolish proposition need not be discussed.

Keeping in mind then that the birth right citizenship needs no naturalization, as it is conferred directly by the Constitution, the only question we have to consider is the statutory change required to confer citizenship upon the natives of Japan who are legally domiciled here. It is not a new question. A great mass meeting in Boise, Idaho, in January, 1921, demanded it. Prof. McGovney, leading teacher in the University Law Dept. of Iowa has demanded it and backed his arguments for it beyond successful attack. The first step toward its accomplishment is an expatriation treaty with Japan. That will be followed by an amendment to our

statute of naturalization. The adoption of this course will adjust our Japanese relations permanently and establish lasting peace with that Empire.

I wish you would write to Prof. D. O. McGovney, University Law Dept., Iowa City, for his two articles on our Naturalization law.

You note certain peculiarities of the Japanese in discussing their relations with us. No wonder they exist, when we consider the offensive and trying peculiarities we disclose in our consideration of the questions that mutually concern the two nations.

Did I send you my discussion of this question which was published in the San Francisco Chronicle?

Very truly,

Jno. P. Irish.