

A Plea for a Clean Ballot.

BY W. E. HARRIS.

In view of the fact that we are to have a local general election on the 20th of this present month the writer feels that the season is opportune for giving expression to his views on the mode of conducting the present day political campaigns carried on in our country.

Without making allusion to any particular party or class of men, I wish to severely denounce the practices now resorted to by those people, or their friends, who may be seeking an honored position at the hands of their countrymen.

It is to my mind proper that a man first show honor and respect to the position to which he aspires by seeking to attain the longed for prize by means which are fair and legitimate and which will not afterwards cast a shadow of reproach upon him.

To a man seeking an entrance to political life to-day the question first comes as to how much he may be worth or how much he is likely to be able to put into the campaign; and let me say right here, if the man referred to is found wanting in this one important direction, all his other qualities, such as ability, honesty, and sobriety, count for nothing and he is relegated to political oblivion until such time as he may be able to come down with his thousands. Now I ask you, dear reader, is this not a most lamentable state of affairs to exist in a country priding itself on its high state of civilization and the remarkable intelligence of its people? And again I ask you as to whether this present mode of asking your would be law-maker to become a law-breaker before he can become the former and of corrupting the morals of otherwise honorable men, to say nothing of the bad example set to the rising generations to whom we are looking with so much pride and hope, does it not throw a strong reproach upon all those who become participants in such.

I don't think there are many who doubt the existence of the state of affairs depicted above and if it is possible there may be any such benighted citizen I feel sure that he may readily become convinced of the truth of my statement without much exertion or inquiry.

We are to-day living in a country unexcelled for its great natural

resources and for its growing prosperity, in a country famous for its sound government, for its broad and valued institutions, and for the rare intellect of its inhabitants and yet in the face of all these happy facts, we have to acknowledge to the truth of there being in the midst of it all, a living disgrace and reproach.

The shame and reproach come simply from the fact that people are so over-zealous in seeking their own immediate and oft times ephemeral gain, that they overlook the eternal welfare and aggrandizement of their well beloved country by selecting a class of men to govern it who are unqualified, save in their possession of wealth, to assume such a position of responsibility. Were men, both young and old, to turn their attention to studying the requirements of our country, for the present and future, and to forming each his own opinion of such, instead of accepting second hand the jaundiced expressions of some callous old machine politician, I will venture to say that offering a voter money for such a well born opinion would be one of the highest insults you could offer an intelligent man. If such were the case you would hear less of such remarks as "I will vote for the man who will give me the most money," or "I don't care which gets in so long as he pays me for my vote," or "Old Simkins won't get in for he has not nearly so much money as the other fellow." Expressions such as the above are too common to all of you to need anything in the way of explanation. In regard to "Old Simkins," let me say, that under existing circumstances, if he should be blacker than a tar pot, internally and externally, heart and skin, his success is assured, providing he has "lots of money." Is this not sufficient disgrace to be endured by honest well-meaning men of the present day to say nothing of handing it down to the rising generation?

I was once rather shocked by reading a headline in a newspaper set in large type "Christ must rule in politics before he can successfully rule the world." I said to myself, this language is too strong, such expressions as these are made by some clergyman who is seeking notoriety, rather than the advancement of his church's welfare. However, since reading the above

mentioned head line, I have become more and more imbued with the idea that our friend who made use of that expression in his sermon had gained a greater knowledge of the truth than I was at first willing to believe. You may say, "Oh! it is no great harm to sell your vote if anyone is fool enough to offer you five dollars for it;" but I say there is harm and that it is most decidedly wrong, for very many reasons. First there is one of your country's laws, referring to the use of corrupt means for influencing a man's vote, and this has to be broken. Then again the man who has stooped to barter away his say in his country's affairs for a consideration plainly shows the world that he has not his country's well being and best interests at heart, or he could never consent to endanger them by selling his opinions in the above manner. If this be the case that man can no longer be looked upon as an honest or good citizen. He is a law-breaker and also a traitor to his country's welfare. He has become a party to what may prove to be the ruination of his own country. Then again do not the holy scriptures exhort you to be a peaceful and law-abiding citizen? If therefore a man is professing to be guided by the teachings of his God, he must bear in mind that he is breaking God's law when he breaks his country's law and that in accepting a bribe for his vote he is committing a double sin. This is a subject on which I feel too much cannot be said, in striving to show to the people what a disgraceful thing it is to recognize the use of money in conducting the political affairs of our country. I often think what an honor it would be to be chosen as a candidate of one's party by his political friends and if elected without having resorted to the use of any unlawful means, to feel that one had been chosen by a majority of the people to be their representative and to fill one of the highest positions which they have the ability to bestow upon their fellow-man, or even to become a candidate and in the face of defeat feel that you have the confidence of your own party, would be no slight mark of esteem. If placed in the position of a candidate I would prefer a thousand times over to accept an honorable defeat at the hands of my opponent than to have the grim satisfac-