

IS A LABOR PARTY PRACTICABLE OR DESIRABLE?

The wisdom of answering this query in the affirmative may well be doubted. It is, indeed—at least to our mind—questionable whether a successful labor party is possible in our generation, or whether, if possible, it would be an unmixed good to all classes of workmen.

One evening during the late campaign, we found ourself attentively listening to a party orator of considerable celebrity. Around us was a little knot of workmen, whose political creed, we soon found, differed from that of the speaker, and though the arguments advanced were logical, clear, specious and frequently convincing, this little knot of hearers listened merely to distort and not admire or believe. It seemed to us that they came more for the purpose of detecting defects than to hear truth and profit by it. They could see the questions discussed only from their own stand-point—the stand-point of party. With the eyes of their minds seared over with partisan prejudice, they stoically listened to all that was said, and never once thought of investigating the falsity of what had been advanced. And the highest results of partyism!

Of partisan intolerance! Of bigotry, hatred, prejudice, ineffective assumptions, and of the perversion of the boy who becomes a party man embryo, the political creed of his party, less liable to change or be religious faith. This is one of the things which seem almost impossible to do so again.

At this place, we have our doubts concerning the advisability or desirability of such a party, and these misgivings are founded on a character of permanency. Politics must necessarily exist in all popular governments. They have their being in the differences of opinion, as to means of public policy, and as to different forms of government. But as circumstances are continually changing and effecting changes in the subject-matter of opinion, hence opinions are always changing, and parties should change with them. Measures and politics are never permanent, because the condition of the state is subject to continual mutation, and as the changes upon which parties are founded changes the circumstances and conditions of the country, why should not parties also change? We firmly believe it would serve the best interests of labor and humanity to have parties changed at each presidential election.

As our government stands to-day, it is the will of the people—it is the will of the dominant party; it is a government of parties, those who do not belong to the dominant party have no more power in shaping its legislation than a native of Japan. Party is king. It is not which party is dominant—it would be any way. If a man dares to leave his party, he is treated worse than a human brute is a dog; and if he dares to disagree with his party on any measure of policy, he is hounded out of the ranks, whether he wishes to go or not. The power of party is maintained by corruption, bribery, and every known means of iniquity. The wrong is not so much done to the people as in the system of party, its conditions, caucuses and rings, which have been multiplying and developing in this country since

Let us do away with permanent parties and vote, like rational beings, on the issues of the day as we understand them. The greatest and highest delusive snare in political demagoguery is the stereotyped cry, "principles, not men." If workmen would invariably vote for good, honest, intelligent men, regardless of their principles, there would be no need for a labor party. If we can find men who combine principles with honesty, character and fitness, it is best to vote for them; but a good, pure man with no principles is far preferable to a man of principles, but corrupt, dishonest practices. A good man will not intentionally do wrong, but principles, as understood in politics, are no guarantee that a bad man will always do right.

Voting for principles and not men is the great stumbling block, over which workmen, metaphorically speaking, break their necks. If a workman, whose whole life has been spent in the cause of elevating labor, and whose honesty and morality none can question, was placed in nomination by one party, the workmen of the opposing party would not support him because he was not on their side they would vote for the devil though if their principles were tacked to his tail; and this

tendency is an outgrowth of party. Party must be destroyed and the people must learn that voting for abstract principles embodied in corrupt personality, means ruin, devastation, robbery and war, while voting for men of honesty, purity and fitness, irrespective of principle and party, means peace, prosperity, and national happiness. We are unalterably opposed to voting for principle per se even if promulgated by a labor party. Let workmen vote for men who have been tried and not found wanting, who have been weighed in the scales of integrity and honesty and not found light, who have proved themselves, and who they know will legislate for them and not against them, and there will be no necessity for inaugurating a party to which our honor would be pledged, and whose candidates we would have to support no matter how unfit or dishonest they might be.

All great parties are controlled by wire pullers, caucusers, and intriguing, scheming leaders, who never once think of the public good. A labor party would necessarily be subject to all these evils and a great many more, and we may well doubt whether we would be benefitted by such a party even if we could succeed in establishing it.—Coopers' Journal.

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