

commerce, whenever that body deems that a particular character of ownership, if allowed to continue, may restrain commerce between the states or create a monopoly thereof, is in my opinion in conflict with the most elementary conceptions of rights of property," and Justices Fuller, Peckham, and Holmes concur.

"Rights of property" are, according to the dissenting judges, supreme and when congress tries to prevent a monopoly it is interfering with "the most elementary conception of the rights of property." The issue presented today in the trust question and in all the other questions with which we have to deal, is the question between human rights and so-called "property rights"—or, more properly speaking, between ordinary people and the great corporations. Those who believe that property rights are supreme take the side of the trusts. If we have a president who is in sympathy with this theory it means that the Dollar will be given consideration before the Man. It means that organized wealth can continue to trample upon the rights of the people; it means that the instrumentalities of government can be used for the protection of every scheme of exploitation that the capitalists can conceive.

I, for one, am not willing that the democratic party shall become the tool of the corporations; I am not willing that it shall be the champion of organized wealth. And it is because I believe that the party has a higher mission than to be the exponent of plutocracy that I am protesting against the schemes of those who would put it into competition with the republican party for the support of Wall street financiers. It is for this reason that I protest against mortgaging the party to the capitalists to secure an enormous corruption fund.

If any who are present tonight or who read what I say think that I am trying to interfere with democratic success, let me answer that no democrat is more anxious for the party to succeed than I am. No one has suffered more from dissensions and divisions in the party, and no one, I believe, is more eager for the country to enjoy the great benefits which a triumph of real democracy would bring. But I do not desire that the party shall win offices only. If that is the only purpose of the party, let its principles be abandoned and let its platform simply declare the party hungry for the patronage. The lesson of 1894 shows the folly of hoping to win by a surrender to the corporations, but even if success could be bought in such a way it would not be worth the price.

No one can defend the democratic party without defending its principles, and its principles ought to be so clearly set forth as to be easily understood. We ought to appeal to the conscience of the public and arraign republican policies as hostile both to the principles of free government and to the principles of morality. We have an opportunity to make the democratic party a power in this country, not only a power, but a power for good. Let us array the party against every abuse of government and against every policy that is hurtful to the people. Let us drive out of the party every democrat who betrays his trust, every official who would administer the office for his private advantage. Let us make democracy stand not only for good government—for honest government—but for a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." And the first step in this direction is the adoption of a platform that recognizes the right of the people to decide public questions as well as their capacity for understanding public questions. To present a platform which is evasive and ambiguous shows that those who write the platform either distrust the people who are to act upon it or have purposes that they desire to conceal.

The New York platform is ambiguous, uncertain, evasive and dishonest. It would disgrace the democrats of the nation to adopt such a platform, and it ought to defeat as an aspirant for a democratic nomination any man who would be willing to have it go forth as a declaration of his views on public questions. In Illinois, in Wisconsin, in Michigan, in Minnesota, in Indiana, in Ohio, and in every other state that has not acted, it behooves the democrats to arouse themselves and organize to the end that they may prevent the consummation of the schemes of the reorganizers. Their scheme begins with the deception of the rank and file of the party. It is to be followed up by the debauching of the public with a campaign secured from the corporations, and it is to be consummated by the betrayal of the party organization and of the country into the hands of those who are today menacing the liberties of the country by their exploitation of the producers of wealth.

### Political Honesty.

The necessity for honesty in financial transactions is understood by all, and the line between honesty and dishonesty is so clearly drawn that no one would attempt to confuse the two. For a man to be dishonest in a financial transaction brings upon him an odium from which he finds it difficult to relieve himself. Embezzlement is one form of pecuniary dishonesty. If a public official converts to his own use money entrusted to his care, he is convicted as an embezzler and summarily punished. The line between political honesty and political dishonesty ought to be as clearly marked, and political dishonesty ought to meet with immediate and universal punishment. A public official has no more right to misuse the political power given him by the people than a treasurer has to misuse public money. Influence is bestowed upon a man, not as a personal compliment, but as a public trust, and when a party nominates a man for public office, it assumes responsibility for his faithful performance of duty, and it suffers if the confidence reposed in him is found to be misplaced. The object of a platform is to make known to the public the course which the official will follow, and it is promulgated in order that the people may know whether to confer authority upon him.

If a platform has any purpose at all, it is to inform the public as to the purpose, plan and methods of the candidate. If a platform commits a candidate to a certain course on any question, and the candidate after election follows a different and an opposite course, he is guilty of abusing public confidence and betraying those who trusted him. If, however, a platform is written in such ambiguous language that it can be construed in different ways, the action of those who wrote it can only be explained upon the theory that they either lacked the ability to state the party's position clearly or that they had a secret reason for using ambiguous language. The New York platform is one of the best illustrations of political dishonesty that has appeared in recent years. Take, for instance, the plank on the trust question. A president elected upon that platform could rigorously oppose every private monopoly and he could defend himself by saying that all private monopolies oppress the people and that all of them stifle "healthy industrial competition." Or a president elected on that platform could refuse to prosecute any trust, and explain by saying that no trust was guilty of oppressing the people, or of stifling healthy industrial competition. So far as that plank is concerned, it would leave any president elected upon it absolutely free to do anything or nothing, according to his pleasure.

And the objection that is made to the trust plank can be made to every other plank in the platform. Did the person or persons who wrote that platform understand the use of language? Could he or they have selected words that would convey a clear understanding of the party's purpose? If not, it was a great misfortune that the convention placed the drawing of the platform in the hands of such ignorant men. If, however, the men who drew the platform were shrewd, intelligent and well informed men, then the purpose of the platform must have been to deceive. The platform, if intended as a model for the democratic national platform, is a cunning contrivance intended to be construed one way in one section of the country and another way in another section, and not intended to have any binding effect after the election. If the New York democrats have no objection to republican policies, why do they go to the trouble of proposing a candidate to run against Mr. Roosevelt? If they do object to republican policies, why do they hesitate to present those objections in clear and emphatic language? If they had views, but were afraid to express them, why did they not frankly say so? A simple resolution would have answered the purpose. They might have said:

"Resolved, That we do not desire to hamper our candidate with directions or instructions, and we therefore adopt no platform, and trust him to do what he thinks is right on all questions, and we agree in advance to indorse whatever he does."

Such a resolution would have presented in an honest way what the platform pretends in a dishonest way. The platform pretends to commit the candidate, but does not do so. Will the democrats of the United States, by approving of the New York platform, declare themselves in favor of deception and double dealing? If they insist upon an honest platform and nominate upon the platform a man whose opinions are known to be in harmony with the platform, they will relieve themselves of moral responsibility in case the candidate, after election, changes his position and misrepresents those who elected him. If, how-

ever, the democrats at large indorse a dishonest platform and nominate a man upon that platform whose opinions, although not known, are reasonably suspected of being with the corporations, they will become morally responsible for the betrayal of the party and the public.

If there is one principle more essentially democratic than another, it is that the people have a right to set in judgment upon every public question, and if this principle be correct, then it is the duty of parties to present the issues in such a way that the people can intelligently decide them. A dishonest platform not only betrays a lack of political honesty on the part of those who wrote it, but it denies the fundamental principle of democracy, namely, the right of the people to have what they want and to decide public questions for themselves.

We have reached a point where we condemn a man who embezzles public money. We shall not be able to boast that our government is thoroughly democratic until we reach a point where we are ready to visit the severest punishment upon those who embezzle public confidence and betray a public trust. The fact that political measures cannot be described and measured as accurately as sums of money, only makes it more important that those who deal with public questions shall be actuated by a sense of honor that will make them avoid the boundary line between that which is honest and that which is dishonest.

### "Sanity."

Mr. Cleveland seems to have a special fondness for the word "sanity" when he speaks of the future action of the democratic party. At first the word might seem to be insulting, because it implies that those who have supported the ticket during the time of his desertion are insane. His friends might excuse the use of the word on the ground that he was trying to deal charitably with the loyal democrats and excuse their support of the party by assuming that they lacked the intelligence necessary to a proper understanding of the issues. He probably uses the word, however, for another reason. People who are insane are, of course, unable to manage their own affairs, and if a person is engaged in any important business and becomes insane it is necessary to have a guardian appointed to act for him. The most reasonable explanation, therefore, of Mr. Cleveland's use of the word "insanity" when he describes the more than six millions who voted the ticket as insane, and the 132,000 who supported Palmer and Buckner as the only sane persons, is that he desires to have the latter appointed as guardians of the former. Those who supported the ticket outnumber the Palmer and Buckner men about fifty to one, and if Mr. Cleveland can have the insane put in charge of the sane, it will give each Palmer-and-Buckner man about fifty real democrats to take care of. Fifty to one is not exactly sixteen to one, but Mr. Cleveland never knew much about the ratio, anyhow.

While no suggestion of the kind has been made so far, yet it is possible that Mr. Cleveland intends to make an application to a federal judge for the appointment of these guardians. Or, possibly, as he favors government by injunction, he may attempt to have each Palmer-and-Buckner man apply for an injunction against fifty regular democrats restraining them from exercising their political privileges to the injury of the said Palmer-and-Buckner men. If Mr. Cleveland can show that the bolters are sane and that all the regular democrats are insane, he ought to have no trouble in securing the injunction. In view of these possibilities we who differ from him in political opinion ought, perhaps, to feel grateful that we enjoy as many privileges as we do, and are permitted to write, speak and vote just as if we were really sane.

A reader of The Commoner asks where the idea of an asset currency originated and when. The Commoner is not able to state who first suggested the asset currency, or when the suggestion was first offered, but the asset currency finds its support among the financiers who desire to make the profit that there is in issuing a currency without the putting up of security. When government bonds are used for security the bank must purchase the bonds, and though it draws interest on the bonds at the same time that it uses the face value in bank notes, it is not satisfied. If it can secure an asset currency it can use the assets of the bank and issue the currency at the same time, and thus make a larger profit. The fact that the people have no security is a secondary matter. The government is being run upon the theory that the financiers will take care of the people provided the financiers themselves are allowed to have whatever they want.