

contented conservative who, hardened by fat years, insists that "all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds."

This man stands stubbornly in the face of all progress. He consistently opposes every human aspiration for better things. For money, he asks more and more; to men, he concedes less and less.

He demands higher rates for railroad service. He resists all attempts at the regulation of public service corporations.

He regards the Wisconsin proposal for government railroads, docks and steamships in Alaska as unspeakable heresy.

He insists on higher rates upon all necessities of life every time the tariff is revised.

With hundreds of thousands of children going to school every morning without their breakfasts, he declares that our trouble is not "high cost of living, but cost of high living."

He is fighting now for a kind of "open shop" which would crush labor unions to the dust, leaving the workmen to deal in his naked individuality with organized dollars.

He says men shall work when and where he pleases for what he chooses to give them, or that they shall starve, with their women and children.

The standpatriot is the greatest asset of socialism. If he has his way, the earth will be owned by fewer and fewer, the many will be more and more completely exploited—and the revolution will come the surer and the sooner.

The growing strength of socialism in every election for the past twenty-two years means just this:

We are going forward.

Most of us would prefer to progress by evolution, but if the standpatriot continues to stand pat long enough and hard enough he will probably succeed in giving us revolution instead.—Omaha Daily News.

"THE REAL ENEMIES OF PERSONAL LIBERTY"

During the campaign, the Milwaukee Journal printed the following significant editorial:

FOLLY ON THE WING

In the face of the active efforts of the brewers' political agents to center the support of the opponents of sumptuary legislation upon reactionary republican candidates for office, the denunciation of their methods by Adolph J. Schmitz, democratic candidate for governor, in his speech at Sheboygan Tuesday night, will meet with the approval of thousands of citizens, who, like him, are opposed to prohibition from principle rather than as an expedient for office-getting or to serve the material interests involved in the liquor traffic.

Mr. Schmitz declares that the political agents of the brewers are trying to raid the democratic party for votes for their candidate for governor in the republican primaries. Though the democratic party traditionally and by principle has stood against the prohibition principle and in doing so has been a bulwark against the prohibitory tendencies of the republican party, the brewers, whose interests have been served by the democratic stand for principle, are now engaged, through their lobbyists and political agents, in an effort to wipe the democratic party out of legal existence in Wisconsin. For, unless it shall be able to cast twenty per cent of its vote at the primary, it can have no place upon the official ballot.

It is just such methods as this that have enabled the anti-saloon league and its political allies to roll up the "dry waves" that have turned county after county and state after state away from rational regulation of the liquor traffic.

The democratic party by tradition and principle is opposed to prohibitory legislation, but the brewers should take heed of the fact that political tradition is sitting lightly on the people at this time. It is quite possible to turn supporters from principle into opponents. For the law of self-preservation is the first of all laws.

The brewers, if they permit their political agents to continue to play upon the anti-prohibition sentiment in Wisconsin to serve the ends of the reactionary republicans and their big business ramifications will run the danger of sowing the whirlwind. It will be dangerous for them and their interests should they be made to bear the responsibility if through manipulation and chicanery and fraud the reactionary elements should obtain control of the legislature. For if there is one instance where the brewers' political agents are supporting and bringing out progressive candidates it is not known, while it is notorious that they were

very powerful in the "Taft republican" convention and have constituted one of the ruling forces behind the Connor committee.

The real enemies of personal liberty in Wisconsin at the present time are those short-sighted brewers who are lending themselves to the reactionary movement and seeking to slaughter the men and parties that have stood as a stone wall against sumptuary legislation as a matter of conviction and principle.

TOLSTOY—"A GREAT REBEL"

Many newspaper writers are criticising Tolstoy; some refer to him as a degenerate, others call him an inferior man, while there are those who say that he was of no real service to the world. One of the best protests against such estimates upon a great lover of mankind appeared in a New York World editorial, as follows:

"Tolstoy was the twentieth century's great rebel—a rebel in literature, a rebel in politics, a rebel in religion, a rebel in ethics, a rebel in economics, his hand raised against every human institution and every convention that outraged his reason or his conscience. He was the universal Luther, always ready to nail his thesis to the door and say, 'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me.'

"To have written 'Anna Karenina' and 'War and Peace' is to be numbered among the immortals; but a still higher immortality than anything literature has to bring belongs to the man who could defy the Russian autocracy, who could defy the holy synod, who could defy all the manners, customs and laws of his caste, and set his foot upon the neck of all governmental and ecclesiastical authority the while he gave his message to the world.

"To be sure, it was a weird and incoherent message. Most of the Tolstoy theories were fantastic and impossible. Never outside of a madhouse was there such illogical logic. No government could exist under Tolstoy's notion of government. Religion would cease to be religion. No nation of Tolstoys could survive under the code of Tolstoy. Civilization would disappear into the eternal twilight. Human society itself would crumble and vanish.

"But great rebels are not to be taken literally or followed blindly. Their function is to shake mankind out of its lethargy and to lay imploring hands upon all the idols that mankind has come to worship. They seldom find the truth themselves, but because of them other men find it and know it and prove it. John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on; and because it goes marching on, the shackles are struck from millions of slaves.

"There is no writer who could not demolish Tolstoy's theories of literature. There is no doctor of divinity who could not crumple up his notions of religion and theology. There is no bureaucrat who could not demonstrate the futility of his notions of government. There is no economist who could not prove that Tolstoy was without a fundamental notion of any system of economics. There is no sociologist who could not prove that the Tolstoy theories were the very negation of society. Yet for all that, Tolstoy stands as one of the commanding figures of modern times, and his generation must say of him as Napoleon said of Goethe 'There is a man.'"

PRIMARY LAW IN NEBRASKA

Two years ago the Nebraska legislature enacted what is known as the open primary law. This provides for one general primary for all parties and a blanket ballot containing side by side each party ticket. Anyone, regardless of their previous affiliations may vote on any one of these tickets although he may not vote on more than one. As a result of this open primary the liquor interests of the state led an army of "wet" republicans into the democratic primary, defeated the present governor of Nebraska for a second term and nominated a man of their own choosing. This nominee repeatedly stated that one-half of the votes he received in the primary were republican votes. Naturally there is considerable discussion on the primary law. Many insist upon the repeal of the open primary provision. Professor George Elliott Howard, of the Nebraska State University, has written to the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal an interesting article in which he says:

"I desire to say with emphasis that I believe that, wherever in the country it has been fairly tried, the direct primary is proving to be a social benefit. Like the referendum, it is seen to be an efficient means of putting government directly in the hands of the people. Decidedly

the recent campaign in Nebraska demonstrates the value of our primary law, however short of the highest ideal that law may be, or however unfortunate certain choices of candidates may have turned out. Our law strikes at the pernicious influence of the parasitical politician, without in the least thwarting the legitimate aims of political parties as the true organs of genuine public opinion. It is significant that it is the politician of the old order, the member of the 'court house ring,' together with the selfish or anti-social interests which he serves—with his eye steadily fixed on the 'plum tree' in the spoils garden—who is the bitterest enemy of the direct primary in any form. On the other hand, conservative men who have honestly doubted the wisdom of the direct primary are more and more coming to see that experience is proving their doubts unfounded.

"Coming now to the Nebraska primary law, I feel that it ought to be improved at least in two ways. If public opinion is already sufficiently educated, I should be glad to have an amendment sanctioning the 'wide-open' ballot; a 'blanket' ballot which would permit the voter to 'scratch' as he pleases—just as he now does at regular elections—thus ignoring party lines at any point. This is the highest ideal to which our states will come in time. If we are now ready for so broad a stride forward—and quite likely we are not ready—then let us adopt the Wisconsin plan as amended in 1907. 'At all primaries,' runs the statute, 'there shall be an Australian ballot made up of the several party tickets herein provided for, all of which shall be securely fastened together at the top and folded, provided that there shall be as many separate tickets as there are parties entitled to participate in said election. The names of the candidates shall be arranged alphabetically * * * under the appropriate titles of the respective offices and under the proper party designation.' The elector votes one of these tickets, 'scratching' and adding such names as he pleases from the other tickets. But party integrity is guarded by the following provision:

"If any elector writes upon his ticket the name of any person who is a candidate for the same office upon some other ticket than that upon which his name is so written, this ballot shall be counted for such person only as a candidate of the party upon whose ticket his name is written, and shall in no other case be counted for such other ticket."

"Secondly, should we not amend our primary law by adopting some form of preferential voting? It is needful to eliminate minority nominations, where the plurality falls below a certain mark, say forty per cent. The state of Washington has a plan of 'second choice' voting which appears to start off well; and Wisconsin is almost sure to adopt a similar plan this winter.

"Whatever we do, I feel sure that we shall not move backward. If we can supplant our present system of representative legislation by direct legislation, and at the same time improve our primary law on the two lines indicated, we shall advance true democracy and do much to take the virus out of party politics. It will tend to call parties back to their rightful place in the social service. Then it may be easier for the politician to be a statesman.

"The referendum and the direct primary will neither destroy nor degrade parties, but purge and ennoble them."

INFORMATION WANTED

James Ballenger and wife, Elk City, Okla.—Will anyone of the readers of this paper kindly inform me if they know the whereabouts of Laura B. Ballenger, or Laura B. Hensel? The last time we heard from her she was in Portland, Oregon. Her mother's maiden name was Maggie McNab, and her mother's people lived at Omaha, Neb. Laura B. Ballenger is the child of William T. Ballenger, our son, who has been dead for several years. Any information leading to the whereabouts of Laura B. Ballenger will be appreciated as we have property to give her. We are her grandparents and are very old.

Mrs. Eva Handley, Dalton, Neb.: A boy 14 years old, slender built, blue eyes, riding a roan pony, left home October 17. Any one knowing his whereabouts would do me a great favor by having him write me at Dalton. Tell him I am staying at the Grand hotel. Tell him I am watching the mails and praying for a letter from him. All papers please copy.

The American Homestead, a monthly farm journal of national scope, will be sent to all Commoner subscribers, without additional cost, who renew their subscriptions during the month of December when this notice is mentioned.