

plishment. They see the defects of our social and economic system as clearly as anybody, and I for one give them the fullest credit for honesty and sincerity, yet the means by which they seek to remedy the existing evils is worse than the disease.

Any theory, social or otherwise, to be successful must be in harmony with the laws of nature.

To ascertain these and conform to them must be the first effort of any reformer.

To confound the German social democrats with the socialists of the United States results either from a complete ignorance of the aims of either party or from willful perversion of facts.

The social democrats of Germany have long since abandoned their Utopian illusions; they now seek only the really obtainable and have the inflexible courage to obtain; neither ridicule threats of prison nor police oppression swerves them from their path or even checks them for a moment, and their progress is steady among all classes in Germany.

Liebknicht and Bebel are not visionaries, but hard-headed, practical and courageous men of indomitable purpose. They are nearer in their demands for reformatory measures to the demands laid down in the populist platform of 1892, than they are to the teachings of Lasalle or Marx, much nearer.

The single taxers, or followers of Henry George, are undoubtedly honest men who sincerely seek a betterment of social and economic conditions, but their philosophy is one-sided and but half a truth. The foundation of their creed is that land values are exclusively due to society, and that the unearned increment belongs by right to society alone, and should be the only source of taxation for federal, state and municipal governments.

On this foundation they build their vivid imagination a Utopian state of society, free from all physical, mental or moral ills.

Alas, their theory applied in practice would result in something altogether different from the Utopia of their dreams.

They make the fatal mistake in believing, first, that only land values are due to society, when in fact all enhanced values of products of human labor are due to society; second, that to tax the products of human labor is to impose a fine on human industry and frugality.

These are grave errors and fatal to their expectations.

Supposing I raise 5,000 bushels of wheat on my farm here and am living so great a distance from society that I cannot transport it there to sell the surplus; that surplus above my individual wants would be worthless. The value of any product of human labor in excess of the wants of the producer is due to the force of demand from society and consequently due to society; therefore, according to their theory, that part of value of the product due to the demands of society should belong to society—a proposition they deny.

They fare no better in their theory, that to tax the products of human labor is to impose a fine on human industry.

They don't seem to be able to see that human industry is the only thing that can be taxed. A piece of land, urban or rural, can produce no revenue without human exertion, without human industry; it is not in the final analysis land value, but human industry and frugality which are taxed.

But supposing their theory became the policy of the state, I will argue its application only from rural standpoint—the standpoint of the farmer.

If the state owned all the land, it would lease it to the applicants. If the demand for a certain piece of land was great the rent would be high; if the demand was small, the rent would be low. If by my industry and the application of scientific methods I increase the productiveness greatly, the demand for this piece of land would increase correspondingly and might be increased to nearly the entire productive value of it; then it would follow that I would have to offer the state as much rent as others would be willing to give or lose my lease and be dispossessed.

Would the state be taxing land values or human industry and frugality?

What incentive would any one have to labor to adorn and beautify a place, to erect commodious and expensive buildings and other improvements,

plant trees, etc., if his tenure to the land depended on the will of the state, guided only by the revenue paying capacity of the land or the cupidly of others desiring to reap and enjoy where others had sown? Would he not be content with the most primitive and inexpensive improvements to enable him to make the most out of the land with the least possible expense? Would that be progress or retrogression?

If I now toil and deny my luxuries in improving and beautifying a farm home, the benefits of which improvements I will not fully enjoy before my death, would it be unnatural for me to wish to bestow on my children, who have helped me to produce this, the full benefits of my labor and saving rather than have them go to society which did nothing to produce them? Would the case of man improving a city lot be any different?

I repeat now what I have said before, that the philosophy of the two parties, socialists and single taxers, will never find many followers among the farmers of the United States.

Now the democratic party is in the unfortunate position that the overwhelming majority of it is handicapped by a wealthy and powerful minority in whose hands is the political machinery for the manipulation of state conventions, whereby a free and complete expression of the masses can be prevented.

The Chicago and Kansas City platforms contained, if not all, at least a great many of the demands that all reformers desire. If the majority of the democratic party at the next national convention can have a full and untrammelled expression of its real wants and nominates men who are living impersonations of its platform, then will its overwhelming numbers make another reform party unnecessary; yes, in the nature of things, an impossibility.

If they fail in doing this, the party will split forever. The progressive democrats will never regress. Whether they will form a new party or join some other reform party, time alone can tell.

The tendencies of the republican party are so well known that a discussion of its aims are superfluous. It is the party of the plutocrats, the party of special privileges and does not deserve the consideration of any lover of humanity or liberty.

There now remains to be considered the people's party.

Born as a living protest against the shortcomings of the republican and democratic parties, and the direct legal heir of the grange and greenback parties, its existence was natural and a vital necessity. Up to 1896 the only reform party worth mentioning.

Its first national platform adopted at Omaha in 1892 is the most statesmanlike document issued by any party in the United States since the revolutionary war. I saw it born on that Fourth of July. I was there, not as a populist, but as a looker-on in Venice. I saw some of the fuglemen on the stage, very noisy, some ludicrous, some dramatic, as is usual in such gatherings, and they did not impress me very favorably; and time has demonstrated that my judgment then did not deceive me: they are no longer populists; they have proven renegades and traitors.

The real statesmen, who drew up this memorable document, were not seen on the stage much; the real actors in this political drama were behind the scenes. I knew them then and know a good many yet. They have my love and respect. This populist party has been a great educational factor in the United States and is yet. The principles laid down in its Omaha platform are being more and more adopted by various localities of the country, proving the far-seeing statesmanship of its authors.

This party has laid its foundation broad and deep; it has recognized the laws of nature and conformed to them. It does not seek visionary or impracticable things.

It insists on the public ownership of public utilities, that is, utilities which in the very nature of things are monopolistic. It insists on the government alone exercising the sovereign power of issuing all money. It insists on equal rights for all and special privileges to none. It insists on the initiative and referendum, and many minor matters of importance to all; but these are enough.

Up to 1896 it was the only legitimate reform party in the United States. In 1896 came the reformation of the democratic party and by its adoption of the populist principles and its overwhelming numbers, brought about the disintegration of the populist party.

While the populists have been quarreling among themselves as to who killed Cock Robin, this is the only true and natural cause of its disintegration as a party.

You have now called an informal

meeting of the reform forces to Denver and while I have not time to meet you there, I wish you Godspeed. If it is not considered presumptuous I would like to give some reformers a bit of advice.

Do not be captious.

Do not think you have an exclusive lien on all wisdom, for there is many a silent man following a plow who can outstrip you in thinking.

Abide by the majority judgment.

Make a good, short platform or statement of principles; on your life rot more than the Omaha platform; and if you call a national convention, adopt that platform and see to it, as you value your life and honor, that no man is nominated who is not a living representative of that platform.

Platforms are easily made, but difficult to carry into execution.

Nominate silent men; men who can do: koenen, koenig or king—the Saxon for a man who can do—and not men who are afflicted with that greatest, chronic, constitutional, incurable national disease—mouth diarrhoea!

Then quietly await the result of the democratic national convention and act accordingly after.

F. ENGELHARD.

Rising City, Neb.

A PAIR OF QUERIES.

Have you read Quick's speech as chairman Iowa democratic convention? Not much comfort for remorganizers in it, nor in platform—is there?—W.

(None in Quick's speech; but plenty in platform—because platform is meaningless, and so intended to be.—Ed. Ind.)

Is Edgerton, et al., quite consistent in denouncing gold democrats for taking votes from Bryan in 1896-1900 that he should have had, and then announcing their intention to do the same thing, a year before excuse for it can possibly arise, if it ever does?—W.

(Edgerton, et al., don't claim to be democrats. Have no objections to helping Bryan on a Chicago or Kansas City platform, but very serious objections to assisting him on an Iowa platform.—Ed. Ind.)

INDIAN TERRITORY.

Editor Independent: Your letters of May 16 and 28 as well as the Henry George Edition reached me in due time.

The reticence and indisposition shown by the tardy reply I hope will not be attributed to a dearth or an apathy toward the cause. The writer apprehends that he shares with others the feeling that it is even of more consequence that the party in energizing itself should make the right moves than to make any at all.

I have read with deep interest the opinions expressed through the columns of The Independent of the issues and methods proposed; and I would avail myself of the opportunity offered to congratulate the editors of The Independent upon their systematic course and policy pursued in the effort at securing the sentiment and feeling of the party relative to the future course to be evolved.

The seeming lethargy manifest in the party which the republicans take such pride in pointing to as a marked evidence of death is but seeming. The energy displayed by the republicans in trying to make it appear that the people's party is defunct should be proof positive of the fear that it entertains of its demise, that it won't stay dead. Like Banquo's ghost, it won't down. Its periodicals are teeming with the subject of its "uneventful ending." Every stump-speaker points to the mortuary feature with great pride, but with a very manifest reserve of fear lest an activity should seize upon its "inanimate" form that lies so docile now, a reserve force that might have to be reckoned with, and that the sleep that is upon it might not prove to be the sleep that knows no waking, the sleep of death.

That there is inertia among our troopers is apparent, but it should not operate as a cause for alarm. It is in the very nature of things and follows from being relieved from fatigue duty, for a time, by an old-time party taking up its fight and adopting its principles. It requires responsibility to energize one and a division of responsibilities can very properly be urged as a cause for any ennui or seeming indifference in the party.

Being weary from the long, hard campaigns, forced marches and double duty, that the membership had voluntarily taken upon themselves, now that their numbers had so vastly increased as to materially lessen the burden, the shift or sharing the responsibility amounted to a relaxation and with relaxation followed a relaxation of energy.

At the called meeting of the committee held at the Sherman house in Chicago to supply the place of Mr.

Towne on the ticket for vice president, in seconding the nomination of Mr. Stevenson, the writer took occasion to state, in substance, that we were in no manner yielding a point or relaxing our hold, but per contra the party was in the attitude of the faithful sentinel who, relieved by the accession to the ranks of superior numbers—by the joint union of the forces—was resting upon its arms until at such a time as he shall hear the bugle call to fall into line and man the works.

A true populist—one that is not in the party for spoils—is a populist by education and his politics is a part of his religion, he can see every reason why he should press on. What has happened to discourage? Everything may not have gone just as he would have ordered it; indeed, his disappointments may have been many. But whilst he has had disappointments to chafe him he looks at his cause for rejoicing. He reviews the history of the party. He sees but a handful meeting here and there in isolated places. Then he sees the country school house filling, filling by degrees to repletion. He recalls, next, how cities began taking cognizance of the advanced ideas of true democracy, and, then, he sees the work and influence of these few handfuls extending from ocean to ocean compelling an old-time political party, of national power, to become an ally and adopt its principles.

Should that not be enough to nerve on any fainting spirit to redoubled energy? But even all of that, that is not all!

Does the student of political economy doubt for a moment that the work set in motion by that few operatives not as a check upon the powers that be? Think you if the attention of the republican party had not been called in such an emphatic manner—so emphatic, indeed, as to rattle its foundations—to first principles, demonstrating that half, aye, more than half of the people were not yet given over to Mammon, but wise enough to keep in touch with party movements and were alive to the fact of how that party had left its first love and how it had wandered off after false gods and had gone to worshipping idols, that today we would have had more than a semblance of democratic institutions or an apology for a republican form of government?

We have had a sample of its methods without check in the Philippines where the rights of a people have been overridden, a nation ignored and methods adopted to subjugate a well-meaning, an enlightened race that are worse than the most diabolical measures adopted by the heathen, or the inhuman, fiendish barbarous practices of the savage—the "water cure."

Let the republican party go unrestrained by an enlightened sentiment and the stereotyped question "where are we at?" would be useless, then, since the most illiterate would soon have a cause to know, the knowledge would be imparted to him by "hard knocks and raps" until he was fully conscious or unconscious of just where he was at.

A retrospect of the past enables us to form an estimate of the future.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." The work of the people's party; its influence for good is beyond computation. As the parent of all reform movements today she can point with pride to her direct offspring—socialism; to the active stimulation of labor unions; to the incarnation of true democratic principles into so-called "democracy;" and last, but not least, she can arrogate to herself the credit of enlightening the public mind to such a degree as to offer serious obstacles to republican rapacity and that behaves as a preventive measure from ignoring the constitution altogether.

The party has passed the formative stage and its procreative powers are recognized. Men who are not allied with the cause, thinking men are forced to admit the schooling which it has exerted in economics and which the antagonists of a popular government have learned to dread.

If it is not plain to every member already it should be made one of the functions of the party to acquaint, to post and emphasize the absolute importance of each "standing up and being counted," and in exerting himself to the extent at least in adding to hold the membership, the numerical strength of the party as high as possible.

It is manifest that if we could not accomplish more we have shown that we have abandoned no principles; that we have taken up our work right where we left off; that while we stand ready to throw our influence to any party that would adopt our principles or fight along our lines, preferring a half a loaf to no bread at all; and, believing that with one-half gained the

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