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Democracy and the Tariff

A WARM ADMONITION

About the weakest editorial ever read by the public, one that is slimy, squirmy, slips through fence cracks and knot holes, eel-like, appeared in the Houston Post of the 19th, headed "The Bryan Platform." The writer says the Denver platform was not ratified at the polls, etc. The democrats—that is what we mean—of the United States did vote for Bryan and the Denver platform and were defeated. Why? Because there were more republicans than democrats. Every dollar that could be gathered from the masses was spent to help in the election of a democratic president and failed. Did that make the platform void and leave us without a guidance? It would seem so from your editorial. There are more sinners in the United States than Christians. Does that make void the Bible? If you want to, when you leave heavenly Houston, enter into the everlasting home, the home where the righteous and those who have stood and will stand upon those sacred pages given us by the apostles dwell, you will have to stand on that platform, even though it is not "ratified" by the majority. Go take a good bath; clean yourself; and don't tell the people that all the democrats in the United States did not vote for and ratify the Denver platform, especially a country democrat, and they are the true ones.—Conroe (Texas) Courier.

A STRANGE DESERTION OF PRINCIPLE

Mr. Bryan's position is quite similar to that which the States announced at the beginning of its discussions of the tariff enacted by the recent congress—announcing that he desired to aid in the election of a democratic majority in the next house, and for that reason his discussions were to the propagation of a principle rather than to a fight against individuals. As a matter of fact, there never has been any doubt that the recreant democrats in both houses, whatever their reasons for voting as they did, had no thought of becoming republicans or of being anything else save democrats.

By some strange mental process, which we have been unable to understand or they to explain, they appear to have been carried away with the notion that the southern democracy was rapidly changing its time-honored position with regard to the tariff and was drifting in the direction of protection. It was an utterly foolish delusion, insofar as it referred to the

attitude of the masses, but that many southern congressmen and senators believed it there seems to be good reason to doubt.

The only plausible hypothesis upon which we can suggest an explanation of the strange desertion of democratic principle on the part of so many democrats is that the clamor of the tariff-hungry special interests was so much louder than the "still, small voice" of duty, or than the voiceless, though written, platform obligations, that they really were deceived. However, we are not offering explanations nor seeking to palliate a dereliction of duty which it is impossible to defend except upon the assumption that party pledges are not inviolate, and that the acceptance of offer at the hands of a political party carries with it no obligation that can not be ignored with impunity.

The fight which must be waged by democrats is not against individuals, but in behalf of a vital principle involving the integrity of party authority and the philosophy that underlies the scheme of government by political parties. As Mr. Bryan suggests, the supreme effort should be directed to obtaining control of the next house, making sure that every democrat who is elected shall go to Washington emphatically and distinctly pledged to support under all circumstances the time-honored principles of the democratic party.

Of course the unity and harmony necessary to produce this most desirable result can not be realized if principles shall be subordinated to personal issues, and if our energies shall be expended in fighting men rather than in advancing democratic doctrines and democratic success which means so much to the suffering masses. Issues personally vindictory or punitive would be alike fatal to that unity which is so essential to success in the next election, although all through the campaign there must be no uncertain note with regard to the question of the absolute right of the democratic party to require strict adherence to its platform pledges by every individual who seeks honors at its hands.

Mr. Bryan's refusal to engage in a mere spectacular debate, the net effect of which would inevitably have been the edification of republicans, the creation of factions within the democracy, the obscuring of a great principle by a mere personal brawl, and the sacrifice of the bright prospects for controlling the next house for the gratification of personal prejudice, is greatly to be commended, therefore. The current is drifting the democratic way now, and the thing to do is to get together, care being taken that the getting together must be on a basis of the acceptance of absolute supremacy of democratic authority by every individual who aspires to honors at the party's hands.—New Orleans States.

THE TARIFF AS AN ISSUE

The tariff will be the issue next year in the congressional elections, and again in 1912 the presidential campaign will fight it all over again. There will be democrats falling into the protection ranks and republicans going over to the good old-time democratic school that teaches the orthodox science of government. It is too bad that we hear men asking each other what kind of a democrat they are, when there should be only one kind—the one broad enough to work for the good of mankind everywhere and for the highest degree of happiness toward all.—Sherman (Texas) Democrat.

TARIFF ON FOOD PRODUCTS

President Taft, in his journey through the west, is certainly making some remarkable statements. He calls the tariff bill, recently passed by congress, the best tariff we have ever had. We are sure that this statement will be opposed by 75 per cent of the people of this country who have ever given any thought to the subject. Let the president get off his train and talk as man to man with the people who listen to him, and he would soon learn what they think about the tariff. They would tell him that they voted for him with the clear understanding that the tariff would be adjusted so that the cost of living would be cheapened. It seems strange that in a country where agriculture is the chief business President Taft should offer the following:

"Certainly no one will contend that protection has increased the cost of food in this country when the fact is that we have been the greatest exporters of food products in the world."

If that is true, then the tariff on food products is no protection whatever. Everyone understands that we pay extra for our clothing or our steel goods because the tariff prevents competition from foreign-made goods. No one

denies this, the theory being that this extra price goes as a sort of bonus to our American manufacturers. In fact, this extra price is the protection which the manufacturers claim and demand. Now, if the tariff on grain or potatoes or other food makes no difference in the price, it is no protection at all. Yet whenever a tariff bill is before congress the farmers are expected to swap duties—that is, agree to a tariff on steel, lumber, clothing, etc., and in return receive the great benefit of a tariff on corn, cabbage, eggs, etc. We have always claimed that these agricultural tariffs were simply part of a bunco game played again and again on our farmers. Evidently, without meaning to do so, President Taft has exposed the whole thing, for if these food tariffs make no difference in prices, they afford no protection, and they amount to little or nothing as revenue producers.—Rural New Yorker.

THE LOGIC OF IT

The Bryan and Bailey controversy resolved itself into one of protection and anti-protection in spite of all sophistry and hair-splitting arguments. Bryan recognizes protection as a republican doctrine and proposes to fight it all along the line, attacking its market places first. Bailey fights the general idea of protection, but insists that, as others get protection—that is, are allowed to tax the masses for the benefit of the few—his few constituents who can receive the benefits of protection shall have their share of the graft. Bryan proposes to fight the republican party by attacking its protective principles, and would plant the democratic party squarely in opposition to their principles. This seems the logical course to pursue, and we believe it would win in the end. The democratic party can never have any real influence while straddling the issue. The Bailey idea of "spotted protection" will only serve to keep the republican party, backed by the great protected interests, in power, while those interests continue to rob the masses and add daily to the cost of living.—Granbury (Texas) News.

The purpose of "straddling" the issue is exactly the purpose of the course pursued by the "standpatters," namely, the protection of special interests. Tariff reform will not come all at once, nor will it ever come by the protection of any interest because another interest is protected. Every time an article, no matter what, is put on the protected list, it strengthens the cause of protection; every time an article is put on the free list it weakens the cause of protection.—Bonham (Texas) News.

"PEARL OF PSALMS"

Sometime ago The Commoner made mention of a little book entitled "The Pearl of Psalms" by E. A. Wright of Birmingham, Ala. It was said that this admirable little book could be obtained in quantities for 85 cents per one hundred copies. The Commoner intended to say that this book could be obtained in quantities at \$8.50 per one hundred copies. Commoner readers desiring copies of this book may obtain the same by addressing Mr. Wright at 1218 North Thirty-second street, Birmingham, Ala.

INEQUALITY

Samuel J. Tilden while serving as governor of New York, delivered a speech at Syracuse in which he said: "I was called on this morning to speak some words of encouragement and hope to four hundred little boys in the Western House of Refuge. During all my journey I have frequently been followed by persons asking for their friends and for those in whom they are interested a pardon from the penitentiaries and state prisons. "I have been compelled to look into such cases to see who are the inmates of these institutions and of what they have been accused, and to ascertain what it is that constitutes the wrong to society on which they have been convicted. "When I have compared their offenses, in their nature, temptation and circumstances, with the crimes of great public delinquents who claim to stand among your best society and are confessedly prominent among your fellow-citizens—crimes repeated and continued year after year—I am appalled at the inequality of human justice."