

## THE ADVERTISER.

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### OUR REPLY.

Major P. L. DeClouet has written to the Lafayette Gazette criticising the comments of The Advertiser on the mass meeting held in the court-house July 23. This is what we said on the subject:

#### SATURDAY'S MASS MEETING.

There was a good attendance at the mass meeting held in the court house last Saturday, and the gathering was a representative one, though it was entirely factional, and for that reason the action of the meeting can not be said to fairly reflect the popular will.

It will hardly be denied that the factional spirit in politics in Lafayette parish is still alive, as much as this circumstance may be lamented by the less militant ones among our public men; and neither side can successfully lay claim to a monopoly of the good people, because both factions have a strong following. This fact cannot be eliminated from our deductions and conclusions in weighing the work of the mass meeting, a fact attested by the work itself. And The Advertiser would not feel called upon, as a non-partisan newspaper, to offer an explanation of this kind, but for the misleading claim that the action of the mass meeting stands for a "united Democracy" instead of a tactful move for factional political advantage.

With this point made clear, The Advertiser willingly acknowledges the worth as a whole, of the selections made by the mass meeting, as appears from the official proceedings published in another column.

Major DeClouet contends that the above editorial expression is replete with misleading statements and is plainly the expression of badly concealed political disappointment. Let us see what are the true facts of the case.

The validity of the charge of political disappointment and spleen is precluded by the firmly established independence of The Advertiser in the field of politics.

Being free from political alliances or aspirations that might be expected to compromise our honest views and opinions on public questions in the hope of reaping personal reward, we can well afford to maintain ourselves in the position we assumed from the beginning of an independent, non-partisan, Democratic journal, a position to which the editorial columns of The Advertiser bear convincing proof.

As to the other charge that our editorial discussion of the mass meeting is "replete with misleading statements," we have the testimony of our esteemed local contemporary that "the actual attendance was composed in LARGE PROPORTIONS (capitals ours) of voters lately aligned with the faction led by Sheriff Lacoste and Clerk Voorhies"; and we have the word of Maj. DeClouet in public print, that "since the election we [the Lacoste Voorhies faction] have been as conciliatory as possible, again offering on several occasions the olive branch in the way of giving representation to BOTH FACTIONS (capitals ours) in the appointments of delegates to State, judicial and congressional conventions, also in the list of persons to be recommended for appointment on the School Board. And in spite of all this, we have been given the thorns in return for the olive branch."

We submit to a fair-minded public that the foregoing statements corroborate the essential points covered by the editorial

complained of by Maj. DeClouet. In our remarks we did not undertake to deal with the whys and wherefores of the factional differences not yet healed in the Democratic ranks in Lafayette parish, but we made a simple statement of their existence, and pointed to the net results of the mass meeting itself, merely to show the public that the meeting recorded the will of a faction and was not the expression of a united Democracy.

Our statements were not misleading then, and the public intelligence is too much quickened to submit to an unceremonious sweeping aside of them by any general denial on the part of Maj. DeClouet.

Most certainly we do not claim infallibility for our views and opinions; but such as they are, we believe they usually carry a reasonable conviction of their purpose to serve the ends of justice and truth.

#### The National Peril.

Times-Democrat.

The strike in the meat trade serves the useful purpose of making the national peril clear to all eyes. There is indeed no time for abstract discussion when eighty millions of people see their food-supply menaced by a dispute between coalesced capital and organized labor. The average man is bound to ask himself why he has to go hungry, or pay exorbitant prices, though all the statistics tell of comparative plenty. The anthracite coal strike revealed a similar condition of things, as to the reserves of fuel. The great cities of the North and East shivered until the president of the United States intervened, without legal warrant, coercing the captains of labor into a compromise which was a makeshift at best.

The essential facts of the case are terribly distinct. First of all it must be remembered that the masses of the American people have no voice in the controversy. A few men fix the price of food, in accordance with the dictates of a selfishness which is to the last degree unintelligent. Another coterie essay to fix the price of labor by methods which will not bear the test of right reason. As a rule, these rival autocrats agree to fleece the public by inflating the cost of the commodities they handle. Some times however, this simple arrangement falls through. Then the consumer has not even the poor consolation of paying and looking as pleasant as he can. The wheels of commerce stand still, while the battle is fought to a finish.

Paper constitutions and high-sounding bills of rights do not count for much in such circumstances as these. Professors of political economy will tell you that the problem must be solved by the inexorable processes of evolution, but doctrinaires of this school have unhappily never known what it means to be hungry. Very different is the discussion which occurs around firesides which feel the pinch of an artificial dearth. There the grim realities stand forth in high relief. The annals of grand politics are made up of just such clashes between the ambitions of the few and the wants of the many.

Careful observers have long known that something was amiss in the scheme of our national life. With each passing year, overgrown capitalists have tightened their grasp on the secret springs of our trade. Competition has been stifled, until it has become

a delusion and a snare for men of moderate means. When cotton or wheat is cornered, some compensation is found in the knowledge that the farmer is reaping a harvest; but the giant packers have actually depressed the price of cattle, while boosting the price of meat to famine figures. Peter is robbed, but Paul is not paid.

The issue thus presented can not be kept out of practical politics forever. Governments, if they have any purpose at all, are designed to meet just such contingencies. "The greatest good of the greatest number" is something more than a subtle platitude. There are moments when a new meaning is breathed into the grand axioms of our civilization. Constructive statesmanship will always find a way out of dilemmas which move multitudes of toilers to break with the past and keep their eyes fixed on the future. The Irish land legislation is a striking instance in point. Nothing could be more radical than the methods which Great Britain adopted to undo the wrongs of centuries, but property had to forego some of its rights or lose them all. Great estates were taken by a resolute exercise of eminent domain and a landholding peasantry was created by force majeure.

The boldest prophet would not venture to predict the outcome of the crisis which confronts us to-day, but we may assume that many cherished ideas will be cast into the crucible. The existing order must be mended, or ended. A virile race will not meekly submit to spoliation at the hands of self-constituted despots. Samson will break his bonds in the end, even though he bring the pillars of the temple down in his struggle for enfranchisement. The competitive principle can not be flung aside with impunity. We have come to the parting of the ways. The one path leads to socialism, the other to true industrial freedom.

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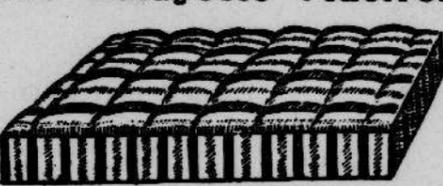
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