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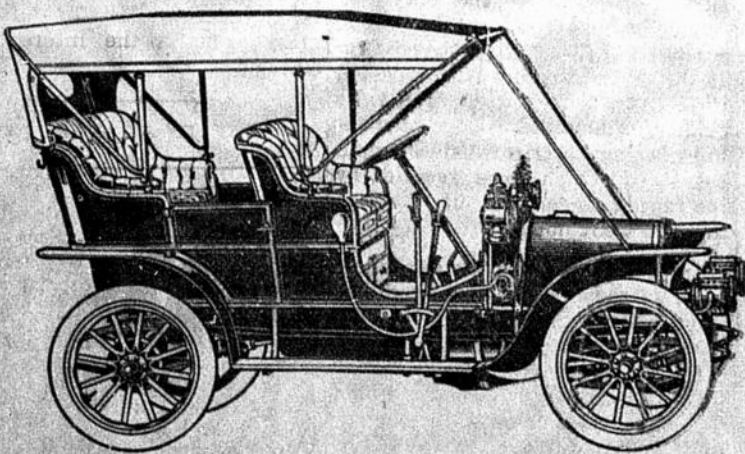
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A LINCOLN SERMON

Not all who shout follow. There are many men today who profess to admire Abraham Lincoln who are distinctly opposed to the principles for which Lincoln stood. What the Great Commoner was, every American president should be, a representative of the common people, working for their good, not to advance the cause, or serve the interest of corporation greed. If the party which Lincoln led, the people's party of his day, and which sprang fully armed from the heats and turmoils of that troublous time, had stood true to its high calling, the government would not now be mostly in the hands of rich corporation interests, and the workers would not be snubbed and clubbed as they are at the present time.

What Lincoln feared has happened. He foresaw corporation growth and rule; to him it was a very real possibility, and he cried out in warning to the people of his day, and to our's, lest haply he might save them from the many troubles that would come upon them if they refused to hear. Lincoln prophesied that if the corporations gained the upper hand, the greater part of liberty would be taken away from us. It is even hinted by those who have made the matter astudy, that the franchise or voting power of the American citizen, as it is at present administered with all its intricate machinery, is a gigantic farce, only permitted by those who are in real power, because it affords a means of keeping the people's minds at times away from their real troubles, and gives them an opportunity to think they control the destinies of this mighty republic! Grown-ups, like children, love to play at make believe. The voters rise in wrath, march to the polls, register their kick, retire satisfied that all will now be well—and the game goes on merrily as before, only perhaps the plowshare is set a little deeper.

The uselessness of expecting a corporation-made or controlled government to regulate trusts in favor of the people is obvious; the uselessness of expecting corporation-appointed courts to render decisions favorable to any except those who place them in their power is also very patent to the man who thinks. The moral is, it seems very clear, that the people themselves should place these folks in power, and then they could very properly expect service. The action of the supreme court, to take one example, merely reflects very faithfully the attitude of those who control the reins of government. Pro-slavery before the war, anti-slavery after, and decisions rendered accordingly by the same body; surely a body capable of such renderings is not fit to sit on the seats of the mighty they occupy today, high above control, a law unto themselves, making up as they go along their own version of the people's will. The people is very well able to express its will thru congress and senate, without having a bunch of wise guys to tell them whether it is really the will of the people or not. The court's business is to execute laws, not make them; that belongs to the legislative assemblies.

The great demand in this day, as it was in Lincoln's day, and which gave rise to the republican party and its early ideals, since mostly lost in the great scramble, is for real people's rule. We do not want president's rule, which is but another form of kingship; we do not want court rule, which is but a form of tyranny used always to crush the opponents of the party in power; we do not want a governing body that is opposed to the will of the people (and therefore not really appointed by them, else they would not dare oppose that will) and has to be clubbed into line whenever the people desire any legislation that is of vital benefit to themselves, but we want a republic, "of the people, by the people, for the people," in which the people really rule. We demand a power higher than president or courts or governing body—which are at best servants not masters, created to express the people's will and not to oppose or dictate it—the great power of an intelligent citizenship expressing itself in its duly constituted legislative assemblies. This is the power that Lincoln appealed to, and which carried him triumphantly to office and righted many of the wrongs of his day. This is the power alone that will conserve our rights and privileges, and save the republic from becoming openly what it perhaps is now more or less in secret, an oligarchy with a seeming power of people's rule.

While the people have the franchise there is hope, and what happened in Lincoln's day, in spite of the most violent opposition of the interests then opposed, may happen today, when the people are fully wakened to the perils of their situation. The vote is a means of oppression in the hands of a sleeping electorate, but a mighty weapon for the pulling down of strongholds when the people awake in their majesty and strength, and demand their rights as men. The times are rotten ripe for the coming of another Lincoln to bear the people's banner to more glorious victories than those of earlier days. Great principles are at stake; great popular institutions are in jeopardy; the very fate of the republic, as a truly representative people's government, is in the balance. And the men of America, what are they going to do about it?

But Lincoln. He was in many respects the greatest man America ever produced, and was truly representative of the great common people, wise, large-hearted and good; sprung from the workers, a mighty worker himself, he served them loyally, even unto death; he served for the good he could do, not for graft or glory. Well it is that the nation should honor Lincoln; better it would be if the nation would follow in the way he pointed out, in the paths of honor, rectitude and love he trod. Not all who shout follow Lincoln, only those who love the principles he loved.

A BAD BLUNDER

The suggestion of the Argus Leader, made some time ago when the Associated Press sent out the news about the criminal action brot in the name of the government, against the publishers of the New York World and the Indianapolis News that President Roosevelt had made the mistake of his whole career, is now being accepted so generally that there is talk of an abandonment of the proceedings. If pushed to a conclusion, it is the opinion of Walter Wellman that Mr. Roosevelt will have made "the greatest mistake of his public career."

There are two reasons for protest against the action. The first is that the "government" cannot be libeled; the second is that it is wrong to drag an editor away from his home from criminal prosecution. This latter thing is done in South Dakota, but it is repugnant to the American sense of a fair deal and the two legisla-

tures have refused to right this wrong, the editors intend to keep up the fight until justice is done. Very few of the states deal so unfairly by the publishers, but South Dakota is one of them and there is no immediate prospect of a change. The next legislature, however, ought to be of the sort which will correct this wrong.

Fundamentally, however, President Roosevelt is wrong in his theory that the government can start a libel suit. If it can, the tendency would be toward a government censorship of the press. The government would have the power to ruin a publisher, or to fight him so long that he would not dare to express his honest views. President Roosevelt talks much about a fair deal, but he is far from fair. If the national government can sue for libel, then the state government can do the same, and in a factional fight similar to that which has been on in South Dakota, a man like Crawford could put a newspaper like the Argus

Leader out of business. It would mean that the whole people would be taxed to punish a newspaper which did not please the men in control of affairs. This is repugnant to American citizenship, full of danger to the welfare of the people, an evil precedent capable of great harm, and an interference with the right of free and untrammelled discussion.

If the New York World was guilty of libel, it must have libeled some individual, and if such individual was not disposed to begin a proceeding, then the action should never have been begun. If Charles P. Taft, or Mr. Robinson were libeled they have their remedy in law. Certainly it is not a government case. We very much fear that with all his brilliancy and capability the president has permitted himself to lose his temper, and to do a very foolish, not to say dangerous, thing. To abandon the proceeding now would look like a confession of judgment, but to go ahead with it would make a very dangerous precedent should the action be sustained by the supreme court. It is too much like lese majeste, which heretofore in this republic has been a joke. Argus Leader.

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