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WHY MR. GEORGE VOTED FOR BRYAN.

g Letter in New York Journal the Day
Preceding Presidential Election.

I shall vote to-morrow for William J. Bryan, with firmer confidence and a clearer conviction of duty than I have ever yet voted with for any presidential candidate since my first vote was cast for Abraham Lincoln.

I shall vote for him, rejoicing in the opportunity to do so; not because he is the democratic candidate, for I think of parties as but roads that the wise man follows only as they lead the way he would have the nation take.

I shall vote for him not simply because I believe he will be elected; for I am used to political defeat, and know that right is not always with majorities.

I shall vote for him not because I completely share his views on the currency question, for I do not. Nor yet that I perfectly agree with the rest of the platform on which he stands; for I find in it what seems to me mistakes both of omission and commission, and could not look for a platform that would suit me in everything unless I could write it myself.

Nor shall I vote for Bryan simply because his life and character and bearing show him fit to represent the American people; for I hold that, despite its abuse, there is wisdom in the motto of "principles, not men."

Nor shall I vote for Bryan simply because the golden age that to my faith waits only man's acquiescence in God's laws will come with

his election; nor yet from any fear that the temporary success of the elements banded behind his opponents must mean their ultimate triumph. It is not in one great battle that such great issues as, to my mind, are involved in this election, are finally lost and won.

I have never shaken hands with Mr. Bryan, nor spoken or written to him since his nomination, or rather since the day when even the hostile audience in the Chicago convention burst into surges of applause and the standards of the West and the South circled around the standard of Nebraska, while big, great-hearted Tom Johnson, his face brimming with delight, threw his arms around me, and with a gesture to the gallery exclaimed: "And there, too, is his little wife, seeing and hearing it all!" Yet I feel to him now that affection which he whose years have begun to fit him better for counsel than for action feels in the young man who steps to the front of the fight.

Bryan Carried Himself Well.

Yet I shall feel no sorrow for Bryan if my belief in his election be disappointed. He has carried himself well. That is all that lies in the power of man. For to us, born of woman, it is not given at the time to know more. It is the lesson of history, as it is the lesson of personal life, that what in the immediate event we most desire often proves evil, and what we most fear often proves good. All we as men can do is to act well our little part in the great drama in which we have our entrances and exits. As for the rest, as the stoic said: "That is the business of Jupiter; not mine."

And so, if I am mistaken about the result of tomorrow's election, I shall not despair politically. Four years ago to-day I was as con-

fidant of the election of Grover Cleveland as I am now of the election of William J. Bryan. Four years ago to-morrow my judgment was approved and my hope fulfilled. It was a deep and solemn joy to me as state after state swept into the growing column of votes for the man who, to my mind, represented, though timidly and falteringly, the saving principle of Jefferson against the destructive principle of Hamilton, I thought, not that the republic was saved, but that the tide that was steadily and rapidly undermining the principles that alone made it worthy of the name of a democratic republic had been turned.

Yet, when my hope was fully consummated, and I saw the man from whom I had expected so much ride along Pennsylvania avenue, the recipient of the highest honor ever yet accorded by the American people to a human being - that of second-time President in three successive elections, at that moment the most powerful of living men - I raised my hat with gloomy doubts. I have never set eyes on him since. I never care to. I prefer the picture in my memory to be of the day on which he had reached the climax of noble ambition. For, if the republic shall be saved, the philosophic historian, who, after our grandchildren have passed away, reviews our times, must write of him as more dangerous to the republic than any of his predecessors. The sequel has proved that it was the Whitneys and Huntingtons who had really cause for rejoicing in his election; not men like me. For no Harrison, no McKinley, no thief of trusts and rings, such as Rockefeller or Morgan; no king's jester of monopoly, such as Chauncey M. Depew or Bob Ingersoll, could, if elected as a republican, have used the place to so strike at the vitals of the republic.

Can the Republic be Saved.

If the republic shall be saved! This is the doubt that determines my vote to-morrow. This is the question that has weighed on me ever since I reached intellectual maturity, and began to strive to discover how all republics before our own had passed into monarchies and despotisms, and how, since freedom is the natural estate of men, the masses of mankind have everywhere been enslaved.

I love the American republic not for what it is but for what it was intended to be, and for what in fullest measure it yet may be made. For the sham republic that to-day exists I care nothing. What is such a republic worth to the ordinary citizen? Is there any great principle of individual liberty that is more fully and more quickly recognized in the United States than it is in Great Britain? Is there any duke or earl who exerts such power over the fortunes and the lives of his fellows as do our simple citizens, mere heads of trusts and rings and pools? Was ever a tyrant of ancient Greece more completely master of his city or colony than are some of our "bosses"? While we have been glorying in the mere forms of the republic and permitting the Hannas to wrap themselves in the American flag and suffering "patriotism" to be used as Dr. Johnson defined it in the first edition of his dictionary, "the last refuge of a scoundrel," all that is worth preserving in the republic has been passing away under our eyes, and the American republic is dying as the Roman republic died; but by steps as much quicker as the modern steamship and locomotive are quicker than the ancient galley and chariot. A republic where the social extremes are represented by multi-millionaires on the one side and tramps on the

other cannot remain a democratic republic. It must in the very nature of things pass the way that Rome passed when monstrous estates increased and the proletariat grew.

What is really in issue in the election that takes place tomorrow is the very life of the republic.

It may not be a final conflict, but it must be a conflict that will make the side that wins stronger and the side that loses weaker for conflicts yet to come. And it is drawing near to the close of the century when, as I have long thought, the great struggle must in fact, though not in form, be determined.

In form the struggle is on the currency question. A shield of gold is set against a shield of silver. But these are only symbols, and behind them are gathered the world-opposing forces of aristocratic special privileges and democratic freedom. I can have no question of how I ought to vote.

To Anti-Bryan Single Taxers.

But of those friends of mine, the few single taxers who, deluded, as I think, by the confusion, purpose to separate from the majority of us on the vote, I should like to ask that they consider how they expected to know the great struggle to which we have all looked forward as inevitable, when it should come? Hardly by the true issue appearing at first as the prominent issue. For all the great struggles of history have begun on subsidiary, and sometimes what seemed at the moment irrelevant, issues. Would they not expect to see all the forces of ill-gotten wealth, with the control of the majority of the press, on one side, and on the other a reliance upon the common people - the

working farmers and the artisan bread-winners? Is not that so to-day?

Would they not expect to see the reliance of the aristocratic party to be upon an assumed legality and a narrow interpretation of the command. "Thou shalt not steal," based not upon God's law, but upon man's law? Is not this true in this case?

Would they not expect to have every man who stood prominently for freedom denounced as an anarchist, a communist, a repudiator, a dishonest person, who wished to cut down just debts? Is not this so now? Would they not expect to hear predictions of the most dire calamity overwhelming the country if the power to rob the masses was lessened ever so little? Has it not been so in every struggle for greater freedom that they can remember or have ever read of?

Let me ask them before they vote to consider the matter coolly, and as if from a distance in time or space.

The Currency Issue.

What is really the issue even in the currency question? It is not whether gold or silver or both shall be the measure of value. It is whether the American people, acting by constitutional methods, can without moral turpitude change their unit from one metal to both. In all the sound money arguments there is the assumption that the single gold standard is the God given measure of value; that having been adopted, it is immoral to change it. Can any reflecting lover of liberty accept such a limitation of the right of the people to govern themselves. It is in essence the contention that has always been made and always will be made by the upholders of vested wrongs when confronted by a demand for equal rights. Granted that the adoption of free silver would cut down the present value of bonds and mortgages and railroad

franchises and large debts, shall private interests be permitted to block the way of what the people may deem for the general good? And even in our own time has not the common standard of value been greatly appreciated by the forced reduction of the greenback currency to a specie basis, and then by the surreptitious change from gold and silver to gold alone?

This was done without the majority of the members of Congress, the president himself, or the masses of our people whose intelligent consent is under our theory of government essential to the real validity of statutes, knowing anything at all about the matter. Thus, when from whatever cause the great change in the relative value of the precious metals did come, the right of the debtor to redeem his debt required a great increase in the amount of labor over that with which he could under the old law have redeemed it. Is it a part of the supreme moral law that all changes in the unit of value in one direction are permissible, but none in the other?

Gold and Silver Merely Banners.

Look at the matter coolly. Gold and silver are merely the banners under which the rival contestants in this election have ranged themselves. The banks are not really concerned about their legitimate business under any currency. They are struggling for the power of profiting by the issuance of paper money, a function properly and constitutionally belonging to the nation. The railroads are not really concerned about the 53 cent dollar, either for themselves or their employees. They are concerned about their power of running the government and making and administering the laws. The trusts and pools and rings are not

really concerned about any reduction in the wages of their workmen, but for their own power of robbing the people. The larger business interests have frightened each other, as children do when one says "Ghost!" Let them frighten no thinking man.

But beneath all lies the question, Shall the great charter of the Anglo-Saxon liberty, wrung from John at Runnemede, be abolished by us in government by injunction? And all the great questions that cluster around it? These questions really involve, not the establishment of a monarchy - kings never came again in Rome after the Tarquins were expelled - but the utter subversion under other forms of American constitutional liberty.

This is why I shall vote for Bryan and why I believe the majority of the American people will so vote.

Nov. 18, 1896.