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AND SHOES...

Our Spring Stock is here and we are opening up this week. Come and see all the pretty things we have. No trouble to show Goods

STEWART & VANT

Words! Words! Words!

The editor of THE LEADER is in receipt of the following personal letter, which explains itself. We give it space simply because the writer professes to believe we are bound by party ties and a bloody oath to suppress everything of this nature. Our one regret in the matter is that the article is so long. Little country newspapers can ill afford to devote so much space to the airing of views which are not endorsed by the editor:

Albany, Or., March 22, 1904.

Editor LEADER:

The Republican party is justly proud of its great achievements. The Democrats enjoy telling what they have done. The flag has well won the title of "Old Glory." The history of our country thrills each patriotic heart with rapture; but above all parties, of more importance than the flag, greater than the country are the People of the United States. I care not how loyal one may think himself, if his prime political thought is not to "promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves (the People) and our posterity," he is guilty of treason.

The business wisdom of all ages demonstrates the fact that the corporation is the scientific and most practical way of making the work of the masses of people effective. The philosophers of today are reducing this method of doing business to practice among the people of the United States. Wherever inaugurated its salutary effect and practicability is demonstrated. Examples of this are the public school system, fire departments, streets and highways, postoffices, municipal light and water plants, the army and navy and scores of other enterprises by the people as a body—a corporation. These all show the complete practicability of the corporation plan. I have been advocating this plan for some twelve years and in all that time I have not met one good man who understands joint stock organizations, or corporation, who opposes its adoption by the people. There are cold-blooded, mercenary, social parasites, who live by getting something for nothing, that oppose it; but they are traitors to the people—modern cannibals who live off others.

The doctrine that "financial or mental might makes right" has wrought immeasurable disaster and misery to the people, who ought to be happy, free and prosperous. You who waged valiant and victorious battle for the oppressed are urgently invited to cooperate in the ballot battle for the abolition of wage-slavery.

The necessity of patriots being serious and reflective is made more apparent every day. From the great Lincoln to President Roosevelt the presidents' messages have been warning the people of the dangers "from the vast accumulations of wealth in the hands of a few." I will mention one of the many terrible existing conditions now realized by many of us. Of the sixteen millions families of the United States, nine millions and more are

homeless. It is high time for us to study to ascertain and how maintain the right relationship to each other. You, notwithstanding you say in your paper of March 18, "We hope every Republican who believes himself a wracked and screwed slave will get out of the party," know that you are "wracked and screwed" by the white paper trust, the clothing trust, the coal oil trust, the food trust—in short, in everything you use from the nursing bottle to the coffin and monument, and you know I know you know it. The centralization of capitalistic power is a fearful menace to the industrial freedom of labor, of produce, of small business and of small property holders. This danger is growing fast. There is but one way to prevent wealth ruling the people, and that way is for the people to rule the wealth. The whole movement toward monopoly is becoming more rapid, comprehensive and powerful. The organization of the people into an industrial corporation is the only escape from capitalistic tyranny and social anarchy. This economic foe is far more to be feared than all the allied powers of Europe. Yet, blinded by party prejudices, ignorance of the real situation, by superstitions from the dark ages, we are too slow taking an unbiased, comprehensive and progressive view of these facts.

One condition prevailed in each of the great nations when they fell: A very small per cent of the people controlled the wealth of the nations. The United States is very near this condition. It will not do to trifle with the question. It is the most serious the nation has met. Every suggestion should be considered seriously. The present condition in our beloved land surely is not the best we can do. No better way of doing business collectively, maintaining justice, accomplishing beneficial results to the incorporated and furthering their individual interests in the company has been devised than the corporation. Study it. We have never before heard a cry so loud, so piercing, so near, so pathetic, so appealing, as the one ringing in our ears today from the coal mine, the factory, the sweatshop. A cry from the wage-slave fathers, wage-slave mothers, and little wage-slave children. Yes, and a cry from the brothels from girls forced there by poverty—a veritable wall from the tortured. Once the cry of the chattel slave was heard and chattel slavery was abolished, we trust, forever. In essence all slavery consists in the power of one man to exact the labor of another for a bare existence. The cry from the wage-slave must be heard, and woe to the traitor that rallies to the "stars and bars" of the capitalistic slave-master.

If you think the Republican party is all right or that we can not improve present conditions, let me kindly ask you again to look at the children emerging from the stifling, malodorous factories. They do not come out shouting, romping, playing and laughing like the happy school children, but they are quiet; there is a premature oldness in their demeanor, an air of hapless in-

difference: their forms are bent, distorted, shoulders rounded; their faces are slim, sad and pale; their clothing is untidy; in their eyes is an appeal—an appeal to each human heart for love, for home, for school, for play, for sunshine. That appeal will be granted. Their little hands are no longer plump, but sinewy, calloused, knotted. The darkness of ignorance hovers about them. No hope of happiness, no expectancy but slavery. Imagine your little loved one among them. Our Republican papers have long articles about mosquitoes and dogs, but not a word for child slaves.

I presume, your bread & butter being at stake, you would not dare publish this, so I will not ask you to. My wish is to make an abolitionist of you.

Your abolition friend,
W. R. BLAIN.

Friend Blain has evidently been listening to John Brown of Connecticut. He takes a great deal "for granted." If he is as well posted as a man in his position should be he knows that labor is better paid today than ever before; he also knows that America leads the world in this item. Being in the clothing business, he also knows that the laboring man may buy a good suit of clothes cheaper than ever before. (We are not prepared to say that this is true in Albany.) He draws a sad picture (from John Brown of Connecticut) of sweatshops and child slaves. If he will investigate and take notice—as those who have "been around" a little have done, he will learn that the unfortunate child in the factory has a drunken, worthless father, who fails to do his duty by his family; he will learn, also, that the cost of living in the great factory cities of the east is less than here in Oregon, and that an industrious man can support a family better on the same wages; he will learn that all the misery and want which he has so graphically portrayed may be traced directly to intemperance. This is the strong argument of our prohibition friends, and it has never been refuted. And that heart-breaking picture of the poor girls and the brothels (original by John Brown of Connecticut)! Here Mr. Blain shields man's duplicity and charges the poor girl's downfall to poverty. We believe Mr. Blain means well, but he is loaded to the muzzle with "hearsay," liberally mixed with sarcasm, which assumes a form in the closing paragraph which might offend a narrow-minded person—but not the editor of THE LEADER. We agree with Mr. Blain that the condition of the wage-earner may be improved—and the first step is to teach the wage-earner to treat himself like a white man. Who supports the innumerable saloons and gambling houses which flourish all over the land? The wage-earner. Why is it that such a large per cent of families do not own homes? Because a large per cent of the heads of these families spend all their surplus in drinking and gambling. It is not our purpose to give a temperance lecture, but to show that the questions raised by Mr. Blain have no relation to politics save from the standpoint of a Prohibitionist. Whatever may be said of the Prohibition party, it is at least founded on a condition and not on a theory. As a party it can never succeed, for the good and sufficient reason that a large majority of the poor, oppressed wage-earners do not wish to be deprived of even one of their blessed American rights and privileges. As long as they can get drunk and "blow" themselves and thus show their appreciation of "freedom under the flag," they don't care if they never own a home. The condition of the able-bodied American wage-earner is just about what he chooses to make it.

It is related that an Atehison man, when told that he must die, begged his wife to be brave. And she obeyed him, being so brave and cool that she was much put out about it, and died pouting.—Atehison Globe.

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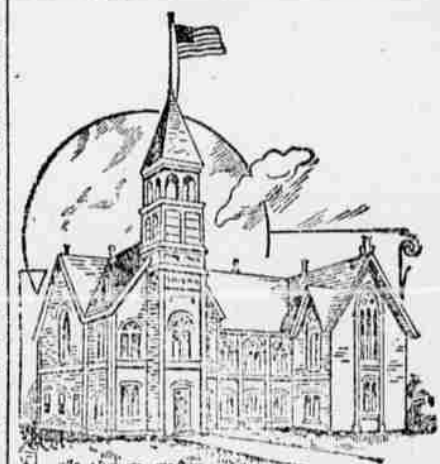
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J. L. HYDE, County Treasurer.

Dated at Toledo, Or., this 25th day of March, 1904.

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Silerz, Or.

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