

What Baseness Deserves.

Portland Oregonian.

William J. Bryan is the most unworthy aspirant and dangerous candidate for the presidency of the United States offered by one of the dominant parties within the memory of living man. We have had candidates with mistaken views; we have had men with dangerous policies; but we have never had a man whose perversion of truth was so shameless; whose stock in trade consisted of appeals to class prejudice; whose hopes of success lay wholly in ministering to the basest passions of human nature. It is past comprehension how any man who values truth before falsehood and sets law before anarchy can ally himself with this most conscienceless of demagogues and most pernicious of agitators.

We printed the other day a letter that showed irrefutably that Bryan had taken a message of Abraham Lincoln's, written to rebuke the ownership of capital in human labor, and so perverted it as to make it appear to be an indorsement of Bryan's senseless ravings against capital in its relations with free labor. It was an act palpably and unmitigatedly dishonest, that should find, as it has found, no defenders, and that should forever debar Bryan from the confidence and support of men of principle.

Why did Bryan urge ratification of the peace treaty? For the purpose of putting the Republicans in a hole. It is the act of a cheap politician; it is not the act of a statesman.

Bryan went about the country in 1896 predicting all manner of catastrophes if we kept the gold standard. If he knew better, he is a knave. If he didn't know better, he is a fool.

He talks silver at the West, anti-imperialism at the East, anti-trusts at the South. He is for anything that will get votes.

He wants us to return to the simple dignity of the Fathers, yet he scurries about the country to receive superfluous nominations and spouts his speeches into a phonograph.

He denounces autocratic rule, yet he is himself the most dictatorial of living politicians.

He holds up Washington and Lincoln as examples, and yet he has done nothing for four years but pursue with unblushing and unwearied ambition the Democratic nomination for President.

Now, a man may be a cheap politician and an arrant demagogue and still be sound at heart. But the baseness of Bryan's purpose is clearly apparent from the nature of his appeal.

If a man is contented, Bryan will do his best to make him discontented. If a man defies the law with riot, Bryan pats him on the back. If a man is poor, Bryan tells him the government is to blame; Bryan encourages him to call down imprecations on the rich.

Here is a man who goes about the country stirring up the poor against the successful; the idle against the busy; the laborer against the employer; the rioter against the courts; the propertyless against property; the disorderly against order; the lawless against law.

Every man that is enraged at the existing order; every man that is envious of his neighbor's progress; every man that blames society for his own incompetence; every man that feels

like taking the law into his own hands to redress his grievances against capital; every socialist, communist, anarchist and rioter; every enemy of progress and prosperity; every croaking raven of calamity; every apostle of discontent; every prophet of despair, recognizes a friend in Bryan, and recognizes truly, because his whole appeal, overt or covert, is addressed to these basest elements and most dangerous foes of our civilization.

Such a man is out of place in the United States. Such a man is at variance with American ideals of liberty and law, individual enterprise and responsibility. He is the enemy of the doctrine of fair play, which insures to each the fruits of his labor. He offers us despair for hope; discontent for determination; bitterness for ambition, despondency for courage. Such a man is dangerous, not only and not so grievously because he perverts history, palms off humbug as philosophy and menaces business and order, but because he seeks to poison at its very source the fountain of our national life. He seeks to substitute for a virile self-reliance, obedience to law and resolution to press forward, a spirit of anarchist rage and bitter complaint that belongs only in the decadent civilization of the Old World.

The difference between Bryan and all his predecessors is not one of degree, but of kind. We have never had a man before who sought to build himself up on the ruins of prosperity, and not only that, but on the wreck of individual courage and manly endeavor. The answer of our sterling young American manhood to this base appeal should be decisive and overwhelming.

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