

LETTERS.

From People's Party Men

On the Question of Union of the Reform Forces.

Thomas Buckman, People's Party member of the 19th general assembly, writes, Marshfield, April 16:

In THE JOURNAL of the 12th inst., in speaking of the political conditions of the present time you speak of a party, that must be "free from all impractical and visionary notions, founded on a few elementary propositions," etc., but have you ever tried to draft into proper shape those "few elementary propositions" so that they will be perfectly plain and practicable, and entirely free from what some will be ready to say "visionary notions." Those few practical principles, that everybody almost seems to know of, get so illusive that nobody has been able to catch them and clearly define them; is what is wanted more at the present time than anything else.

The Republican party when it was first formed had a few clearly defined propositions, and they were to prevent the further extension of slavery into the territories, and not to meddle with it when it already existed; it was successful on those propositions alone, when the issue of retaining the union intact was forced upon it and the visionary notions of the abolitionists furnished its final landing place.

There are thousands of persons who are quietly waiting for the masses to get settled on to those few elementary propositions and are ready to await the results and trust to the future as to the fate of their "visionary notions," after those few propositions are put to a test. It is one thing to know and speak of them and but it is quite another thing to clearly formulate them in such a shape that the great majority of the people will approve of them.

THOMAS BUCKMAN.

A NEW PARTY.

Ward Swope, assistant editor of "The Other Side," official People's party paper of Washington county, writes:

Accept thanks for copy of issue of March 25, as I was much interested in the different articles concerning the future action of the "opposition forces." It is certainly apparent to anyone that a union of all these forces is necessary to success; but how this union can best be accomplished is the puzzling question.

In considering this question, let us bear in mind that all parties are made up of two or more factions; and that these are held together by some dominant principle. If a union is formed, it is evident that the demand for financial reform must be the nucleus around which all these forces may gather.

But in my mind the restoration of silver is not enough; nor do I believe that more than one-fourth of the Populist voters will agree to a union on that phase alone of the money question. We demand that gold, silver and paper shall all be primary money; and that is the only kind of money we consider "sound money." I shall not take the space here, but, if agreeable to you, I shall in the future be pleased to give a few reasons for our objections to paper money made redeemable in either gold or silver, or in both.

Moreover these forces, no doubt, can all be united in opposition to the national banking system, to monopolies of all kinds, to of transportation, communication, etc. and in favoring an income tax, the referendum, a primary election law, a tariff based on the difference in the cost of production in our country and in foreign countries, and various other demands. Now I fall to see any necessity for the formation of a new party to advocate these demands since there is already a party, thoroughly organized, that has been advocating these reforms since 1890, and has in fact forced these issues before the people.

I am aware that many of our allies of the late campaign object to being called Populists and their reasons may be summed up under two heads, viz: (1) That Populists are extremists, and (2) That some other name is preferable because of the prejudice against the name Populist.

There never was really any grounds for the charge that Populists are extremists; true some editors and some speakers among them are extremists, and some of their expressions have been heralded over the country by the opposition press as expressing the views of the party; but no part of our platform can be termed extreme. There are radicals and conservatives in all parties, but these extremists will in future affiliate with Coxey's new party or with the Socialist Labor party.

It is true there is some prejudice against the name but it would be true of any name we might select. The name Democrat was given by the Federalists to Jefferson and his followers who had left the Federalists

as a term of contempt. The name Republican was a term of reproach in the early history of that party. If I believed success would come sooner, I would be willing to take the name Democrat or Republican or any other name for as Shakespeare says: "What's in a name: That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." However, much of this prejudice against the name was removed by the action of the Populists in the late campaign.

It is not to be expected that the Bimetallic Union will allow itself to be swallowed by the Populist party, or that it will unqualifiedly endorse all the Populist demands, but as has been suggested by C. H. Baker, let the Union maintain its organization, "net with the idea of running a full ticket in all elections, but merely to hold the forces together and throw them to whatever candidates of other reform party which is likely to grant our demands."

A state ticket, made up of such men as U'Ren, Barkley, Bilyeu and supported in this way would sweep the state.

WARD SWOPE.

A POPULIST'S VIEW.

Chas. P. Rutherford, Drewsey, Harmony county, writes April 6:

In my humble opinion the first duty of the reform parties in this state, is to unite on some plan, whereby Oregon can be redeemed in '98 by electing two congressmen and a legislature that are not tools of the gold standard party. Possibly the time has not come to organize a new party. But we should hold ourselves in readiness to adapt ourselves to the changes that time is sure to bring.

There must be a union of forces if we are to accomplish anything and those who oppose it are either in the pay of Mark Hanna or blinded by party prejudice. Standing in the middle of the road or squarely on the platform of our party, might be all right for a party in power, but a minority party will have to make some concessions, at least history does not show that any party has gained power without so doing. Politics is like farming.

Theory is well enough, but we must do some practical work. Will each of the reform parties place a full ticket in the field in 1898 and 1900 with certain defeat awaiting them? I do not believe they will, but if we listen to some of the cranks and would-be leaders, we will. The Peoples party has sown the seed of financial reform. Now a portion, and I hope a small one refuses to accept the help they must have to reap the harvest. And why? Because this help does not believe in all the reforms advocated by them.

The Peoples party took an advanced position on the money question from the first and have done as much or more than all others. They make it the most important issue before the people today. Their campaign of education compelled the Democratic party to adopt a platform and nominate a candidate that was decidedly Populist and disrupted the Republican party.

And now where thousand and millions of voters are ready to help them to victory there are would-be leaders with their dog in manger policy who would say then nay. Political issues are made by circumstances and conditions that we have failed to control and the actions of any political party will not change them. The Peoples party has advocated money, land and transportation with the result, that the money question has become paramount and the land and transportation plants, however much we may regret it, has become of secondary importance and the party that has the best chance to succeed, that adopts the money question as the issue, will receive the support of the rank and file of all other reform parties, whether the leaders so will it or not. Some say that the Peoples party would be robbed of the credit justly due them by a union with other parties. This I do not believe, but better than condemnation for indirectly helping to fasten the financial policy of England on the people of this country.

I firmly believe that the Peoples party is the best calculated to carry out financial reform, for the reason that they are the best educated on the subject and more fully committed to it than any other party, but we must have voters, and it must be remembered that vinegar never catches flies to any great extent, neither will calling all other reform parties hypocrites and other pet names gain votes.

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Yours very truly,
HOFER BROTHERS, Editors.
SALEM, Or., Feb. 25, 1897.
Editor Daily Journal:
DEAR SIR:—The weights of mails now received from the DAILY JOURNAL are fully 75 per cent more than a year ago at this time.
Respectfully,
B. F. BONHAM, P. M.
By J. A. Sellwood, Asst. P. M.
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