

Greensboro Daily News

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Failure of a Democratic Government

We have been accused of butting in; but we are going to present some facts and discuss some principles of government in connection with the way the Democrats are administering affairs in North Carolina. It is the reiterated boast of the Democratic leaders that their party favors local self-government. This they lay as a flattering unctious to the souls of the dear people, at elections times and, when their party representatives meet in general assembly, they legislate as if the people were apt to be governed instead of freemen to govern themselves. These Democratic snobs violate their election troth by snatching local laws not needed nor wanted, imposing tangled schemes of government upon many communities in utter disregard of local preference, and it is the party, say they, which deplores its pretension of opposition to state enmesh an exclusively aristocratic monopoly of respectability!

It is not in the cant of pharisaical pretense that the test of party respectability is to be found. Respectability, like charity, vaunteth not itself. It is not by the exaggerated claims of political orators that the measure of their party is to be taken. Actions speak louder than words. We have had some evidence recently on high Democratic authority that the party's devotion to local self-government is not manifested when the test is applied, and its much puff'd up respectability, when put on self trial, is neither an exclusive trust or a substantial monopoly.

It is hardly worth while to recall the evidence of how Wake county Democrats estimate each other; how their denunciation of each other has been applied thick and fast in the contest of factions; nor in peace and without molestation do they permit each other to assemble to resolve the extreme cussedness of one another. All this will be found in recent numbers of that democrat of democratic journals—the News and Observer; and, either way we look at the situation, accepting the views of either of the factions, we find an absence in the prospective of those evidences of a deep concern for local government, and any manifestations of high respectability that certain Democratic leaders would have us believe are the party's monopolized stock in trade. There are still other cases to be considered.

It was not in the long ago, but within the past twelvemonth or so, that Robeson county beheld Democrats arrayed and arraigned against Democrats because the Democratic legislature had passed a bill creating a board of audit composed of Democrats named in the bill as the members of the board which, in the discharge of its duties, proceeded to investigate the Democratic officials of that county. This board filed a written report accusing certain Democratic officials of the misapplication of county funds, arraigning the Democratic commissioners for selling goods to the county contrary to law, and sundry other accusations and criticisms of the administration of the Democratic county officials. These things if true—did not evidence that Robeson county was having at the hands of Democratic officials even a tolerably efficient or correct county government.

There followed, from a Democratic schoolhouse and ex sheriff of that county, also from the Democratic county commissioners, replies, explanations and defenses, accompanied by severe criticisms of the board of audit of the county, until page after page of printed evidence of each other's wrongs, malfeasance in office, neglect of duty, and general shortcomings, were circulated throughout that county. If all the crimination and recrimination of these Democratic officials of each other were true in part upon their own estimate of one of the other, the impartial judge would have concluded that not in Robeson county would be found a Democratic monopoly of respectability, or Democratic trust in official character and efficiency.

Let us consider now still another section and another case. Here recently Wilmington, dear old city by the sea, charming in hospitality, heir to an aristocratic respectability, buoyant in its commercial progress and long inured to the most inefficient demagogically imposed government, has taken its place in the book of revelations. Her Democratic citizens have revealed, and are revealing the impotency of Democratic officialism, the hydrheaded local government imposed on it by the state Democratic legislature, and an extent of lawlessness that renders the situation in that city one that does not prove the possession of all virtues, respectability and love of local self-government to be the monopolized attributes of the Democratic party, as certain of its exponents would have the dear people of the state to believe. And Wilmington seems to be moving in its cycle of revolution to open revolt. It seems that Wilmington is provided with enough officers to govern the whole state. It has ten aldermen, five members of the board of audit and finance, a mayor, chief of police, city treasurer and assistant city treasurer, clerk of

auds and finance, superintendent of streets, superintendent of waterworks, five members of police and fire commission, five members of water and sewerage commission, five members of street commission—or about 37 executive officers. Its employed policemen, firemen and streets hands number about forty. And to these officers has been added a recorder and his official clerk. It appears that the last legislature created the police and fire commission, giving it full power over these departments, and created a recorder's court, without consulting the wishes of the community. In fact, at the previous municipal election the proposition for a recorder's court had been voted down by the people. This court is given by the act concurrent original jurisdiction in all misdemeanors which the Superior court formerly exercised, and the power of the grand jury to investigate crime of a general nature in New Hanover county is given to the recorder exclusively.

A citizens' committee has revealed the fact that over 700 barrels of whiskey had been received in Wilmington since January 1, 1910, and, it is alleged, sold at "near beer" saloons. A large number of persons have federal license to sell liquors. And it is claimed that nothing has been done by the sheriff or the chief of police, or their subordinates, all of whom are Democrats, to suppress violations of the liquor laws. The citizens say they are impotent, incompetent and inefficient. One writer in the papers declares:

We have had more crime of a serious nature in this city in the past ten years than at any previous decade. Once before the writer directed attention to the statistics in a published article. Upwards of 50 homicides have occurred in this city, easily within 12 years, with few apprehensions of the criminals and few convictions. Statistics are at hand to verify this assertion. Whether are we drifting? If to lawlessness, then the progress of our city will be retarded, socially and economically. It is time to act. We have a right and the cause to demand of the police commission a competent police department.

The same writer has declared the chief of police (a Democrat) is unfit for office, and describes the sheriff of New Hanover (a Democrat) as "a mummified incarnation of official inertia," which leads one of our Charlotte contemporaries to remark that, "conservatively speaking, the language is vivid." Nor do we find in the Wilmington papers any defense or exoneration of the alleged conditions in that city.

Nor does the record of Democratic incompetency and failure, so far as Wilmington is concerned, end with the foregoing. In a published speech by J. O. Carr, a prominent attorney, and once a Democratic member of the legislature, who presided over the recent citizens mass meeting, he arraigned the recorder as not performing his duty.

Now, it appears that the last legislature named in the act creating the Recorder's courts for New Hanover county, one John J. Farlow, not a lawyer, nor an educated man of affairs, but a justice of the peace (making his living partly thereat) and chairman of the Democratic executive committee. He is ALSO the SCAVENGER OF THE CITY. He was also, until recently, a contractor with the city to remove the city trash. He was indicted by the grand jury, for a nuisance in depositing, at improper places, night soil, but the Superior court judge presiding informed the grand jury that he couldn't be presented by them, as the Recorder's court had original jurisdiction. Here recently, says the Dispatch, he has been actively around the polls at the Democratic primaries seeking the nomination to succeed himself; but if violations of the primary laws occur, his is the court of original jurisdiction to try the offense.

Mark you well, all this in the respectable Democratic party, in one of our greatest cities—Recorder—Scavenger—and ward politician—not a sweet smelling mixture, to be sure!

And this, too, is the man whom the Hon. W. W. Rittin, Democratic governor of North Carolina, appointed as a delegate to represent this state at the assembly of the members of the American Academy of Political and Social Science—a body of learned gentlemen in the United States, professors and scientists, which met in Philadelphia! And, gentle reader, can you contemplate it with serenity, he has been re-nominated by the tried and faithful Democracy of Wilmington as its candidate to succeed himself to the judicial position of Recorder by an overwhelming majority, over the Hon. A. M. Waddell, gentleman, scholar, lawyer, orator and patriot!

And yet, we are often advised that the Democratic party is the only party of respectability! At a citizens' mass meeting held recently some resolutions were adopted concerning the inefficiency of the Wilmington local government. These resolutions are interesting, particularly if read in connection with the foregoing. As printed in the Evening Dispatch of May 11, the resolutions are as follows: Resolved, 1. That we condemn the lax manner in which the law is being enforced in the County of New Hanover and in the City of Wilmington, and we call for the reorganization of law-abiding citizens to join us in our efforts to bring about better conditions in this respect,

and we demand that the next member of the legislature from New Hanover county restore to the grand jury of the Superior court jurisdiction to investigate, try and punish all crimes which the recorder shall not have assumed jurisdiction of within 30 days from their commission. 2. We disapprove and condemn the practice of city and county officials acting in the capacity of chairman of the executive committee of any political party as subversive and detrimental to the highest performance of his duty, and that this be remedied by legislative enactment, and we further demand, in the interest of good government and clean politics, that no man convicted of any crime shall be eligible to membership on the executive committee. 3. We are opposed to and condemn the practice of any county or city official receiving, directly or indirectly, any compensation, profit or reward by virtue of any contract or other obligation which is to be paid by the city or county, and that this be remedied by legislative enactment. 4. We demand more rigid economy in the administration of public affairs, to the end that the taxes paid by the people may return to them better conditions in the way of streets, roads, law enactment and other benefits which are furnished at public expense. 5. We demand that no law of any kind be introduced into the next legislature by the member from New Hanover in any way affecting public affairs in New Hanover county, without first publishing said proposed law in a newspaper in Wilmington for one time at least two weeks before same is introduced. 6. We pledge ourselves to support such candidates in the coming Democratic primary as stand for the above principles.

A LESSON FROM THE STARS. The widespread discussion of Halley's comet that is to be found on every hand in the newspapers and magazines and in the mouths of men when two or more gather together, has turned the thoughts of the public into broader orbits than those in which they have been accustomed to run. We are in the habit of regarding this earth of ours as representing the whole scheme of creation, with the particular portion which we inhabit and in which we move and breathe and work as the greatest and most important part of the world. We even regard ourselves, in an unconscious sort of way, as being the most important factors in the doings of the world, or, if we are unsuccessful and take a pessimistic view of things, we ponder of the fact, or rather the fancy, that we might have played an important role, important even when viewed in relation to all things and all time. But read what the astronomers have to say about the comet in particular and the vast universe of stars in general; consider the fact that this earth of ours is simply a planet in one of perhaps a million solar systems; then consider the millions upon millions of men who, through countless generations, have been born and lived their lives and then passed away even in this little world of ours—do this and then compute the fraction of the whole which is represented by even the most important man who is living today. Do this and with this in your mind go out alone into the stillness of the night, gaze long and earnestly at the heavens, at the countless stars, at the comet, which is whence we know not and going whither we know not; do this, and if you have a spark of imagination in your being you cannot but feel that this little life we live is not so important as in other moods it would seem to us.

But there is another side to the mental picture. Just as two stars may differ in size by millions of feet, but at the distance from which we see them appear of about equal dimensions; and so far as their size with relation to the universe are of about equal dimensions, so two lives, though at close range may appear to be the one important and the other unimportant, in the larger perspective even so nearly that the one can scarcely be told from the other. Take two men, the one occupying what we call an important position, a man of social influence, a man of commanding personality; the other a mediocre man, a man of smaller caliber, a man who is simply one of many more just like him; take these two and to you who live and work alongside of both the one seems incomparably bigger than the other. But view them both with reference to the relative importance to the world, not to say the universe, and if one is bigger than the other he is so little bigger that the difference is unnoticed and unnoticable. What the world would have lost and suffered by the loss of the one or by the loss of the other can be measured by the same rule.

From this it logically follows, if we still take the larger view of the matter, that it really makes little difference whether a man is what we call important or unimportant. His work, at best, is the work of a pigmy. If he stands above his fellows he has little reason to consider himself as made of different clay from them. If he does not rise to the heights attained by the man beside him, he can still think that after all he is filling the place made for him as well as the other man is filling his and that this entitles him to equal praise and equal reward.

Do not misunderstand us. We are not preaching a gospel of pessimism or hopelessness, we are not saying that it makes no difference whether a man works or loaf, strives or shirks, succeeds or fails. What we are saying is that the chief thing to be considered is for a man to do his work well and

held every other man his equal who strives to do the same, that we are all more or less of the same status and the same kind, that we are all fellow-workers in the same work and that the Master, whose servants we all hold ourselves to be, will take but little account of the differences we think we see so clearly, but will judge us, not by the insignia of rank we wear in the army of mankind, but by how well we have done the work He, in His omnipotent wisdom, has assigned us to do, whether it be the work of a general or of a private. And, after all, this is not only the truest, but it is at the same time the most cheering and uplifting view to take the matter, for it does much to strengthen the bonds that bind us all together and link us in a common destiny.

WILL JOSEPHUS SUPPORT THEM? Suppose the "Ring" in Wake county wins out in the primaries, what then? In red ink and black face type Josephus has denounced the "Ring"—denounced them for about everything he could well print in his paper; he has said they were unclean and unfit; that they had sold their birthright; that they had robbed and debauched the suffrage and corrupted the body politic. But Jodanis claims to be a Democrat (it was not ever thus, beloved), in fact, a Democrat of the Democratic—publisher of the "Democratic Bible"—now, if the "Ring" wins out, will Jodanis support the "Ring"?

Will this paragon of Democratic political excellence support men for public office who, AS HE SAYS, has debauched the people to such an extent that they have become a menace to popular government? Will the "me too" please copy? Your patron saint is in deep trouble and needs your kindly offices.

Rev. L. S. Massey, of Oxford, has been elected editor of the Raleigh Christian Advocate to succeed Rev. T. N. Ivry, who was elected by the general conference as editor of the Nashville Advocate. Mr. Massey is new to the tripod, but is a clear-headed man, well informed and thoroughly equipped in knowledge of his church affairs. We welcome him to the editorial brotherhood, and wish for him great success in conducting the affairs of the "Old Raleigh."

The prohibitionist should not get mad and throw a paper down every time it mentions local self-government—he is unfair and dishonest with himself when he does it. There are many questions besides liquor that come under that head, and there are many people who favor local self-government who vote against liquor at every opportunity.

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