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Friday, November 12, 1915.

Food For Thought.

In a thoughtful article entitled "The Natural History of a Reform Law" which appears in "The Catholic World" for November from the pen of William J. Kerby, Ph. D., we find this sentence:

"There is no time when all of the wisdom of conservatism is agreed on any measure of social policy, just as there is no time when all of the danger of radicalism is concentrated at any one point. Leaders clash with leaders. Factions dispute with factions. Judgment contends with judgment at every step. Yet out of the turmoil and worry of the conflict of these two fundamental tendencies in life, humanity is enabled to take certain thoughtful steps toward the ideals of social justice which it holds in reverent attachment. The world is moving. It is moving in the direction in which radicalism points. Radicalism triumphs, becomes conservatism, and the new conservatism resists the new radicalism as it appears."

Truth of this is found right in our generation. Look at William Jennings Bryan. Was ever a more fiery radical than he in 1896? Where is there a more ardent peace apostle today? Who was supposed to typify conservatism better than William Barnes Jr? Yet today he champions real direct primaries and the so-called short ballot, both of which are radical movements.

On the other hand, Elihu Root is turning out to be a champion of certain radical ideas and he was classed as a Tory of Tories. Then there is William Randolph Hearst. A few years ago he was a radical of radicals, but today his papers are rather more conservative in editorial tone than the New York Tribune, once sturdy defender of bitter partisanship.

It was ever so. Unless all the people lose their heads completely, there never is a complete unanimity of opinion regarding any new or novel proposition of government or economic policy and so discussion and analysis is had before the new idea crystallizes into reality or statute law and the net result is generally a saner and safer proposition than the original.

Reformers often rail at their opponents as afraid to trust the people. That is unfair. All the people are to be trusted to reach a sane collective decision but the trouble is that all the people are not interested in a given reform proposition while those who are interested are personally prejudiced in its favor and hence not qualified to pass judicial opinion. Had all the women of New York state really wanted the ballot, does anybody, for a minute, think woman suffrage would have been defeated on November 2nd? Conservatism and radicalism

are contending forces necessary in a community to preserve a true equilibrium of the body politic.

President Outspoken.

While he may badly advised regarding Mexico and the way to meet the situation there, no fair-minded citizen ever has thought that President Wilson either was bigoted himself or sympathized with bigots or bigotry.

This has been demonstrated more than once but it was demonstrated again last week in the course of the President's vigorous speech regarding national conditions.

Rightly, the Chief Executive scored those aliens who wish to avail themselves of the protection, laws and privileges of this country yet still regard themselves as citizens of another land and free to express their feelings even if by so doing they may make the United States seem to transgress the law of nations. He reminds these that while these are privileged to sympathize with their fatherland they are not privileged to wage a propaganda in this country which will violate our expressed neutrality in the European war now raging. This cannot be impressed too strongly upon the minds of not only aliens but also of "hyphenated citizens" so-called.

President Wilson declares with all the vigor he possesses that there is no place in this country for bigotry or discrimination against any citizen because of his race or creed. It is plain that the "Guardians of Liberty" are not in favor with the President of the United States. There are mayors, and Governors too, who could well take the President's advice to heart and govern their actions accordingly.

The Election.

Election is over. The people have registered their verdict as to municipal officers for two years to come and of legislative representatives for a year to come.

The people are entitled to have what they want when they want it. We are satisfied that they know their own minds. To the losers, ordinarily we extend sympathy. In 1915, in Rochester we scarcely feel that way. The losers really deserved to be beaten. Hoping to turn a minority into a majority party, they accepted, at least did not repudiate, endorsement by and alliance with the most repugnant element in Rochester's citizenship—the element which would proscribe men and women in social, fraternal, business and political life merely because of their religious belief.

It is plain now that Rochester's civic conscience was thoroughly aroused and that its decent citizens, irrespective of party, rose in their might and smote the bigots and their political partners hip and thigh.

Let us hope the slimy serpent of bigotry will not rear its nasty head in Rochester for years to come!

Herman Ridder.

It is unfortunate that Herman Ridder was taken away at this time. Men of his sterling worth and high character are a distinct addition to any country's citizenship.

Mr. Ridder was a shining example of the way energetic, persevering men of foreign extraction have risen to high place in the citizenship of the United States. Although he never held public office beyond honorary positions, yet as editor of the New York "Staats-Zeitung" he exerted a powerful influence far beyond the confines of New York state. While he was a staunch adherent of Germany in the European war, nevertheless he never fell short of being a loyal American citizen.

It may not be known to many of the present generation but Herman Ridder was the one man who took hold of the "Catholic News" when it was in sore financial straits following the death of John Gilmory Shea and built it up into one of the best paying weekly newspaper properties in the United States.

Mr. Ridder was a loyal, devout and exemplary Catholic. He never was afraid to avow his Faith; he was zealous in his attendance upon Mass and the Sacraments and he was the intimate friend of the prominent Catholic prelates of this and other countries.

Such men as Herman Ridder are needed in this country and death will leave a vacancy hard to fill. May God grant eternal repose to his soul!

"Political crook, moral and religious impostor and intellectual fraud" is the way Editor Charles H. Betts characterizes one of his critics!

Congratulations to the Hon. Eugene J. Dwyer on a deserved re-election!

Assemblymen Powers and Judson did not run behind their party ticket.

Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton bids fair to emulate the experience of the late Cornelius R. Parsons—fourteen years mayor of Rochester.



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