

**THE LABOR QUESTION, IN
ITS RELATION TO
POLITICAL PARTIES: AN
ADDRESS TO WORKINGMEN**

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The Labor Question, in Its Relation to Political Parties: An Address to Workingmen by Thos. M. Nichol

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THOS. M. NICHOL

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AN ADDRESS TO

Workingmen,

By THOS. M. NICHOL.

with compliments of
T. L. McGinnis

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE PARTY AND RECORD QUESTIONS.....	1
WHAT LABORING MEN WANT	7
PROOF THAT TIMES IMPROVE.....	10
THE MONEY QUESTION—SILVER.....	15
LABOR AND CAPITAL.....	19
THE TARIFF OR PROTECTION QUESTION.....	25
HORACE GREELEY'S ARGUMENTS, RECOLLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES	38
OUR FINANCIAL SYSTEM—NATIONAL BANKS	45
BONDS NOT TAXED.....	57
5-20 BONDS—WERE THEY EVER PAYABLE IN GREENBACKS.....	62
THE CORPORATION QUESTION.....	68
THE LAND GRANT QUESTION.....	70
SOME RAILROAD ADVANTAGES.....	73
WAGES AND RATES OF C., M. & ST. P. R. R. THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THOSE OF 1860.....	74
COST OF LIVING NOW AND IN 1860	76
HENRY GEORGE.....	77
DOES CAPITAL PAY LABOR.....	81
HORACE GREELEY VS. HENRY GEORGE.....	83
THE MISTAKE OF THE ANARCHISTS.....	84
THE MITCHELL AND SAWYER QUESTION.....	86
A LAW OF PROPERTY.....	88
VALUE OF A FRIEND	90
CONCLUSION.....	92

THE LABOR QUESTION.

AN ADDRESS TO WORKINGMEN.

The fact that the representatives of the People's party, commonly called the Labor party, seek joint discussion, taken in connection with the large attendance, good order and close attention at the discussions recently held, show conclusively that the men who have joined the new party sincerely believe they are right, and that their claims for their own party and their charges against the Republican party can be successfully maintained in full, free and candid discussion.

If they *are* right—if the Republican party is wrong, or if it cannot maintain itself, or is afraid of the argument, then it ought to be and must expect to be beaten. But let us all appeal to “the law and the testimony.”

There are two sides to all questions. The working men who have been listening to Mr. Schilling or others of like belief, have heard but one side. Will they not welcome a fair presentation of the

other, that they may judge impartially and intelligently between them? You have no interest in being deceived—you don't want to be deceived. But till you have heard both sides you are always liable to be deceived.

A LARGE QUESTION

The labor question, in all its phases and ramifications, is a very large one, requiring a great deal of careful study over a wide range of subjects. You have not all had time and opportunity to engage in this careful and extended study, but receive your ideas largely in the first place from others, who assume to have studied the questions, and whose representations you are persuaded to accept as true. It does not follow because men differ, that any of them are necessarily dishonest. Differences arise from many considerations—from hereditary or educational bias; from self-interest, and from imperfect and partial investigation.

LET US BE FAIR.

I mean to write plainly, keeping back no material fact, and indulging in no sophistry or demagoguery. I ask a candid reading of what I write. If I am correct in my beliefs, Mr. Schilling is wrong, and by accepting his views you only dam-

age and injure yourselves, and the future prospects of yourselves and your children, and the general prosperity of the whole country.

I admit that the subjects I shall discuss have a more direct reference to national than to local affairs. Whether this or that man is elected to a state or county office does not directly affect these questions; it shows, however, the direction of the public sympathy, and thus has a moral influence of great power.

But you have a member of congress to elect—his vote and his influence bear directly on these great subjects of national policies, of finance and trade, of foreign and inter-state commerce; and in all phases of these you are most vitally interested.

THE PLAIN QUESTION.

The plain question is to which party, and to which candidate in your own district, can you best afford to commit your interests in these questions.

I have insisted, in the discussions that many of you heard, that "there is no way of judging the future but by the past." That either the Republican or Democratic party will control our national legislation. That judging by the past there is

much good to expect from the Republican party, and no good from the Democratic party.

THE RECORD QUESTION.

Mr. Schilling objects to the "record argument." He says we can't depend on a party's past record. It's no guarantee for the future. Now, "It's a poor rule that won't work both ways," is an old proverb. If a good record is no guarantee for the future, a bad record is no objection to a party for the future, and no reason for rejecting it. Mr. Schilling is illogical to the point of absurdity when he rejects my proposition, "a good record is the only guarantee for the future" (in fact there can be no other), and then his whole argument *against* the Republican party is on the ground that its record is not good, and the Democrats he denounces because their record is worse. Mr. Schilling is not logical. His whole appeal is based on record, ruling out the good.

THE LIVING PRESENT.

But it is not wholly to an old and honorable record that the Republicans appeal, though we are very proud of the finished past. There is a living present and an immediate future that we are not
d of nor afraid of,

Allusions to saving the Union and wiping out slavery are ridiculed as "shaking the bloody shirt." Of course, Republicans are proud of these great successes, and of the blessings they have brought to mankind—blessings that do not end but are only fairly begun when union and liberty are universally acquiesced in. We live and will continue to live, and our children will live, down to the latest generations, in an atmosphere of blessings, resulting from "liberty and union," the work of the Republican party.

But if you choose to ignore this claim, there are others that you must see. The direct influence of our finance, tariff, and commercial laws are felt every day. It surrounds us as the air we breathe. We are hardly conscious of the existence of air or of the exercise of breathing, but we live by them all the time. Our whole industrial and commercial machinery, the regular operation of which is as the breathing of animal life, depends on these commercial and financial laws, even as animal life on the air it breathes. If these laws are kept pure and sound—composed of the right ingredients rightly compounded, as it were, then we will have vigor, life and health in the industries of the country: just as we have nerve, vigor, health and life in a pure atmosphere. But vitiate these laws