

**POLITICAL LEADERS
OF PROVINCIAL
PENNSYLVANIA**

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Political leaders of provincial Pennsylvania by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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PENNSYLVANIA**



POLITICAL LEADERS OF
PROVINCIAL PENNSYLVANIA

TO
L. C. S.

1845

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INTRODUCTION

A ROUGH classification might divide ethical standards into two groups. One is based on results, the other on principles. The first is the favorite method of the politician, the man on the street and on the farm. If a thing produces good, it is good in itself; if evil, evil. A method of action, a piece of legislation is to be justified or condemned by the consequences which follow it. In ordinary affairs not involving moral considerations this sort of judgment is universal. Business decisions are wise or unwise according as they prosper. Fiscal legislation is ordinarily decided, not by eternal principles of political science, but by results as shown by history and experience which followed similar legislation in the past and are likely to follow it in the future. Perhaps ninety-nine per cent. of the acts of legislatures are determined by such considerations.

Philosophers codify these methods and variously call themselves hedonists, utilitarians, pragmatists and so on, as they vary the theories to suit the conditions of the age or country.

If one could see *all* the results nothing could be better. But the wisest of philosophers can only see a little way ahead and the shrewdest of politicians and business men have a limited horizon. What is manifestly useful to a

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have been so pervaded with the idea that immoral acts cannot be made moral by the beneficent consequences which seem likely to result, that they become inefficient in the work of practical politics as it sometimes exists. When they swallow their scruples they cease to be in harmony with the Friends' position and lose their standing in the church. Hence we have frequently found that those members who have become active in political life have been on the fringe of the Meeting rather than, as they were in early Pennsylvania, the trusted ministers and officials, whose state duties bore on their consciences no less rigorously than their ecclesiastical duties, but who would sacrifice either rather than violate an apprehended moral obligation.

Good seems to come from the chicanery of politics no less certainly than from war. Out of the selfishness, the venality, the immoral strategy of the presidential conventions has come the greatest line of rulers any country has ever seen in any age. From the days when Hamilton traded off with Jefferson the location of the capital city for the funding of the state bonds, in the first Congress down to the days of the last Congress, many measures yielding valuable results have come as the results of bargains not always honorable or moral. Every legislator knows that in order to have a good measure passed it often seems necessary to support others who want bad measures passed, and the perfectly independent man who yields nothing in this way is hardly efficacious in the councils or acceptable to his constituents. To do evil that selfish projects may succeed and to do evil that good may come are the lines that have too frequently distinguished the evil from the good legislator.

The principles which have been the keynote of Quaker morality and those which define the average morality of the politician even of the better sort are widely apart. The