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EDITORIAL

THE GUARANTEE.

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THE pickle that the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic, party is in with its Mayor Born of Sheboygan, Wis., is one of those events that some people call “providential,” others “the logic of things,” but the providentialness or logic of which would be wasted if its actual providential or logic features are lost sight of.

Mayor Born was elected upon the Social Democratic ticket. No sooner elected than he went back upon his party. The reason he gives for his conduct is that he was elected “by the people.” Of course, all successful candidates are; there is no organization of any party that comprises a majority of the voters. In view thereof, disloyalty to the principles that set up a candidate would be raised by Mr. Born’s “justification” to a civic virtue. The “justification” is transparent. The Born act is a scamp’s act; civic virtue is not scamp’s turpitude. But in the very excessiveness of the Born turpitude lies the danger of its being wasted on experience. People are but too apt to look at the surface of an evil and give no thought to its source. The source lay with Mr. Born’s party.

About six years ago James F. Carey voted for an armory building in the industrial city of Haverhill. The day will surely come when all the brass of Mr. Carey’s brow will have been pounded to pieces by the S.L.P., and his “justifications” for voting the \$15,000 appropriation for an armory will give no more protection, even to his shameless face. When that day shall have come, Mr. Carey will openly admit that he did wrong on that armory matter. The danger must be averted to the movement of allowing the real crime of Mr. Carey from being overlooked. It is in this respect that the Born affair is of service.

Mr. Carey was elected Councilman of Haverhill in 1897 on the ticket of the Socialist Labor Party. No sooner elected than he pulled out of the party, and then,

just like Born now, when called to account, he simply said “the people, not the S.L.P., elected me.” The subsequent betrayal of the working class by the armory vote was but the sequel, not the essence of Mr. Carey’s turpitudous act. It was but a natural flower on the stalk of his betrayal of the party that he had cheated into setting him up.

The question frequently is asked, what guarantee is there that the successful candidates of a party of Socialism will not sell out—pull out as soon as elected. One of the answers is furnished by the experience now being made by the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party, with its Mayor Born, plus the Carey affair.

It is unquestionable that the bribing power of capitalism is stupendous. Equally unquestionable is the fact that the financial resources of Socialism are so trifling that all idea of parrying the capitalist bribing power with a financial shield must be dropped. What, then, remains? Nothing but this—so scrupulous a regard for decency and good faith on the part of any party that flies the Socialist colors, that only would a slip by such a party be an immediate condemnation of its own trustworthiness, but that the cheats would find the Socialist movement too hot to breathe in. The party of Mr. Born failed in this. It knew the smut that clung on Carey—the real and fundamental smut of his betrayal of S.L.P. confidence—but it took for good policy, both as a weapon against the S.L.P. and an increase of its own forces, to receive the reprobate with open arms to do him honor;—nor is Mr. Carey the only one. It thereby branded, and continues to brand, itself unworthy, and deals itself the death blow that will tear it to pieces—and thereby furnish the answer to help supplementarily to teach the lesson of how to prevent acts of treason in the Socialist movement.

The Born episode teaches that, in self-protection, a party that sincerely flies the Socialist colors can not be too intolerant of breaches of trust; it teaches that only the relentless condemnation of breach of trust in the Socialist movement can keep the scoundrels out; it thus answers, at least partly, yet quite extensively, the question, what guarantee is there against being sold out by successful Socialist candidates.

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