

1889-11-04 NYT Urging Ballot Reform

DR. M'GLYNN'S ADVICE TO THE ANTI-POVERTY SOCIETY

A larger audience than usual was present last night at the weekly meeting of the Anti-Poverty Society at Cooper Union. Dr. McGlynn had been announced to speak upon election issues, and although he delayed referring to any such issues until pretty late in the evening, he expressed himself in no uncertain tones.

"The most important issue before the people," said Dr. McGlynn, "is that of ballot reform. [Loud applause.] And I think I may say that that issue is one of our pets. Those who are in sympathy with the movement of the Anti-Poverty Society can boast that they themselves were the first to demand this most important of all reforms, because it is part of the machinery by which other reforms may be obtained. The ballots should be printed by the Government, at Government expense, and absolute secrecy in voting should be compulsory."

After a careful explanation of the advantages of the Australian system and a summary of the political corruption which it would prevent, Dr. McGlynn went on to relate how wonderfully the condition of Ireland and Great Britain had been improved by the adoption of the Australian method.

"And yet," said the doctor, "I greatly fear that on next Tuesday 60,000 men of Irish blood and some of them Irish born will be doing their best to defeat this ballot reform. They will accept instead the instruction of their leaders that such a measure or system would do away with the poor man's right. My friends, the only right it would deprive him of would be the right to sell his vote for a few drinks of whisky. Now, we must save these men from themselves. We must prevent them from committing this crime of political suicide."

Dr. McGlynn was constantly interrupted by applause. The excitement reached its height when he at last uttered the following sentence: "There is no use in mincing matters. The Republican Party [loud cheers] is the party pledged to this great reform. The County Democracy is, too, I am glad to say, in favor of it. But the present Governor of this State, [hisses,] his friends, and the ruling Democratic faction in this city are the declared enemies of any bill for true ballot reform. The Republican

Legislature has passed, two years in succession, a bill for the establishment of the Australian system.”

Here an auditor of Tammany sympathies hissed loudly and immediately became an object of much dislike to the rest of the audience. Every eye was turned upon the Tammanyite and, rushed and disgusted, he got up to go. He was followed up the aisle by a volley of hisses and a few parting jeers. Then attention was once more paid to the speaker, who went on to extol the Republicans in the matter of ballot reform and to urge his hearers to vote for the nominees of that party or combination which had declared itself in favor of free ballot reform.

High license was also mentioned as another important issue, and on this he advised his followers to vote in the same way, declaring Gov. Hill and his supporters to be the friends of the liquor trade. The meeting was practically unanimous in its support of Dr. McGlynn on both of those important issues, and the influence of the Anti-Poverty Society is to be thrown in tomorrow’s election for ballot reform and high license.

Mr. James Redpath, Vice President of the Anti-Poverty Society, was enthusiastically greeted by his fellow members for the first time since his return from Europe.