

fairly measured by price lists of the past. Yet statisticians like Wright proceed upon the assumption that the common wants of 1870 are the same as those of 1898, and therefore that lower prices with higher wages imply an improved condition of the working classes. Why, Mr. Wright, the working classes are men and women, not cats!

We must go still further beneath Mr. Wright's statistics of rising wages before dropping them. Even in themselves they are as worthless as the weather predictions of an old-fashioned almanac. Though they purport to have been taken from the pay rolls of business firms, the firms are not named. Consequently, the figures can neither be verified nor any inferences as to their value be drawn from the character of the firms that furnish them. Moreover, in 1870, trade unions in the occupations named were weaker than now, so that, for all that appears, the wages of 1870 may have been "scab" wages, while those of 1898 were "union" wages. Another consideration is the fact that the wages given in the data are "day" wages, and "day" wages might increase without increasing the annual income of the workers. Steadiness of employment is a vital factor in the problem, but Mr. Wright furnishes his readers with no means of giving due weight to that factor.

Finally the averages in Mr. Wright's latest statistical production are so obtained as to make valid conclusions from the published data utterly impossible. Instead of dividing the aggregate of wages by the aggregate of employes, in order to ascertain the average wages, or adopting some equivalent of that method, he ascertains the average in each city and then divides the sum of all the averages by the aggregate number of cities! The average wages of blacksmiths, for example, as he ascertains them, vary in 1870 from \$1.86 in Philadelphia to \$3.80 $\frac{1}{2}$  in San Francisco, the aggregate of all the aver-

ages being \$29.14 $\frac{1}{2}$ . This sum Mr. Wright divides by 12, the total number of cities, and gives \$2.43 as the average wages in 1870 of blacksmiths in those cities. Every schoolboy knows that an average so ascertained can be right only by accident.

Suppose a schoolboy were given the following problem: John owns 1 cow worth \$15, 10 cows worth \$10 each and 1 cow worth \$20; James owns 1 cow worth \$500, 1 cow worth \$12 and 1 cow worth \$16; what is the average value of the cows that John and James own? The school boy would find that John's cows were worth \$135, and that James's were worth \$528. Then adding these two sums together, he would say that the aggregate value of all the cows was \$663, and dividing by 15, the total number of cows, that the average value was \$44.20. But not so Mr. Wright, the eminent commissioner of labor of the United States. Mr. Wright would find that John's cows were worth \$135, which sum he would divide by 12, their number, and say that the average value of John's cows was \$11.25. Then he would find that James's cows were worth \$663, which sum he would divide by 3, their number, and say that the average value of James's cows was \$221. Finally he would add the average value of John's cows to the average value of James's, making a—may be he would call it "a total average"—of \$232.25, which he would divide by 2, the number of averages in the "total average," and produce the astonishing sum of \$116.12 $\frac{1}{2}$  as the average value of those 15 cows!

This example is very ridiculous, but it illustrates the way in which Mr. Wright, in his latest statistical exploit, has arrived at the average wages in 25 occupations in 12 cities of the Union. Whether he has followed the same method in arriving at the average wages in each city, his report does not divulge; but it is by no means unlikely. These plutocratic statisticians have so completely mud-

dled their minds with metaphysical delusions in "economics," that they appear to have lost their faculty of dealing with elementary problems even in simple arithmetic.

### THIRD PARTY POLITICS.

When men are stirred by new political ideas of the radical sort, temptations are strong to set about organizing new political parties for the purpose of carrying the new ideas into practical politics and establishing them in legislation. It is assumed that such a party may be built up from the day of small things, until pushing aside the older parties one after the other, it forges ahead, and gaining control of the government, embodies in the law of the land the ideas in behalf of which it was formed.

But there is reason to believe that this assumption is poorly grounded. A third party that does not come to maturity at a bound, is never likely to come to maturity at all. It may do valuable educational work, and be the forerunner of some triumphant party of the future; but it can hardly hope to accomplish political results itself.

This view of the third party question finds ample confirmation in the history of American politics, a field that has been the happy hunting ground of third parties ever since the middle twenties, when there was but one political party in the country.

Most of these third parties, it is true, were merely factions of old parties; but the Liberty party of the forties was a veritable third party. So was the Free soil party, which swallowed up the Liberty party. So too was the present Republican party, which followed the free soilers.

It is often argued by third party advocates that the present Republican party is the Liberty party and the Free soil party under another name, and is therefore a standing confutation of the theory that third parties cannot gradually grow. That, however, is a mistake. While the Republican party doubtless owes its existence to the anti-slavery agitation to which the Liberty party and the Free soil party contributed, it is neither of these parties in any political sense, nor is it their political heir. It is a different

party, as a brief historical summary will show.

The Liberty party ran Gen. Birney for the presidency in 1840, polling 7,609 votes. Four years later it nominated John P. Hale, but withdrew him upon the calling of the Free soil convention, and participated in that, thus putting an end to its own party organization. The Free soil party was not a continuation of the Liberty party. It was formed by the Martin Van Buren faction of the Democratic party. This faction having failed to secure full representation in the Democratic national convention, from New York, called a convention of the opponents of slave extension—not of slavery, but of the extension of slavery into the territories—and for the purpose of joining that movement, the abolitionists disbanded the Liberty party. It had lasted four years and contested one election, and as a party that was the end of it.

The Free soil party lasted but little longer. Its candidate for president in 1848 was Martin Van Buren, who polled 291,263 votes. In 1852, with John P. Hale for its candidate, the party polled only 156,149. It was not heard of in politics again.

Immediately afterward, the Republican party was formed without the slightest reference or political relationship, as a party, to the Free soil party.

Like the others, the Republican party was indeed a third party; but it differed from all previous and subsequent third parties in the particular, the vital particular, that it sprang instantly into the position of a second party.

The Republican party was formed locally in the early fifties—about 1854. It held its first national convention in 1856, in which year it polled for Fremont 1,341,264—scarcely half a million less than the Democrats polled for Buchanan—and left the Whigs in the rear. Ever since then the Republican party has held its place, either as first or second among American parties.

The third parties of note subsequently organized, apart from the liberal republicans and the straight democrats of 1872, which were only fac-

tions, have been: the Greenback, the Prohibition, the Union-Labor, the Populist, and the Socialist-Labor parties. Two of these have gone the way of the Liberty and the Free soil parties, leaving, as they did, an influence which has found expression in other organizations, but also like them ceasing to be, as parties. The others are still in politics, and are doubtless doing educational work, but as political parties they make no progress.

The Greenback vote in 1876 was 81,740 for Peter Cooper. In 1880 it rose for Jas. B. Weaver to 307,206. But in 1884 it fell again for Benj. F. Butler to 133,825, and with that election the party died. In 1888 the Union-labor party, at its first and last presidential election, gave Streeter 148,105. Then the Populist party came. The Populist party is thought to be a continuation of the Greenback party, but in reality it is not. Greenbackers helped organize it, but they organized it as an entirely new party. That, however, is of little importance, for the populists polled only 1,041,028 for Weaver in 1892, a lower percentage of the total vote than was cast in 1848 by the freesoilers for Van Buren; and in 1896 they were swallowed up by the new democracy as completely as the Liberty party had been by the free soilers.

In the experience of the Socialist-labor party there is an indication of steady growth, but it is too slight for any valid inference. This party made its first presidential record in 1892, when it polled 21,164 votes, and in 1896 its vote rose to 36,274. That was an increase not only in the vote but also in percentage. But any favorable inference that might be drawn from the limited experience of the Socialists, is discredited by the Prohibition party, which has passed through the largest experience of all in an effort to gradually build up a third party in American politics. The Prohibition party began its career in 1876, when it polled 9,522. In 1880 it polled 10,305; in 1884, 151,809; in 1888, 249,907; and in 1892, 264,133. Here is a record of steady increase in the vote, though the percentage to the total vote fluctuates, being 0.113 in 1876, 0.111 in 1880, 1.511 in 1884, 2.196 in 1888, and 2.19 in 1892. With the strong and widespread pro-

hibition sentiment that prevails among the churches the Prohibition party ought by this time to have become an important party, if the principle of gradual growth is applicable to the establishment of political parties. But in 1892 the party had made only a slight advance either in vote or percentage, after five presidential elections, as the foregoing figures show; and in 1896, it fell in popular vote from 264,133 to 145,976, and in percentage from 2.19 to 1.048. Though it still has formal existence, its futile political career is evidently drawing to a close.

So far, then, as the political history of this country throws light upon the question, it is evident that third parties cannot be coddled into power. The only successful third party is the Republican, and that came to the front with a leap.

But the experience of other countries is pointed to as evidence of the possibility of slowly and laboriously, with devotion and sacrifice, building up a political party. This experience, however, will not bear examination.

The most impressive European instance is that of the Social democratic party of Germany, which, from a minor party has risen to command a larger popular vote than any other party in the empire. But in connection with the growth of this party there are several overlooked considerations. In the first place, even if it had been a party of slow growth, that would have proved nothing for this country, so different are the political conditions and so differently do the aggregate German and the aggregate American minds act. But it has not been a party of slow growth. It sprang well to the front at its first parliamentary election, 1877, with nearly half a million votes. Then again, the socialist part of Germany was proscribed by law for 12 years, a fact which drew toward it naturally a large body of voters who had little or no interest in the party program but were bitterly opposed to political proscription. For this and other reasons the party long since ceased to be a third party with a socialist program, and became distinctively the party of opposition—what in our country

would be called the second as distinguished from a third party.

In his article on "Political Germany," in the Review of Reviews for April last, Dr. Barth, the liberal parliamentary leader, said: "The greater number of voters for the social democratic candidates, do not trouble themselves about the socialistic program, but they wish to express their feeling of political discontent with things as they exist, by voting for the most violent opposition." This opinion of Dr. Barth's has recently been confirmed by the socialists themselves. At the socialist convention held last month at Stuttgart, the opportunists exhibited such overwhelming strength that the old leaders, Liebnicht and Bebel, expressed their fears that socialism in Germany would get away from its original revolutionary plan. It has in fact long since done so. This convention only made it evident that the masses of the Socialist party in Germany have themselves come to realize what has for years been apparent to observers, that the party, instead of being a slowly developed third party with an affirmative program, is the popular party in opposition. Like the Republican party of the United States, it leaped almost at a bound into the place of an influential factor in practical politics.

Not only does experience testify against the possibility of slowly building up a third party and finally raising it to power in politics, but all the probabilities are against such a thing. Any third party must, in the nature of things, soon become the second or first party, or drop out of politics. There can never be for long more than two great parties. The simple reason is that broadly speaking there are two and only two kinds of political thought. Every live man is instinctively in his political thought either aristocratic or democratic. Hence political activity naturally generates two parties, the tendency of one being away from popular government and that of the other toward popular government. "Hamiltonism" and "Jeffersonism" are terms that describe a conflict which is inseparable from political growth. Consequently a third party, to live, must speedily be-

come the exponent of one of these two political tendencies. That is, it must speedily pass from the position of a third party to that of the first or the second party.

Yet it is clear that the two leading parties of a country often fail to represent between them the two great conflicting tendencies in political sentiment. They fall under the control of machines and bosses who use them as instruments for selfish ends. And how shall this evil be remedied, if third parties are to be condemned? We have not said, let it be noted, that third parties are to be condemned. What we insist upon is not that they cannot be successful but that they cannot be slowly coaxed up to success. When that one of the two leading parties which stands for democracy, becomes a mere echo of the other party, when its vitality is gone and it is indeed but the tool or plaything of bosses and rings, then there may be an opportunity for a third party. And in those circumstances, if the third party strikes the right breezes in public sentiment it will sail into power.

That was the case in 1856. The Whig party had fallen as completely under the dominion of the slave power as had the so-called Democratic party. It was a dead party. The democratic sentiment of the time had no exponent in politics. Then the Republican party rose up. It embodied the leading principle of the declaration of independence in its platform—the equality of men—and resting upon that principle denied the constitutional power of congress to give legal existence to slavery in any territory. That struck the keynote, and at the very first election which this new third party contested, the moribund Whig party fell to the rear. The new third party became the second, and the old devitalized second became the third.

We have now reached another period when the devitalized condition of the party upon which democratic sentiment depends may have opened the way for a third party. The Republican party has so completely changed that, no longer the exponent of democracy, it has become to plu-

cracy what in 1856 the then Democratic party had become to the slave power. It now represents opposition to popular government and equality. And the democratic side, now as then, is represented unsatisfactorily.

Here may possibly be an opportunity for a third party to spring into the place of the Democratic party as did the republicans into that of the whigs in 1856. Such an opportunity there doubtless would have been two years ago had the plutocratic leaders not lost their grip. Such an opportunity there doubtless will be two years hence if they recover their grip. But should the Democratic party turn upon plutocracy in 1900, as it did in 1896, the lesson of history is that there will be no opportunity for a successful third party.

In that event, and even in expectation of that event, the effective thing to do is not to waste effort in third party politics, but to take a hint from the radicals of England, and organize a party within the Democratic party, to keep the face of the latter turned constantly toward the shining sun of democracy.

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## NEWS

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The turmoil in France has subsided. At our last report it had reached a state which had forced the radical cabinet of M. Brisson to resign. This crisis was precipitated by the resignation of the minister of war, and the refusal of the president to make a new appointment at once, which gave the opposition an advantage that expressed itself promptly in a vote of want of confidence. The cabinet resigned on the 25th, and on the 27th the president asked M. Charles Dupuy to form a new cabinet. M. Dupuy was premier in 1894, when Dreyfus was degraded and transported, and President Faure was then associated with him in the cabinet as minister of marine. The selection of Dupuy, therefore, created a popular impression that it had been made in hostility to Dreyfus. M. Dupuy acceded to the president's request, and on the 31st succeeded in forming the following cabinet: M. Leuret, Minister of Justice; M. Dupuy, Premier and Minister of the Interior; M. de Freycinet, Minister of War; M. Lockroy, Minister of Marine; M. Delcasse, Minister of Foreign Affairs; M. Peytral, Minister of Finance;