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EDITORIAL

THE OLSSON VOTE.

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THE decision of the Federal Department of Justice in reversing the action of the now fugitive from justice, Judge Hanford, who cancelled the citizen papers of Leonard Olsson on the ground of his being a Socialist, will have for its effect the casting of a vote next November that will be heard around the world.

The vote for Taft will be nothing astonishing. In so far as it will be cast by the Plutocracy; that vote will be of the regulation sort. It stands for "Grab and keep and look pious." In so far as it will be cast by working people it will be the same old sad sight of blind proletarians holding the train of the robe of their masters.

The vote for Roosevelt, tho' somewhat novel in America, is not unknown in history. In so far as it will be cast by Plutocrats it has been seen before—the recognition, on their part, of the impossibility of the forms of democracy where wealth has concentrated cumulatively; the recognition, on the part of Congested Wealth, of the uses of the Big Stick. In so far as that vote will be cast by non-Plutocrats, it also has been seen before—the enthusiasm of the Slums of high and low degree bestowed upon the Mailed Fist which will smite, and "do things," and knock discredited Law into a cocked hat.

The vote for Wilson will be purely idealistic, that is to say, star-gazy and hazy. It has often been seen in history. It has been growing in the land. In so far as it will be cast by Plutocrats and proletarians alike, it will be a display of the blind confidence with which shipwrecked mariners sometimes cling to a sinking ship.

The vote for Debs will be an exhibition of the psychologic phenomenon described by the German saw concerning "people who hear a bell ring, but know not where it hangs." The vibrations of the bell of Socialism have reached the eardrum of the Socialist party crowd, but they know not where the bell hangs As a consequence, anxious to come under the bell, they stray in all directions of the compass—some towards Anarchy; some towards the Rooseveltian despotism of State Socialism, so-

called; some towards the romanticism of “Christian Socialism,” whatever that may mean; some towards the trap of Politicianism; and so forth, scattering far and wide, hither and thither.

’Tis otherwise with the vote Reimer will poll. The Socialist Labor Party poll is a poll of converging forces. Not one of these forces but is tributary to the main force that acts as a battering ram against the citadel, as it is also the symbol, of social despotism—the Political State. The S.L.P. poll is a denial of Disorder and an emphaser of Order; it is a solid pronouncement against shams; it is a clear utterance of the scientific foundations without which no party of revolution can hope to endure; it is a bold, not a wild, asserter of Principle; it has all the bravery that comes from soundness; it is the legitimate child of the American Revolution that struck off the feudal shackles from the Colonies; it neither mystifies nor allows itself to be mystified; it is the Buzz-Saw of the coming Revolution in the land against which no conspiracy, be the same high or low, can prevail, and the edge of which no opposition can turn. Typical, this year, of that poll will be the vote cast by Leonard Olsson.

Summoned before a Federal Magistrate to state his views, the brave, because well poised, Socialist Labor Party man did not quail, hedge, dodge, or palter in a double sense. Leonard Olsson plumply announced that he had “no superstitious reverence for the Constitution”; he calmly declared his purpose to be the overthrow of the Political State and the establishment of the Industrial Republic; without fawning he proclaimed his weapon was the ballot, and without cringing he repudiated violence as Anarchic. The Federal Magistrate, the then Judge Hanford, acting in the blindness that precedes a fall, and knowing not that he had “caught a Tartar,” revoked Olsson’s citizen papers. The temper of the Buzz-Saw was tested. Hanford now lies prone, self deposed, his weapon broken, and Olsson resumes his citizenship as a matter of right.

As Leonard Olsson before Hanford symbolized the Socialist Labor Party in its struggle against the Capitalist Class; as Leonard Olsson’s triumph foreshadows the triumph of the Socialist Labor Party; so will Leonard Olsson’s vote next November typify the vote of the S.L.P. and be heard around the world.

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