

THE other day I happened to have a few spare moments, and I read the speech which Mr. Hewitt made at the meeting of the United Democrats. I could not read it before, for until the other day I had been occupied in reading the printed and lengthy letters which have been passing between him and Mr. George, and was struck by his statement, made with that modesty and diffidence for which he is noted, that every honest and respectable voter in the city of New York would vote for him. Now, if I am to judge by the faces of those who make up this meeting to-night, Mr. Abram Hewitt will find on the 3d of next November that the criminals of this city have polled an extraordinarily large, and, what is more, a winning vote.

Gentlemen, I come before you on two distinct issues. I take direct issue with each of my competitors—one with one of them and one with the other. We hold in this campaign that we are not only the representatives of law and order, but we are also the representatives of radical municipal reform. At the same meeting to which I have already alluded Mayor Grace said that his chief objection to me as a candidate for mayor was that I am too radical a reformer. I am perfectly willing, gentlemen, to take that issue and make the fight on it alone, and I believe that you, all of you, think that there is a need of reform, radical reform, in the City Hall.

* Speech at Cooper Union Hall, October 15, 1886. *New York Times*, October 16, 1886.

[*“That’s what we want,” shouted a man, and “That’s what you’ll get,” responded Mr. Roosevelt.*]

We have heard for the past ten days the wailing of Mr. Hewitt’s managers, appealing for our votes in support of their candidate. This is a curious political alliance. We see the Tammany Hall heelers clasping hands with the heelers of the County Democracy, aided by that dull, feeble Chadband faction represented by *The Evening Post*. I read in a recent issue of that truthful sheet that we did not take issue with Henry George. That is not a correct statement. We emphatically take radical issue with Mr. George, and our past record entitles us to stand up in the fight against that theorist better than the Democrats. The fact is we don’t fear the drawing away from us of any Republican votes by the George campaign. It is the Hewitt managers who fear that George will carry many Democratic votes out of their ranks. They know that he has shattered their machinery, and they hope by noise and clamor to impress the timid good with the belief that by voting for me they will elect Mr. George. We say that we stand directly against George’s theories, and we are antagonistic to the practices of the supporters of Hewitt.

Gentlemen, we all know how we are served by the supporters of Mr. Hewitt who now hold office, many of whom hold their places, not because they serve the people, but because they serve some local political boss. We know many who are retained in office on account of their ability to influence an election or control a political convention. The time for radical reform has arrived, and if I am elected you will have it.

[*“You will be elected,” cried a voice. “I think so, myself,” said Mr. Roosevelt.*]

No honest and no competent city official need fear

my election. I was partly instrumental in making the civil-service laws, and you may rest entirely assured that if I am elected mayor I shall see to it that they are strictly enforced. All sinecurists, dishonest and incompetent city officials have cause—very great cause—to fear my election. I am a strong party man myself, but if I am elected, as I feel I shall be, and I find a public servant who is dishonest, I will chop his head off if he is the highest Republican in this municipality.

I would like also to take issue emphatically with Mr. George when he says that he would make a better mayor for the working men than I would. I am, if I am anything, an American. I am an American from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. If I take office I will take it as a freeman, as an equal to my fellow freemen, to serve loyally, honestly, and conscientiously every citizen of this great Commonwealth. I don't care what may be his politics, I don't care what may be his religion, I don't care what may be his color. I don't care who he is, so long as he is honest he shall be served by me. All I ask of him is that he discharge faithfully the duties of an American citizen, and I am his representative. If I am chosen I will have one ambition—which is lawful and honorable—to so comport myself as to earn the right to the respect and esteem of every citizen of the city of New York. I am the candidate for mayor nominated and indorsed by the citizens and the Republican party. If I am made mayor, I will be mayor of the city of New York.

Gentlemen, I won't detain you much longer, but I wish to state again that we stand against George on account of his theories and against Hewitt on account of the practices of his followers. We will not only try to preserve law and order, but we will endeavor to effect

radical reform in the City Hall. We will show favor to no one party, but treat all parties alike as they stand. I will remain strong for my own party, yet shall see the chief magistracy used to promote no single party, but the welfare of the entire city. I don't know of any more promises which I can make. I will let my past record serve as an earnest for what I shall do in the future.