Why I Vote the Democratic Ticket

"Would you tell me, please," said Alice to the Cheshire Cat, "which way I ought to walk from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice, "so long as I get somewhere."

There are a good many people in this country at the present moment who feel about the coming presidential election as Alice in Wonderland felt about the direction she took - they don't much care so long as they get "somewhere." They say that one political party is like the other so they see nothing for it but to vote for the man Herbert Hoover or the man Alfred Smith, as the one or the other takes their fancy; that is, decide as Alice did when the Cheshire Cat informed her that one of the two roads before which she hesitated led to the Hatter and the other to the March Hare. "I have seen a Hatter," said Alice - the March Hare will be "much the more interesting."

But is it true that next Fall we have simply to choose one of two remarkable products of American life and institutions.
The one man's prominence as a matter of business in dealings with governments, the other is in a matter of the applied science of government. When the one man writes to the other and then reads a person's reaction, he has been trying for some years to parallel the other. He has been trying to parallel the other but has not been able to parallel the other. If one man has a thought, why the other can think of it, the other can think of it.
To Alice, yes. But turn about you?

The one man's pre-eminence is that of mallet of malmes: The mace as a mallet
The one is a powerful administered - a

stump as they were. Potentially yet. a

never experienced. The other is

a challenge. I wonder how that

bells - a helpless. Seek for Solace.

The one under a great and true

behold only dignity. Remember

refling. Night joyous. The one

human which harder. Need my

coffee. My balcony. Man from

stew morden as he during to

where is the gallery? Which

is the morn. Here. That depends

on you.
The man named in the epistle, of which you speak, I called it in the mind service, because it has in 14 years applied it in every out-great experience.

This man came to public service after a experience of activity. We turned...
It would be true if a political party was the tool of one man - as an Italian party is. But that is not yet true in the United States. A political party with us is still more than its leader. It is still the average of a freely expressed will, judgment, ambition, character of all the men and women in it. A leader may do wonders with his party - in our day Theodore Roosevelt did wonders with the Republican party, Woodrow Wilson with the Democratic, but both, in the long run, could go no further than the consent of his followers. Neither could stay nor substantially deflect that unseen and powerful under-current that sweeps men and women into a party and keeps them there until they lose their faith in the party's fidelity to the under-current.

To be sure, both Democratic and Republican politicians have done all they dared this year to persuade voters that they were both headed to an identical "somewhere." "I always view with a little degree of suspicion a law firm made up of a Democrat and a Republican," said Governor Smith of New York, talking recently of political conditions in small communities. "Usually it seems to have been formed to get 'em coming and going."

Both the Democratic and the Republican platforms this year - and it is not the first time - were obviously prepared to "get 'em coming and going." But what more can we expect?
Consider how a platform comes into being. It is simply the best average a committee can strike between the factions fighting within the party, combined with as much thunder as it can steal from its antagonist, without the theft being too blatant. But a party cannot be judged merely by a platform framed in the heat of a political struggle. The thing that really matters is the trend of a party, the unseen under-current and to understand that you must take its record for at least fifty years. Look at it that way and you see clearly enough that there is a choice to be exercised next fall.

Something over fifty years ago the Republican party decided to make common cause with one class of its citizens, the manufacturers. Against the advice of a large body of its best men, it made a favored class, very much as the Soviet Republic has made a favored class of the factory worker. From that time on the party has steadily put more and more power into the hands of the men with whom it then went into business.

The Democratic party has contended from the start that it was impossible to work out a thorough-going democracy where you had the whole country taxed to create one highly prosperous class. It disputed the Republican contention that if the manufacturer and his labor profited everybody else would profit in proportion. It pointed out the inevitable monopolistic tendency of such a practice, the tendency to concentrate power at the top, to tie up government more and more closely with private
business. Furthermore, it insisted that the logic of this policy as well as the only justice, was to extend to every class as rapidly as possible some form of compensating privilege. All of these things have been shown more and more clearly. It has become clear to many disinterested observers that if this trend of the Republican party persists, the result must be a corporate state—a state modelled on one of our great corporations, power centred in a carefully chosen board of counsellors, presided over by an able leader satisfactory to those counsellors—the whole body politic whipped into line and meekly taking its orders from their highly efficient leadership. It would be a state much more magnificent than that Mussolini and his colleagues are building in Italy, because it can draw on almost limitless natural resources and they have none, but also far less honest and more dangerous in its powers for it will be camouflaged as a democracy, and camouflage is something for which the Italian dictator has supreme contempt. He does not pretend to be anything but an armed autocrat, trying to establish a stable government of a new kind, one which, if he lives to work it out, will create much more genuine co-operation between all productive groups than the Republican party can possibly achieve in a corporate state, camouflaged as democratic.

For a number of years now, we have had under our eyes a clear, beautiful and highly important exhibit of the way centralized
powers in private hands naturally develop in a country as largely governed as we are by a privileged class. It is that grandiose attempt to put under private control all the power and light that will ever be yielded by all the water power of this country, to make it into a "Giant Power" secure under the able rule of the highly intelligent, highly efficient and often highly humane men who are building up the service. These men, generally speaking, believe that it is better for the business of the country that they should control this water power so perfectly that no outside ownership can disturb their country-wide service. They believe that with a government to their liking they can work so smoothly that no regulation unfavorable to them will ever disturb their plans, their prices, their efficient management. They have done wonders in the last eight years of Republican government in effecting combinations, for today eighty per cent of the power production of this country is under the control of fifteen companies — fifty per cent is controlled by five companies.

The purpose to make it all one thing has not been undeclared. Seven years ago, one of the most able of these gentlemen, Mr. Samuel Insull of Chicago said frankly that one power system for the entire country was ahead of us. It was along about this time that those who believed that this was a desirable end set about to educate us to believe with them that public management of a utility is an "inherent failure," also to dazzle our vision with the
magnificence of one Giant Power, - all the streams harnessed - by private interests, of course.

Their promoters have done magnificently. "There is no more romantic temperament on earth," says Joseph Conrad in "Victory" "than the temperament of a good promoter." Never in the history of this country have we had put into action such an efficient and complete scheme for educating the public to what a single group of private interests wish us to believe. It aimed literally at reaching everybody in the country from the eighth grade up. The gentleman responsible recently told the Federal Trade Commission, which was investigating their activities, rather sorrowfully, that there was no use trying to do anything below the eighth grade, but everything beyond that, up to the university itself, was reachable, also everybody outside of the schools who could read; or, if they didn't read, went to the movies. They grew almost dithyrambic in telling the Commission how they carried their campaign for persuading the people of their own incompetency when it came to handling their own business, into the colleges, women's clubs, Chautauqua assemblies, lyceum courses, libraries, newspapers. In Illinois alone, 653 high schools have been using literature especially prepared by the great utility industries. And all over the country, all the Kewanis, Rotary and other men's and women's clubs have been listening to what the utilities call "dependable speakers."
Now, I would be the last to contend that the water
power interests have not the right to present their case as fully
as they think wise to the public, to put out all of the literature
and send out all of the speakers that they will — indeed, I think
it very necessary they should do so, for their own safety and
justification where rates must be revised and extensions undertaken;
and I think it most necessary for our salvation that they say frankly:
"This material has been prepared at the expense and by the order of the
public utilities of the country. We come here as the paid agents,
in their interests, to tell you what we believe to be true and to be
for the real advantage of your community." But there has been, as a
rule, no such labeling of their propaganda.

This educational campaign of the Public Utilities is successful, in their view, in proportion to the
degree in which it undermines the faith of the men and women in a
community to do things for themselves. People are taught that they
are unable to handle their own affairs, that they must look outside
of the community if they are to have an efficient service of power
and light. If there is any soundness in democratic ideals of
government, it is a terrible wrong to young and old to build up in
them the feeling that a community is an impotent thing.

The Democratic party has always fought this effort of
centralized power and wealth to weaken the confidence of men in
their capacity to do things for themselves. Governor Smith in his
fight to hold onto the water power of New York State has acted on the belief that we could manage our affairs for ourselves. He has had a long fight - twenty-one years - a fight beginning when the Pittsburgh Aluminum Company secured a charter for harnessing the St.-Lawrence River. It lost it, but never gave up its efforts to regain it, and Governor Smith has been a chief factor in preventing their success. He holds it as a principle that the people of the State should look on these waters and their development as their property and their business, that they should not allow them to be alienated even by lease for any period of time.

No one has ever used the Democratic doctrine of the direct appeal to the people more effectively than he has in his struggle to arouse the people to accept this principle. And every time he has made an appeal he has quickened our conviction of our own importance, strengthened that very thing that the educational campaign of the Utility Corporations has been trying to destroy - that faith in the power of the common man that begat the American conception of self-government.
But there has been no appeal to prejudice, to hate of wealth or class or big things of any sort in his fight. As a matter of fact, there is nothing in Democratic doctrine as we are getting it today, to discourage business simply because it is big. It is not big and efficient business that Governor Smith and his party condemn, it is business founded on special interests, on private control of powers which belong to the State. What he and his party are against is class government, which is a very different thing from business government.

Governor Smith in his handling of the water power in this State has been totally free from any kind of demagogism. He knows that one man, whether he acts honestly or dis-honestly, must in the street condemn between right and wrong as one sees the right if you will take the trouble to reach him. Therefore he is always willing to sit down with the big business man. "If a man is to be successful in an executive position," he says, "he must at least be able to discuss a matter at hand intelligently with other men who disagree with him. It is impossible for him to get anywhere if he mistakes honest disagreement for antagonism. When a group of interested citizens comes before the Chief Executive to make an honest, straightforward request, he must be prepared to sit down and discuss it. He cannot holler at them and say, 'You came up from Wall Street.'"
Moreover, if a class, however protected by privilege, has developed valuable methods, improved service, contributed anything to the well being of life, as nearly all our great corporations have, Governor Smith and the Democratic party believe its discoveries should be used. If privilege has a part in development it is all the more important that what they have done should be made available to all. That is, the platform of the Democratic party and its present leader do not include in their program the destruction of anything that can be proved sound and beneficial. They are not advocating or practicing revolutionary methods. It is an evolutionary party, bent on preserving whatever of good has been developed in the country and putting it within the reach of all.

Governor Smith, for instance, doesn't rail against a "Giant Power" interlacing the nation. What he does contend, however, is that the source of that power is and should stay where it belongs. "If we are going to hook up with any giant power scheme, he said not long ago to a group of New Yorkers, "let us be sure before we make the hook-up that we own the source of supply. If you don't, you might as well give it away to private enterprises for the rest of the life of the State, for the minute these waters go over the State line, we lose all control of them."

It is natural - inevitable, indeed, that a party founded on a privileged class like our manufacturers, should
sympathize with the ambition of private interests to control or own outright the water of the country. The activities of the two dovetail closely, they are necessary to one another. They both believe firmly in the ineffectiveness of government ownership and operation, believe in the centralizing of all power in a few at the top, - naturally, public ownership of anything is hateful to them. Whenever a town does run, as we know sometimes happens, its own water works or electric light plant successfully, they take it out in declaring that the community is no better than Bolshevik. Apparently, if they do succeed they ought not to.

And Governor Smith, most conservative of liberal Democrats, they dub a Socialist because he would have a State take care of its own.

This dislike of a State's owning anything has had something to do with the attitude of many Republicans toward what we call the Oil Scandal. One can hardly expect a party which believes that prosperity is caused by a tax laid on the whole for the direct benefit of a comparative few, or those who believe public ownership and operation are "inherent failures," to feel any genuine outrage at the turning over of leases of government lands for whatever purpose they might have been held, to private operation as the naval leases were turned over in the case of Teapot Dome and Elk Hill.
This is not saying that their sympathy necessarily extends to the dirty work by which these contracts were obtained. Hatred of corruption is a doctrine of all parties. It is unjust to claim it as a special attribute of any group of men. A great corporation may be built up with the aid of injustice and unlawful practices—we have such—but that is not saying that all great corporations are dishonest and unjust. Many of them are scrupulously fair. But in every great aggregation of men, and particularly political parties, there are evil and greedy men; and when they succeed in carrying out some sinister and lawless scheme, the temptation of the leaders is to ignore it "for the good of the party," and at the same time to distract attention from their own black spot by hunting for black spots on their rival's body. No one can doubt that the loathsome scandal which for the past six years has been dragging across the whole country, silencing even the White House, was utterly hateful to the great mass of the Republican party, and certainly to the majority of the members of the two administrations which it affected. But Republican solidarity must not be disturbed. One almost prayed to hear a clenched fist banging the cabinet table in Washington, a loud voice denouncing the outrage and calling for the fullest light and punishment, to see a port-folio hurtling through a window, one honest outburst of righteous indignation—we almost prayed for it, but we didn't hear a peep.
Centralization must eat its own vomit — that has been the botten trouble with every party tied up with wealth since this country was founded. Federalist congressmen and their friends back in 1790 bought the certificates which a poverty-stricken government had given Revolutionary soldiers and sailors in payment for their services — bought them for fifteen or twenty cents on the dollar, when they found that Congress was about to vote a tax on the whole country to pay the soldiers and sailors one hundred cents on the dollar. And when popular indignation broke out, they only jeered. It was left for the Democrats to remonstrate, but all they got for their pains was the contemptuous title of demagogues.

Centralized wealth breeds arrogance and a protection of its own in operations which the great majority of the leaders and members of the party may heartily detest.

This is not saying that the Democratic party, aiming at de-centralizing wealth, is Simon pure — by no means. It has its rascals, but it is practically impossible that its corruption should be national as in the Oil Scandal, however bad at times it may be locally. Tammany, the darkest spot on the Democratic party is a local institution and has been so since its founding nearly one hundred and forty years ago. More important, its sins which are many are not inherent — not attributes of character.
They are shocking abuses of some of its greatest virtues.

Tammany deals with the crowd. It has fought the battles of democracy all its life - backing Jefferson and Jackson, stretching across its walls years before the Civil War a great banner bearing the words "The Union must and shall be preserved" - raising at its own expense in 1861 the Tammany Jackson Guard which fought through all the war, and when reconstruction came, coming much nearer Lincoln's wise and humane ideas than the bitter and revengeful ones of a large part of the Republican party.

Its sins are not inherent and they have not gone unchallenged by many of its own members - Samuel Tilden, Abraham Green, Charles O'Connor - all Tammany leaders - helped clean up the notorious Tweed Ring. It was a Tammany revolt that finished Hylan. The movement for self-correction is strong within the society today, lead by Governor Smith and his friends. Certainly any corruption existing in Tammany now has no possible chance of becoming national if Governor Smith should be elected to the presidency. He is too interested in cleaning up the great organization whose virtues as well as vices he knows as well. But if thou were not wise, the country would believe.

An old contention of the Democrats - that the Republicans were deceiving themselves when they insisted that their tariff-made prosperity could be equally distributed, has come to the top in the present campaign. It never has been equally distributed, and it never can be. Moreover, it was inevitable that sooner
or later those outside the favored circle should discover that they were not getting the full share they were promised and should cry for a compensating subsidy. Why should not the farmer call for an equalizing tax? He has supported the protective system faithfully for years because he was told that it would give him a larger market, with higher prices. It has. But it gave him a market subject to serious fluctuations. Also it gave him dear and irregular labor, expensive transportation, a highly complex market system, over-laden with middle men, vicious gambling in his products, and perhaps worst of all, educated him to the undemocratic idea that it is always possible to find panaceas for economic troubles.

Moreover, he has been feeling the pressure towards combination. Temperamentally our farmer is our greatest individualist. He detests being a hired man, and when he sees land gathered into huge blocks, the same highly efficient methods applied to its tilling, the thinking all done at the top, nothing to do but to conform and keep your mouth shut, he doesn't like the prospect and calls for his subsidy. He certainly did it whole-heartedly in the Farm Relief bill. That bill was the cap of the system, and a perfectly logical cap, if we are going to give symmetry to our pyramid of privilege.
The remarkable and almost vitriolic message of the President of the United States, who himself honestly believes protection to be the cause of prosperity, was one of the best arraignments that we have ever had of a *privilege* tax placed on a people for the sake of a class; and practically every point of it applies as perfectly to the protective tariff as it did to the Farm Relief bill.

The farmer needs help. But he needs something more fundamental than the panacea for which he has called. He needs the loosening of the log jam in which he has been caught by the attempt to build up privileged and centralized wealth. He needs education in and opportunity to use the great modern machinery of financing, scientific management, all the vast new knowledge on the matters in which he is concerned. He needs to believe in co-operation with his fellows - a co-operation where his own initiative will have place, not a consolidation with a top which acts for him. Then he can work out his own problems and keep his self-respect as an independent individual.

To a thorough-going Democrat this keeping men independent is much more important than making a few men rich. He is less interested in getting things done than in getting more and more people to do things and profit by them. And here he is in direct conflict with the Republican theory of the *strong top*. The Democrat doesn’t believe that you get your best results in the
long run from the top. Moreover, he believes that you will only get big things done, in the long run, as the bottom consents.

The failure of the Eighteenth Amendment under its present interpretative clause is a painful example of an attempt to centralize the control of an appetite in the Federal Government. Here is a country, 1598 miles from north to south and 2907 miles in extent from east to west, the tidal shore line of its mainland 7314 miles long and broken and bent into innumerable bays, gulfes, lagoons, threaded with rivers and spotted with vast forests and deserts, open to every sort of land, water and air craft, peopled with nearly 110,000,000 men and women of all sorts of traditions, customs and views - a people jealous of its local authority. The Federal Government attempts to tell this people what they cannot drink, and a substantial and ever increasing number of them thumb their noses at the Government.

What are we going to do about it? The present leader of the Democratic party, its candidate for the presidency, is one of the few, the very few men in high public office who has had the daring to recognize the facts, to frame a policy, and put it down clearly and frankly. This he did five years ago.

The Republican Assembly of the State had passed a bill repealing the article in the State's Penal Law which put the provisions of the Volstead Act on the State's statute books. This article was known as the Nullan-Gage Law. Should he veto or approve its repeal? A nice political predicament! He spent a month of
study and thought, and approved the Republican repeal. And when he did it sent a memorandum which states, with reasons, just what he thinks should be done in our present intolerable situation—a situation which is threatening our hardly won achievements in national temperance.

Here are certain of his conclusions then, and they are his conclusions today:

1) "The Eighteenth Amendment is the law of the land and no one suggests, least of all the legislature of the State or myself that it should be violated."

2) "The repeal of the Mullan-Gage law will not and cannot by any possible stretch of the imagination bring back into existence the saloon which is and ought to be a defunct institution in this country, and any attempt at its re-establishment by a misconstruction of the Executive attitude on this bill will be forcefully and vigorously suppressed."
fully and vigorously suppressed."

3) The definition of an intoxicating beverage contained in the Volstead Act is not an honest or a common sense one. . . . . It seems to me that common sense backed up by good medical opinion can find a more scientific definition of what constitutes an intoxicating beverage. Such a definition should be adopted by Congress as a proper and reasonable amendment of the Volstead Act and a maximum alcoholic content should be prescribed by Congress which would limit all states to the traffic in liquors which are in fact non-intoxicating within the meaning of the Eighteenth Amendment. Subject to that limitation each state should thereafter be left free to determine for itself what should constitute an intoxicating beverage."

4) "A state has no right or power to enact any law that in any way infringes upon a constitutional act of Congress but . . . . the Federal Government has no right to impose upon the state any obligation to pass any statute affirmatively embodying any federal statute. . . . . The preservation of American democracy requires the maintenance of that balance between State and Nation which is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and that
the re-assertion of that principle is today of vital consequence

to the preservation of the democratic form of government guaranteed
to us by the Constitution."

That was his official formal statement. To a friend he
said:  

"I believe in enforcing the law, and I believe in personal
liberty. I could have made a better-looking case by vetoing the
repeal and talking about enforcement, but in my heart I believed the
degree to which personal liberty is being interfered with in this
matter is unwise, and I am going to take a position consistent with
what I believe in my heart."

This loyalty to personal liberty of all men low and high
has been a distinguishing mark of real Democracy from the beginning.
It was the thorny path by which you developed self-directing citizens
It forced the separation of church and state, gave us the guarantee
of the Constitution that we were free to think as we would in
religion, to belong to the church of our choice without any man's
interference. Religious freedom has had its battles—still
finishing. The Democratic party struck a bold blow this year
in nominating a Catholic for the presidency. And the country has
so backed that blow that the opposition to the Democratic nominee
on religious grounds is forced to speak in whispers. Men are
following "what they believe in their hearts" in this matter. How
silly are their whispered fears of a national government packed with
Catholics if Governor Smith is our next President. What has Governor
Tammany? Tammany is not a Catholic organization, nor an organization of Catholic politics. Contrary to the tided edition of popular curiosity and indelible of Tammany's beliefs.

What does Tammany do? Six of its members are Protestants.

What has Governor Smith done in New York State? Take his cabinet of today. It is made up of 13 Protestants, 1 Jew, 2 Catholics — for the sole reason that he is seeking efficiency in government, not influence in his Church. That makes his Protestants nobody knows better than the intelligent Catholic or the country that he will continue if elected. No religious freedom is not threatened by the Democratic party today. It believes too heartily in the ability of men and women to think and choose for themselves.

Still more important it believes that what we get of good and evil in a democracy comes from the bottom. It is the brooding mass, growing unconsciously through the years that throws up pregnant ideas and the leader fitted to handle them. Neither ever come from a centralized, stabilized, standardized top. Such a top is hostile to them, for it has itself to preserve. It has to be forced to adapt itself to the new thing. The mass is eager to accept, for it is not stable, it is ever pushing up to improve itself. It is always there that we find the great inspiring new trends. And it is there that the Democrat sees the future.

Perhaps fortunes would pile up less rapidly under Democratic than under Republican ideas, but we would get in the end a greater division of whatever is worth while in our development.
We would have, too, a more stable state, because more people will be working on their own in it, giving a broader foundation. It would be a state less subject to revolutionary attack because its aim will be to arouse self-directed effort in individuals. Such a state will be a far better guarantee for world peace than a state built on privilege, whose aim is to shut the nation's door as far as possible to outside products, an aim which is an invitation to the ill-will of every country on the globe.

No, it is the trend not the candidate alone by which men must decide how to cast their votes this coming Fall. The belief of one party is in power at the top, the belief of the other party is in the mass below. It all comes down to how much faith we have in the mass. For myself, I feel with Governor Smith that democracy is so eternally right that Almighty God is our strength.