

## The Commoner.

lative body which ought to stand above suspicion.

Third. Senatorial elections, as conducted at present, interfere with the legitimate work of state legislatures.

Whatever causes may have led to the adoption of the existing method of electing senators, experience has not only shown that the people can be trusted with the direct choice of their public servants, but it has also demonstrated that the nearer the Government is brought to the voters the better it is for both the Government and the people. There is more virtue in the masses than ever finds expression through their representatives, because representatives are influenced, to a greater or less extent, by their personal interests.

It is true that even with popular elections the nominations would be made by conventions, but the fact that the voters would afterwards sit in judgment upon the work of the delegates would be a constant restraint.

The last few years have furnished so many instances of corporate influence or corruption operating in the election of senators that no elaboration of the second argument is necessary. It has become apparent to the most casual observer that candidates backed by railroads and other large corporations have an enormous advantage over men who must rely upon their personal popularity or worth.

While in some instances money has been used to purchase votes outright, the method more frequently employed is to place the legislators under obligation to a particular candidate by pecuniary aid furnished during the campaign. Organized capital is also able to bring pressure to bear upon legislators by the bestowal of favors.

But aside from the arguments which affect the character of the men selected, the best interests of the state require that the legislators shall be relieved of the duty of electing senators, because legislative candidates cannot now be voted for according to their fitness for legislative work. As one-third of the United States senators are elected every two years, two legislative sessions (where they are biennial) out of every three are called upon to settle a senatorial controversy and this controversy, as a rule, overshadows all other matters.

When the contest is prolonged the regular business is interrupted by daily balloting and attention is diverted from state affairs.

Two years ago there were deadlocks in four states, and this year two legislatures are having obstinate struggles.

Some object to the proposed change on the ground that the Constitution should not be disturbed, but this is always the argument of those who are satisfied with things as they are. The best friends of the Constitution are those who desire to strengthen it in the affections of the people by making it conform to the wishes of the people.

There is no force in the objection urged by some that a senator should be selected by a legislature because he represents the state. This draws a distinction between the state and the people of the state. Surely the choice of a majority of the people would be more truly a representative of the state than the choice of a minority.

It will be a great victory for popular govern-

ment when the selection of United States senators is taken away from legislatures and given into the custody of the voters where it rightfully belongs.

### Liberty a Supreme Good.

Buckle, whose "History of Civilization in England" has given him a permanent place in the literary world, was a passionate lover of liberty. In one of his productions, to be found in the World's Best Essays, he expresses himself with so much clearness and emphasis that an extract is given below. It is worth while for the reader to compare the vigorous logic of the historian with the complacent philosophy of the present-day imperialists, who assume that a defeated monarch can bargain, sell and convey, for pecuniary consideration, the bodies, souls and inalienable rights of eight millions of Filipinos.

Buckle says:

"Liberty is the one thing most essential to the right development of individuals, and to the real grandeur of nations. It is a product of knowledge when knowledge advances in a healthy and regular manner; but if under certain unhappy circumstances it is opposed by what seems to be knowledge, then, in God's name, let knowledge perish and liberty be preserved. Liberty is not a means to an end, it is an end itself. To secure it, to enlarge it, and to diffuse it, should be the main object of all social arrangements and of all political contrivances. None but a pedant or a tyrant can put science or literature in competition with it. Within certain limits, and very small limits too, it is the inalienable prerogative of man, of which no force of circumstances and no lapse of time can deprive him. He has no right to barter it away even from himself, still less from his children. It is the foundation of all respect, and without it the great doctrine of moral responsibility, would degenerate into a lie and a juggle. It is a sacred deposit, and the love of it is a holy instinct engraven on our hearts."

### Companionship of Children.

The new district attorney for the city of New York, in an interview with a newspaper reporter, said of children:

When I am not working, there's nothing I'd rather do than spend the time with them, entering into their thoughts and watching the development of their minds. Children are wonderful beings!

Commenting upon this, the New York World adds:

The Czar of all the Russias has made it a point to spend three hours a day with his children. Thomas Jefferson's happiest hours were spent in working and playing with his children and grandchildren. Charles Dickens found his best recreation in the same way. Abraham Lincoln soothed the anxieties of war days by romping with his boys in the White House. And New England's grand old man, Edward Everett Hale, has kept young in spite of a long life of hard public labor by cultivating the society of his children and their children. Wherever, indeed, you find a truly wise father you will discover him taking and giving benefits in loving, studying and appreciating his children.

Keeping close to the children is not only a fatherly duty but it is a valuable privilege to the busy man. Not all of the responsibility for the rearing of the little ones rests upon the mother, although it is true the burden is usually shifted to her shoulders. But the father can at least set a good example to his little ones and when seeking rest from the cares of his business, he can aid in their training, and at the same time obtain profitable relaxation for himself.

The man who, seeing so much insincerity in

the world, has become a pessimist, will be brought back to his moorings by cultivating the society of little children. There he will find sincerity; there he will find friendship; there he will find truth. And it is not too much to say that no man is so well educated that he cannot learn from little children something that will improve his mind; no man is so good that he cannot obtain from little children something that will make him better. The good father should be a companion to his children, not only in order that he may assist in their training, but also that he himself may be benefited by the association.

### Mistaken Identity.

The political editor of the Cincinnati Times-Star, feeling it necessary to register his disapproval of THE COMMONER, seized his pencil and dashed off the following brilliant criticism:

In initiating his editorial duties Mr. Bryan is as unfortunate in his choice of quotations as in his political speeches. The last man of American public men whom Mr. Bryan should quote is Webster. There is not a principle which the great Massachusetts statesman stood for which Mr. Bryan represents. \* \* \*

Mr. Bryan errs whenever he attempts to quote Webster in support of any of his political ideas. The use of the phrasing of a partial sentence, selected without regard to the center thought, is a favorite trick of Mr. Bryan, but an unfortunate one, because he has almost invariably chosen a phrase which was inappropriate when read in a fuller light.

When our much esteemed but incautious contemporary can withdraw himself from the contemplation of Webster the Statesman long enough to examine a compilation prepared by Webster the Lexicographer, he will find the definition as given in the first editorial of THE COMMONER. The language quoted was not, as he intimates, taken out of its connection.

It must be admitted that the writings of Noah Webster, of Dictionary fame, are marred by frequent change of subject, and seem somewhat disconnected, but while they lack the stately and flowing style of the Massachusetts orator, the editor of the Times-Star will find them worthy of occasional perusal.

### Barriers to Freedom.

A San Francisco dispatch of recent date reports a public sale in that city of five Chinese girls who were "knocked down" to the highest bidder. These girls were the property of a Chinaman who was about to leave for his native heath. The girls were exhibited, the auctioneer enumerated their good points, and they were sold and delivered at prices ranging from \$1,700 to \$2,500 each.

To be sure the sale was not legal, but the "property" did not know it; and as no protest was made by the well-informed, the sale and delivery were as effective as though they had full sanction of the law. Is it not true that we are becoming somewhat indifferent in these days to such proceedings as this? Is it not strange that in one of the largest cities of this country such a mockery upon liberty could be made without evoking indignant and effective protests? Is it not possible that we have become negligent in the duty of crushing out innovations upon American ideas?

The San Francisco Chinaman had a recent precedent from which to take encouragement.