

The Commoner.

bimetallism would amount to an abandonment of bimetallicism because gold democrats would secure nominations on such a platform, and then, if elected, would, as they have in the past, act with the republicans to maintain the gold standard.

As to the second question, namely, whether concurrent circulation of the two metals is essential to a bimetallic system? To answer this in the negative without further explanation might lead to misunderstanding. The concurrent circulation of the two metals, while desirable, is not absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the bimetallic system, but bimetallists believe that the parity would be maintained in this country at the ratio of 16 to 1. We had bimetallicism from 1792 to 1834, during nearly all of which time gold was at a premium because our mint ratio, compared with the mint ratio of France and some other countries, undervalued gold. When in 1834 the ratio was changed from 15 to 1 to 16 to 1, silver was then undervalued, as compared with the ratio of France and some other countries, and, therefore, silver went to a premium and remained at a premium until it was demonetized. During both these periods we had bimetallicism, and it was possible to coin gold or silver without limit as to amount into full legal tender money at a fixed ratio. As above remarked, it is the belief of bimetallists that the parity can be maintained at the ratio of 16 to 1, and this belief is founded upon two arguments; first, that the monetary use of silver would absorb all the silver available for coinage at our mints, thus raising the bullion price of silver to \$1.29 an ounce; and, second, that no gold nation is now coining gold and silver at a ratio more favorable to gold than ours. If any large nation opened its mints to the free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver at 15½ to 1, it would get some of our silver and silver would go to a premium. If, on the other hand, any large nation opened its mints to the free and unlimited coinage of both metals at the rate of 16½ to 1, or some higher ratio, it would be apt to get some of our gold, and gold would go to a premium. But, under existing or probable conditions, there would be no difficulty in maintaining the parity at the ratio of 16 to 1. If there was any force in the argument made for thirty years that the parity was more difficult to maintain because the production of silver was increasing more rapidly than the production of gold, the parity ought to be more easily maintained now, since the production of gold is increasing more rapidly than the production of silver.

Two ways of maintaining the parity have been suggested. One is to put silver upon an equal footing with gold, make it a legal tender equal with gold, and enable it to do all that gold can do—this is the bimetallic plan. The other plan is to make the silver dollar redeemable in gold, but this plan converts silver into a credit money and greatly impairs its usefulness. It really makes gold the standard and silver subsidiary to it. When one metal goes to a premium it does not all leave the country. It circulates at its premium value and still contributes to the volume of money, just as silver did from 1834 to 1861 and just as both gold and silver did from 1861 to 1879. If under bimetallicism one metal goes to a premium the people can do whichever they prefer, viz., they can either change the ratio or bear with the inconvenience of the premium.

Some bimetallists whose devotion to the cause cannot be doubted have expressed themselves in favor of a change in the ratio, provided it is shown by experience that the parity cannot be maintained at the ratio of 16 to 1. Others have refused to discuss this proposition; first, because a discussion of other ratios might be construed (not fairly, but unfairly) as an admission that the parity could not be maintained at 16 to 1; and, second, because the power to legislate remains with the people, and they are always at liberty to make any changes which to them may seem best. Under our form

of government no unchangeable system can be established. If the people try the gold standard and do not like it, they can change it; if they try the double standard and do not like it, they can change it; if they try one ratio and do not like it, they can try another.

In answer to those who express the fear that the parity cannot be maintained, but give no reason for their skepticism, the advocates of bimetallicism express the belief that it can be maintained and give their reasons for it. Neither side can prove its position by a mathematical demonstration, but experience and argument support the bimetallists.

Senator Heitfeld's Letter.

On another page will be found a letter written by Senator Heitfeld of Idaho to the chairman of the populist committee of his state, giving his reasons for becoming a member of the democratic party. During the last two campaigns the populists and the democrats have co-operated in the attempt to secure certain reforms which both parties advocated. The first defeat was due to a coercion such as was never before practiced upon American voters. The second defeat, as Senator Heitfeld explains, was largely due to the fact that times were better, which fact caused a great many voters to give apparent indorsement to republican policies rather than risk the effect of what they considered a possible change in industrial conditions. The issues which brought the reform parties together have not been settled and are not likely to be settled by the republican party. That co-operation must continue is certain; the only question is whether it shall be co-operation between organizations or co-operation between individuals under one organization. This is a question which must be determined largely by local conditions. If the populists were to join the democratic party they would strengthen the reform element in that party and assist in preventing the repudiation of the principles of the Kansas City platform. On the other hand, where the populist party is strong as compared with the democratic party it may be wiser to co-operate than to attempt the amalgamation of the parties.

For ten years I have advocated co-operation between the democrats and the populists because, while their platforms are not identical on all questions, they are practically so upon the questions immediately before us. The two questions about which democrats and populists differ are, first, the redeemability of the greenbacks, and, second, the government ownership of railroads. As to the first it may be said that the question of redeemability is of much less importance than the question of the government's right and duty to issue all the paper money used. The democrats believe in government paper as against national bank paper, and it would be the height of folly for one who believes in government paper, but favors an irredeemable currency, to give direct or indirect aid to the republicans in their effort to retire greenbacks and substitute national bank notes.

It will require the united aid of democrats and populists to save the greenback as it now is; when it is saved from annihilation and the right of the government to issue and control the paper of the country is firmly established, it will be time enough for democrats and populists to fight out their differences on the question of redeemability. (I am aware that some populists object to the word "irredeemable," but I use it because it is the word usually employed and best understood.)

As to the second question, it must be remembered that the government regulation and control of railroads is more easily secured than government ownership. If the voters are not willing to compel railroads to deal justly with their patrons, they are not likely to enter upon so great an undertaking as the government ownership and opera-

tion of the railroads. At present there is so much indifference upon the railroad question that the republican party is able to fill the United States senate with railroad attorneys without protest from the rank and file of the party. The recent consolidations may make the people study the question.

But just now there is an issue of greater importance than either the money question or the railroad question. The question of imperialism strikes at the very foundation of our government, and no one who fully appreciates the enormous and far-reaching change which imperialism will effect in our institutions and our ideals will oppose co-operation because of interest in less important issues.

Whether one can serve his country best in the democratic party or in the populist party is a question which each must decide for himself, but whether those who oppose an imperial policy, trust domination and the control of our finances by financiers, should unite against the common enemy until the country is saved from the dangers which now threaten it is hardly an open question.

They Are Ours Now.

Rev. James Brent, bishop-elect of the Episcopal church to the Philippines, delivered a sermon at Boston, Mass., November 17, in which he outlined his idea of the Philippine situation. "The bishop who goes to the Philippines," said Mr. Brent, "goes to stand for righteousness in civil life, to make civil service what it should be there, to promote Christian education, to further the interests of American civilization in that country which is now our responsibility and to foster the true elements of our own civilization. It is no longer a question of imperialism or anti-imperialism. We have our duty to perform. It is to give these people, for they are ours now, all that we are capable of giving them."

It is difficult for the American citizen who fully appreciates the favors which he enjoys under a republican form of government, to listen with any degree of patience to such remarks as these. Here we have a man recently chosen by a great church to go to the Philippine islands and while he tells us that his mission is "to further the interests of American civilization in that country," he adds "we have our duty to perform. It is to give these people, for they are ours now, all that we are capable of giving them."

If this Episcopal clergyman in this un-American sentiment merely stated his own personal opinion, no serious attention need be given it. But the fact is, aggravating as it may appear to the American conscience, that when this man, referring to the people of the Philippine islands, said "they are ours now" he merely reflected the sentiment of republican leaders and he voiced the opinion that must be accepted as the dominant opinion of the day.

What is there about the American people, a people who revolted against the idea of the divinity of kings, that in this day they are authorized to conquer and to own other men?

What has happened since the Declaration of Independence was written by men who resented the monarchical theory of government, to persuade the American people that they have any right in law or in morals to own men and women or to deny to them the same privileges and the same aspirations to which the colonial forefathers aspired, and for the accomplishment of which many of them died?

There are thousands of men in this country today who understand that they cannot violate righteous laws in their personal affairs without being called upon to pay the penalty and yet many of these people lay the flattering unction to their souls that in the capacity of citizens, they may violate every moral principle and every law without being called to account.

When this Episcopal clergyman said "they are