

Letters From the People

Clint Pearce, Burnside, La.—At different times, I have seen it stated, the south was entitled to representation on the national democratic ticket in 1908. The different articles stated the south had always been loyal, and true to the democratic party and principles, and a southern man ought to be on the ticket. I fully agree with the writers of those articles and think continued fidelity and loyalty of the south to the party and its principles ought to receive its reward. I would like to place before the country through your valuable paper, the name of our governor, Newton Crane Blanchard for the second place on the ticket. He has always been true to his party and his people, and he has served them in the halls of congress, the senate of the United States, on the supreme bench of our state and as governor with honor to himself and great credit to his people. He is a very able man, one who has had vast experience in state and national affairs, and I think stands at the head of all our southern statesmen of today. Hoping for the success of the democratic ticket in 1908, and to see Governor Blanchard's name on the ticket, with best wishes for the future welfare of your valuable paper.

P. Zuckreigel, Cleveland, O.—I read what you say in a recent issue of *The Commoner* about weekly state papers. Very good! I believe that such would be a good thing, no matter what the dailies may do or fail to do. But why are we to continue to allow the dailies to do as they please, betray the people and the country at pleasure? Is it simply because they are institutions of large capital? We are talking a great deal about regulating railroads and other big trusts; why not the daily papers, institutions so dangerous to our country and through which all the iniquities of the other trusts were made possible? The power of these papers depends on their circulation, hence the people can easily control these mediums. Why not step up and say: We demand that you employ two chief editors, one from each of the dominant political parties and subject to the approval of the respective party, through their authorized representatives (committee), and then start an agitation that the people refuse to patronize any and all such papers as refuse this righteous privilege, and also refuse to patronize any business that will advertise in them. This would soon break the camel's back and instead of the people being at the mercy of these institutions, they would have them as their servants, which properly they should be. It strikes me forcibly that if I owned such a paper and depended on public patronage to make it useful and pay, and such a proposition came to me from a reasonably good source, I would accept in lightning quickness; to not be left. And I venture the prediction that once a start is made in this direction it will sweep the country of this monopolistic press evil and the people will get fair play and we will have a free press sure enough. The party committee in any community where these papers are published, ought to start this agitation.

C. C. P., Celeste, Texas—In 1893, when speculators in gold were "looting" the United States treasury by means of United States treasury notes, I remember the cry of the bankers was that it was not the scarcity of money, but the "lack of confidence—lack of confidence!" The bankers who recently "resolved" on the scarcity of money at certain periods in the year, and asked congress to pass a law for an asset currency should be reminded that it is not the scarcity of money; it is "lack of confidence!" Confidence is what you need, Mr. Banker. Again, if the money question is settled, as many bankers, speculators and politicians have asserted from time to time, why not let it stay settled? If the money question is dead and presumably buried, why be always digging it up? If the education of the rising generation is of such importance that it is deemed proper to compel property owners to pay a tax, and even working men to pay a poll tax, why should it be considered wrong to compel parents to send their children to those schools? Is farming the only occupation at which children of ten to fourteen years of age ought to be employed? At what were young girls employed a century or more ago? Was it so very unhealthy?

Would it be wrong now? Is it better for children to be employed or unemployed? At what particular age does idleness become a vice, or lead to vicious habits? Would it be wrong for women and children to work in small broom factories or other small well ventilated factories in the country, or small towns, if little dust is found? Is it certain that laws to prevent children of twelve years from working at healthful occupations are right and laws compelling those of twelve to attend school wrong? Is it right to force idleness upon children, when they can not be in school? Is it wrong for any child under fourteen or sixteen years of age to labor? Could not laws be passed allowing women and children to work at any healthful occupation a part of each day? Are not many of the laws now in existence drawn more to reduce the number of laborers than for the benefit of women and children—particularly the children? Are these laws, where they have been enacted, rather too sweeping?

E. E. Clark, Syracuse, Neb.—Under the caption, "Where Does Mr. Taft Stand," in *The Commoner* of May 3, a very pertinent question is asked and at a very opportune time, and is also suggestive of a few other questions fully as difficult to answer satisfactorily. The article referred to says: "Congressman Longworth of Ohio says that Secretary Taft is the proper man to 'carry to completion' the reform work undertaken by President Roosevelt, and it has been announced semi-officially that the president himself, desires the secretary's nomination. The question that naturally arises is, for what reform does Secretary Taft stand?" The logic of the foregoing is easy—if the president really wants Taft to succeed him (and he does) it must be conceded that the president believes, at least, that Taft stands for the same reforms "undertaken" by himself, which is about as near it as you could point your finger, and they are all remarkably democratic—I don't think. The democracy of President Roosevelt as it came to us as he stepped over the presidential threshold was to the effect that there would be "no change in the policy of my predecessor in the Philippines," and what was that policy? Time will never wear away the blush of shame bequeathed us by that "McKinley policy," that the r-former Roosevelt assured us he would keep inviolate but, perhaps, the damnable nonpariel should lose some of its blackness. Another of Roosevelt's democratic coups is seen in his playing the role of national or international constable to enforce collection of debts, i. e., among the "weaker" nations of course. Other phases of his democracy may be seen in the Panama affair. Although many other such evidences of Roosevelt's democracy are in mind, the writer forbears save to quote from the article above referred to: "The president could have secured a better law by accepting democratic aid, but he compromised in order to make it seem a republican measure." This is a type of democracy that would permit a president of the United States to not only stultify his own convictions of right, but also to sacrifice the most vital interests of the people. Yet in this coup there is, incidentally, a redeeming feature—he unearthed several different kinds of liars as well as one "damliar." O, yes! Taft stands for exactly the same reforms that has marked Roosevelt's career. Rooseveltian democracy, when seen through a democratic lens, is about like Senator Beveridge's "championship" of the cause of the children. Senator Beveridge knows that child labor abuses are only found among the landless class, and that if the parents of these children had land enough to support, or even partially support (say a good sized garden patch) their families, there would be no child labor abuses. But ask Beveridge to support a measure to make access to small holdings of land, of which in every community there is a surfeit, except for land monopoly, and he would very soon class you among those undesirable citizens, that the "Roosevelt democracy" found in Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, with "My Dear Mr. Harriman" as a close second. No! Roosevelt, nor Taft, nor any one that is known, generally, to stand for the "reforms" in their list can get the g. o. p. nomination short of a split that will be fatal. All of this fudge about Bryan nominating Roosevelt or Roosevelt nominating Bryan is too thin to cover with and will convince no one that in a proper "show down," Bryan and Roosevelt are any more alike than they were when, a couple of years ago, the great hunter was asked to apply the "criminal law" to such men as Harriman, et al.

A Palpable Hit

The entire lack of good faith that characterizes Henry Watterson's attitude toward Mr. Bryan has never been better disclosed than in Mr. Watterson's recent comment on Secretary Taft. Mr. Watterson pretends to be "personally friendly" to the Nebraskan and to be opposing him only for "his own good" and "for the good of the party." He is against him not because Mr. Bryan is not a good man, but because he "lacks availability." He lacks availability because he has been too frank, too outspoken. He has expressed himself too freely and openly on living questions, and so has alienated this man, offended that one and disgusted the other. Therefore, according to the Kentucky colonel, he won't do; he can't be elected.

Very well. Let us see, then, how this disinterested, unprejudiced and protestingly friendly critic applies his own doctrine to an opposition candidate—Mr. Taft. In his paper of August 13 he comments on republican protests against Taft's defining his position on the tariff. Republicans are afraid "he will be so unwise as to dwell upon the expediency of a tariff reduction." Says Colonel Watterson, "In their view this would be terrible. It would hurt the party and weaken Taft as a political chief."

Now what does Colonel Watterson think about it? Surely not that Taft should disregard the warning! Surely not that he should be frank and brave and honest with the voters! Surely not that! But just listen to the Wattersonian verdict:

"Secretary Taft is one of those strong-minded men who, being for a thing, do not hesitate to say so; therefore, being a tariff revisionist, the chances are that he is not apt to make any effort to conceal the fact. It may weaken him with the party managers, who like to see the campaign funds roll in, but the people—the independent voters who know something about the evils of that tariff—are likely to be pleased."

Listen again!

"It is a great trick of politicians nowadays to do what is technically known as 'playing both ends against the middle.' Now, if Mr. Taft could or would resort to the trick he might get the lofty and honorable fame of being a brilliant, cunning and successful politician. To hear some folks talk, nothing could be more splendid than to be a smooth politician, no matter what sort of public official such a politician may be."

And listen again—for the further we read into the colonel's program for Taft the more heretical it becomes:

"The trouble with Mr. Taft, however, is that he seems to be one of those peculiar persons who dare to prefer to be honest rather than shrewd—who would rather be a statesman than a politician."

Can it be that the Henry Watterson who wrote this is the same Henry Watterson who has been querulously scolding Mr. Bryan because he would not be a politician rather than a statesman? Can this be the same Henry Watterson who would have Mr. Bryan shrewd rather than honest? Can this be the same Henry Watterson who is sorely aggrieved because Mr. Bryan will not be "cunning and smooth?"

Is it possible that this great Kentucky mentor of democracy would prefer a democratic leader little and cowardly and mean, while at the same time he commends, with every evidence of sincere and manly feeling, the frank and honest and courageous course for a republican leader?

If this is, indeed, the pitiful attitude of Editor Watterson of Kentucky, as it seems to be, there is no escaping the conclusion that, with one party or the other, he is not counseling in good faith. And the question naturally arises, which party would he deceive? Or is he only a man driven, by some unguessed and hidden motive, into playing horse with his own convictions?—Omaha World-Herald.

In view of Collier's review of Mr. Fairbanks' connection with the old Indianapolis Bloomington & Western Railway, people can understand why the employes of that corporation referred to it in the old days as the "I Beg & Wear Rags" road.