

The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

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Seems to be quite a bad spell down in Hayti—or Haiti.

Christmas right here, and the currency is being rapidly revised.

But, supposing everybody shopped early—what would be the use.

Joseph G. Cannon, "swearing he would ne'er consent, consented."

There's many a slip between the 1880 and 1908 memory of an oil king.

The Tom Johnson scrap book will be a greater heritage than the millions of some men.

Speaker Cannon is so confident of an honest revision of the tariff that our worst fears are confirmed.

An Omaha burglar stole his victim's pajamas and alarm clock. The burglar may learn of another alarm clock by calling.

While the republicans spent nearly three dollars to the democrats' one, they got nearer their money's worth.—Boston Herald. Perhaps.

When the time comes for President Castro to undergo that surgical operation he would do well to search the surgeon for Holland credentials.

Timothy Woodruff has withdrawn from the New York senatorial race in favor of Elihu Root. Timothy is entitled to be known as the Great American Withdrawer.

"President Gompers is evidently one of those 'leaders' who haven't any following," says the Pittsburg Gazette. The Gazette's paragrapher should get into consultation with the Gazette's telegraph editor.

Of course those republican legislators in Oregon who promised to vote for a democrat for senator do not have to keep their promise. They can exhibit themselves as plain, everyday prevaricators devoid of honor if they so choose.

Attention is being called to the fact that the constitution makes no provision for the presidential succession in case a president-elect should die before March 4. But why worry at this particular time? What's the constitution got to do with it as matters now stand?

SOLVING THE "MYSTERY OF 1908"

THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

In its issue of November 13, The Commoner invited contributions to a symposium, having for its purpose an inquiry into the causes of the results of the 1908 election. The Commoner asked the co-operation of its readers in every section of the country, submitting these questions:

Did the democratic party make losses in your county and precinct?

If so, to what influence were such losses due?

"What course shall reformers adopt for the future?"

Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?

The third installment of this symposium is printed in this issue. It should be understood that the publication of any particular opinion does not mean that The Commoner endorses that opinion. In order that the inquiry shall be thorough it will be necessary that wide scope be given the contributors to this symposium, and these opinions are to be printed with the names of the writers.

For the preparation of this symposium The Commoner must lay down certain unalterable rules:

First, replies must be brief and to the point.

Second, the writing must be plain.

Third, the tone must be respectful, the language non-libelous and free from epithet—although the widest possible latitude will be given for the description of the conditions that contributed to the result and the expression of opinion as to the future course of reformers.

The name of the contributor will be used.

The Commoner will continue this symposium from week to week, covering sufficient time and space in which to clear up "The Mystery of 1908."

TAMMANY'S PART

The New York Ledger (a democratic paper) prints an editorial from which the following extracts are taken:

The genius of Mr. Roosevelt, who has much the same power over the American electors that Mr. Bryan has over any audience that he faces, and who was able to change a republican panic, that should have been a snare for the feet of Taft, into a formidable weapon for Taft's hand, was the chief cause of republican success.

In Taft he had a man who really had had unequalled administrative opportunity and who had well used it, making followers of the most widely different elements of the voting population; and he had the means of publicity both in money and in newspapers to make the people believe that their immediate prosperity and happiness was safer through republican success than through democratic elevation.

Briefly, these are the real reasons for Mr. Bryan's defeat, we feel. They are reasons which apply to city and hamlet, to farm and factory, to cottage and hotel throughout the entire United States, no city nor county excepted.

Yet with that apparently divinely-ordained fatality which makes both death and detraction "love a shining mark," the city of New York and its most famous democratic organization, Tammany hall, has been singled out for criticism, not only as the most conspicuous, but as the one and only place in the country where democratic leadership had not done its full duty.

Mr. Bryan says: "If Tammany did the best it could, and couldn't carry the city of New York for the democratic national ticket, several questions arise." All the four questions he then asks, it will be seen at one intelligent glance, are as unnecessary as if a little child should say to his father: "If my hobby-horse is a real horse, papa, why can't it run?"

In the city of New York, Mr. Bryan, there are four counties—New York county, Queens county, Kings county and Richmond county. Unfortunately, the organization known as Tammany hall covers only New York county. The

other three counties have their own organizations, effective more or less. Tammany hall, sad as the showing was elsewhere throughout the country, did carry New York county by a plurality of five to six thousand votes for Bryan and Kern.

Tammany hall was organized before Nebraska had been bought from France or Greater New York had been thought of, and its splendid solidarity and sincerity of purpose have not even yet been able to make its inspiration and example of patience and loyalty bear fruit worthy of it among the organizations outside its own habitat, New York county.

The Ledger believes that if the other counties of Greater New York had organizations as ably managed as Tammany Hall, Mr. Bryan would have carried this city, but this is no time for chasing scape-goats, either in that territory of New York City which is outside Tammany's actual control, or anywhere else over the country where disappointment has given birth to silly animosities and to personal and partisan belittlement.

Others may point to the national ticket's misfortunes in Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, or even to Nebraska's sister western states, or yet to the good old democratic city of Boston, where the direct nomination system (of glorified fame among reformers) holds sway, and which gave a plurality of less than thirty votes for the democratic national ticket.

The Ledger contents itself with emphasizing the causes of the general defeat, as explained in the first part of this article, and has no criticism or blame for anybody.

Not only is Tammany not to blame, but it is entitled to the thanks of the whole country, especially to the thanks of Mr. Bryan. Standing alone in the very heart of "the enemy's country," giving every aid possible to the national committee and taking care of its own fight single-handed; with every daily newspaper on Manhattan island against Mr. Bryan, if we except the insincere and chameleon-like support given to him by the World; with Mr. Hearst unable to help himself, but terribly powerful in injury to Mr. Bryan, and in aid to Mr. Bryan's enemies; with a large proportion of Tammany's constituents earning their living as clerks and other office employes and more amenable to the same influences here than in other places hurt grievously, and with Tammany suffering from a parasitical growth of an office-holding class recently made, bearing its name but belying its spirit—yet did Tammany hold aloft and carry to success within its territory the Bryan and Kern banner.

Tammany, as an organization, put forth every effort to poll its full vote for Bryan and it did it under the loyal and intelligent guidance of Charles F. Murphy and his district leaders.

Mr. Bryan asks if there is a democratic party in New York City outside of Tammany Hall, and the enemies of democracy fancy that, in the way he asks the question, they see the shadow of a desire to have such an antagonistic faction arise and receive the godspeed of the national committee.

The Ledger answers that in New York county, as everywhere else in the country, there are honest independent democrats, and there are dishonest democratic pretenders; there are fair men and there are fakirs voting the democratic ticket now and then. To give encouragement to the furtherance of factional democratic fighting on Manhattan island, we believe was a blossom not of desire, but of impatience arising from lack of information on Mr. Bryan's part.

Theodore E. Slinkard, Bloomfield, Ind.—What course shall reformers adopt for the future? Advocate: First, Government ownership of railroads, giving reasons; second, publicity of campaign contributions; third, postal savings banks. Drop the issue of guaranteed banks. "Can the democratic party ever hope to gain control of the federal government?" In one of two ways, yes: First, by promising immunity to the railroads and such other interests as the railroads dominate over, or second, by the advocacy of so-called "radical" measures. Notwithstanding your caution concerning brevity the writer will give some reasons for his position: It is not to be doubted that the railroads dominate every other organized commercial interest in this country, and in the end require the other interests to follow what they say. The people are just beginning to learn this to be a fact. The campaign contribution publicity plank