

The Situation in West Virginia

Fayetteville, W. Va., December 14, 1910.—
 Editor The Commoner: I enclose you a letter written to the Charleston Gazette by Judge Maynard T. Stiles, of Charleston, W. Va. This letter voices the sentiments of the loyal and regular democrats of this state so thoroughly that I felt that The Commoner should have an opportunity to reproduce the same, especially when we find the metropolitan press and the men who contributed so largely to your defeat in 1896, 1900 and 1908, talking about progressive democracy, and declaring that the hope of the success of progressive democracy is the elimination of W. J. Bryan, that this letter strikes the keynote of the democracy of this state, at least, and I believe, of the nation, and as I thought possibly your paper would like to reproduce this article, I take the liberty of enclosing the same to you. Judge Stiles is what we call a "northern democrat," who has been living in West Virginia many years, but he has always been loyal and true to democratic nominees and democratic principles. Sincerely yours,
 C. W. OSENTON.

ELIMINATING "BRYANISM"

Editor of The Gazette: One of the strange results of the recent election is the notion entertained in some quarters, particularly by certain eastern journals, that the election eliminates Bryan as a leader or as a controlling influence in the democratic party; or that the elimination of Bryan and "Bryanism" is necessary to the retention and extension of the party advantage just gained. These journals, most of whom supported Taft in 1908, talk of "new leadership" for democracy as they did in 1904. By "new leadership" they mean the old leadership which, despite Bryan's loyalty to the party name and candidates, led us so far into the slough of eternal despond that only the return of the standard into Bryan's hands give the faintest hope of deliverance. The same mutinous crew that scuttled the ship in 1896 and 1900, and ran her aground and abandoned her when they captured her in 1904, are preparing to clamber aboard again, now that she is once more afloat and out in mid-stream, and to throw overboard her navigator and tear up the chart in which lies the only hope that the democratic passengers and cargo will see port in 1912.

I do not mean to imply that Bryan should necessarily become the nominee in 1912; it is not the time now to pick candidates, but I am one of those who believe that to abandon the things which Bryan championed in the last campaign would be to plan defeat in the hour of victory. I am one of those who believe that the personality and doctrines of Bryan are dearer to the great majority of democratic hearts than are those of any other man in the party or out of it, and that the elimination of "Bryanism" by "new leadership," if it could be accomplished, would carry with it every hope of the triumph of democratic principles under the party name two years hence.

The New York World, in an editorial quoted in your issue of Saturday, advised Mr. Bryan "to get in step with progressive democracy, and give all the moral support within his power to new leaders," and added: "He has had his chance—he had three chances—and each time the country repudiated him." The justification for the reproduction of these attacks upon the foremost living democrat, made by professed democratic editors, is to be found in the warning it affords to the "faithful" of the attempt to conceal reactionary plans in the disguise of a pretended "progressive democracy." It is unfortunate that great nominally democratic papers, like the World, cannot give more convincing evidence of their progressive democracy than persistent misrepresentation of its greatest exponent; and that they should suppose that party harmony can be restored or party interest advanced by attacks upon him.

By whom was Bryan three times "repudiated?" By "Standard Oil;" by the "Morganheims" and the Aldriches; by the steel trust and all the steal trusts; by the "System," by the "Interests," the individuals, corporations, and combinations of corporations that had their snouts and forefeet in the swill of special privileges—to the success of whose efforts to keep them there the World and its kind contributed, and without which treasonable succor Bryan would have pulled them squealing from the trough. These rejected Bryan, as they will al-

ways reject anyone who seeks to loosen their vampire hold upon the public.

The World does not remind us of how millions of "fat," fried by Hanna from protected and entrenched privilege, it cost to "repudiate" Bryan. It does not remind us that, without money enough to buy postage stamps, Bryan three times led the hosts of progressive democracy up to the very castle moat of the money barons, the tariff barons, the graft barons, et id omne genus, and was swept back each time only by the deluge of slush-gold that Hanna and his band let loose.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that the result of the election means a recession of Bryanism—of progressivism. Republican insurgency, which contributed to the democratic victory, is the outward manifestation in the republican party of that which, in the democratic party, has taken the name "Bryanism." In both parties it is real democracy—opposition to the rule of privilege and pelf. It was truly said by the standpatters that Roosevelt was Bryanizing the republican party though it was in truth Dolliver, Cummins, Beveridge and LaFollette, more than he, who were accomplishing that revolution. The repudiation of Roosevelt was no rejection of anything for which Bryan has stood. So long as Roosevelt was believed to be committing larceny of Bryan's principles from patriotic motives, there was none more popular than he. When he was finally understood, when, in addition to his known disregard of constitutional limits to executive power, and his disclosed willingness to solicit and accept secret aid from the "malefactors" he professed to war upon, it was made plain that he was aiming at a third term and a perpetual dictatorship, and that to realize his ambition he was as ready to stand pat with Lodge as to "insurge" with Beveridge, then the people smote him into the dust with a mighty smite. But insurgency and Bryanism did not fall with him.

Incidentally, it may be said, that never was there a sharper contest between the repulse of

a champion of principle, and the overthrow of a swash-buckler, animated solely by personal ambition. Roosevelt, when routed from the field, sounded no note of defiance to his foes or of comfort or hope to his followers. Wrapped in wrath and disappointed egotism, he skulked to his lair, denying himself to friend, foe, and stranger alike. He "had nothing to say," to anyone. When the avalanche of purchased and coerced ballots piled up disaster for Bryan and his followers, Bryan's own disappointment was forgotten by him in their greater loss, and, more heroic in defeat than he would have been in victory, he rallied his forces and sounded the advance.

We may thank insurgency for much of our victory—and the more so because insurgency is democracy. The insurgents in the congress have advocated those things and opposed those things that the majority of democrats in each house have advocated and opposed. In those republican states where the insurgent movement was organized and had candidates, those candidates were almost uniformly elected. Where there were no such candidates, such insurgent votes as were cast went to elect "progressive democrats." That was the case in this state. There were five standpat republican congressmen up for re-election, no one of whom was a true representative of the state or of the progressive sentiment in his party. There was no outlet for that sentiment except a vote for a democrat.

The opinion that this state, or any considerable part of it, was carried democratic by unusually effective organization or by unusual pecuniary resources, rather than by discontent with all that is implied by "Aldrichism," fails to take into account the glacial drift started in the democratic party by Bryan, and which has swept beyond party lines. The movement that has made this state democratic is unorganized, but irresistible. More perfect party organization in times past, and greater financial resources, have failed to effect what an awakened understanding and an aroused independence have accomplished.

A fatal error will be made, and the scepter which has passed into our hands will pass from them, if the party in the legislature fails to take proper account of what has brought about the change in this state, as well as in the nation at large, and to be governed accordingly in one of the most important duties it will have to discharge, and to apply a progressive democratic principle—a Bryan policy—popular election of senators. Not the smallest factor in the putting of a democratic majority into the legislature was the perpetual alternation of Scott and Elkins, two of Aldrich's faithful gray wolves, hard and fast representatives of the interests, who regarded themselves as absolved, by the price their offices cost, from accountability to the mass of the people. Republican success would insure the retention of these two millionaire agents of arrogant big business. The republican legislative candidates were their branded property. Escape from Scott and Elkins lay only in democratic success.

A situation anticipated by but few of the democratic legislators-elect will confront them, and there are two ways in which they may meet it; they may prove that the people who voted for them have not escaped that from which they fled; they may follow the republican example set by Scott's election and elect a senator whom the voters would not elect, whose claim to consideration is not a demonstrated capacity for public service, or devotion to public interest, but the possession of great wealth acquired through protection and privilege, and who would become a recruit for the gray wolves of the senate; or they may elect a democrat such as might be the choice of the voters who elected them, if the matter could be submitted to their free choice. There are democrats a plenty in the southern end of this state (which ought to have the senator), whose wealth or poverty would not be inquired about, and who, rich or poor, are eligible. Some of them have coquetted with the forbidden things just enough to be acceptable to Bill Sawyers, but not enough to hurt, and some of them he might now regard as "unco quid," but in whose presence he could stand unabashed after he shall have accepted progressive democracy as a fact. Party success can not be insured, nor democratic principles be advanced, by following an evil precedent that has contributed so largely to republican disaster. Respectfully,

MAYNARD T. STILES.

Charleston, December 13, 1910.

A Lorimer by any other name would be as bad in New Jersey as he is in Illinois.

The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory

A NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT

"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory"—but as he said it he took from willing, working men the necessities of life, that he might gather gold—and the glory he knew was greed; another took usury from the poor—and the glory he knew was cunning; another surrendered his conscience to his party—and the glory he knew was folly.

"For Thine is the kingdom—" It came in life-full notes, for I read its meaning in the campfires lighted by those who have broken the shackles of party pride; I felt its strength in the business methods of unpretending men who take their toll and give to every man his due.

"For Thine is the kingdom"—and it was a new, sweet song, for I saw it spring to life in the lovelight of the mother's eyes, in the laughter of the little child, in faithful friendships, in generous deeds.

Then I threw open my own dear memory doors and saw go trooping through—some with tears in their eyes, but all with laughter in their hearts—those who had brought happiness to me. What a line of loving, living men and women and children they are! Some are in the Now; others are in the Forever; but all are frequent visitors to this hall and never do they come but they bring—and leave—something of good.

I knew then that the song I had heard was, in truth, a psalm of life; and as the last echo of the footfall of those I love had died away my listening heart received this New Year thought:

"Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," for all that is Thine is mine—and mine is the kingdom of good, where the power of love brings the glory of God.

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

Lincoln, Neb., January 1, 1911.