

Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

Who Wrote It.

"These are words of weighty import. They involve consequences of the most momentous character. I take leave to say that if the principles thus announced should ever receive the sanction of a majority of this court, a radical and mischievous change in our system of government will be the result. We will, in that event, pass from the era of constitutional liberty guarded and protected by a written constitution into an era of legislative absolutism."

Here is a serious charge brought against the majority of the supreme court of the United States. The court is accused of bringing about a "change in our system of government"—not only a change but "radical and mischievous" change. It is charged that in the event of that decision—and the decision was made—"constitutional liberty" would be lost and "an era of legislative absolutism" ushered in.

What graver indictment could be brought against our highest judicial tribunal? Who wrote it? Who is guilty of thus reflecting upon the patriotism and purpose of the court? Let the republican papers ferret out the culprit and visit condign punishment upon him. Let him feel the righteous wrath of those pure and immaculate souls who always bow to a court decision when it is on their side, and never utter a reflection against a judge (unless he decides against them).

Who wrote the words above quoted? Did they emanate from a demagogue; was this the wall of a defunct candidate; was it the speech of some disturber of the peace—some stirrer up of discontent?

No, the words will be found in a dissenting opinion of a justice of the supreme court of the United States of America. A democratic justice? No. A populist justice? No. A silver republican justice? No.

What then? They are the words of a republican justice of the supreme court—Justice Harlan—appointed by a republican president.

Hereafter, when republican papers desire to condemn those who criticize a supreme court decision, let them begin at the top and assail Justice Harlan first. After they have administered to him the rebuke which he, from their standpoint, deserves, they will be too much exhausted to attack those who quote Justice Harlan against the court.

Be Vigilant.

Several states hold elections this fall and these elections will have an important bearing upon the party as well as upon the nation.

The reorganizing element is seeking to secure control of the party; it does not openly proclaim its hostility to the Kansas City platform, nor does it propose a platform for the consideration of the voters.

Its plan of operation is to put forward candidates for the party organization who are not in harmony with the principles or purposes of the party. They work under cover of a desire for harmony; but it is the harmony the burglar desires when he hopes that the members of the family will not awake until the valuables are removed from the house. The democratic party has no reason for existence except as it champions the rights and interests of the masses.

It has made its recent campaigns, beginning with 1896, almost without money and yet the party has polled a larger vote than it ever polled when it had a large campaign fund. It can secure a large campaign fund again whenever the leaders of the party make secret pledges to the corporations, and these pledges will not be made by leaders whom the people trust.

If the men who deserted the party in 1896 or in 1900 are put at the head of the party before they give evidence of a change of heart they will drive more voters away from the party than they will bring to it.

The rank and file of the democratic party can respect an honest republican who calls himself a republican, but they will not respect a dishonest republican who calls himself a democrat. The democratic party has adopted a patriotic platform; it has asserted the right of the American people to have a financial policy of their own, to have industrial independence among the people and constitutional government wherever the flag floats. If the party will stand firm it can expect victory whenever the people realize the dangerous tendency of republican policies.

But if the democratic party passes under the control of men who are in harmony with republican ideas the party will be in no position to appeal to the confidence of the people. If republican policies are good the republican party has a right to administer them, and it should be permitted to enjoy the protection of its copyright. Those who believe in democratic principles as set forth in the Kansas City platform must be vigilant and that vigilance must begin with the primaries. Do not allow a man to be placed upon any committee, precinct, county, state or national, unless he is a believer in the Kansas City platform. If a man opposed to the Kansas City platform is sent as a delegate to any convention he should be bound by instructions and should have associated with him a sufficient majority who are sound on the platform. If a man objects to instructions, leave him at home; no democratic delegate will object to an expression from the voters whom he seeks to represent.

A republican speech would not sound well at a wool-growers' banquet this year.

Mr. DeLima is one man who understands the decision in the Porto Rican case. Mr. DeLima gets his money back.

The truth of the old adage that "reading maketh a full man" was never better shown than after a reading of all the diverse opinions of the supreme court on the Porto Rican question.

They "Distrust" a Cuban Patriot.

Now it is reported that the administration politicians propose to take a hand in Cuban politics. They are opposed to the election of the Cuban patriot, Maximo Gomez, to be the first president of the new republic. It is said that these administration politicians "distrust" General Gomez, and the present mayor of Havana, acting under the inspiration of Governor-General Wood, is now organizing a party to accomplish General Gomez' defeat.

It will be interesting to have some of these administration politicians explain to us by what authority they interfere in the political affairs of Cuba. It is interesting to be told that these politicians, who properly have no concern in Cuban affairs, "distrust" the man who imperiled his life in defense of Cuban independence.

Is It True?

The New York World is authority for this statement: "The World is also in a position to announce on unimpeachable authority that two days before the Porto Rican cases were decided the court had unanimously agreed that the constitution was in force wherever the United States exercised sovereignty. But immediately before the court met to make its decision public, Justice Brown changed his attitude on the question."

If we accept this as a correct statement, it would seem strange that Justice Brown could on so short a notice make so material a change. Justice Brown's opinion was a most radical one. It is to be hoped, however, that the World's "unimpeachable authority" may be successfully impeached. The character of Justice Brown's opinion, bad as it is, is not so bad as would be a condition wherein Justices of the highest court in the land flopped on a moment's notice. In the income tax decision we had one instance of a judge changing his mind between sessions, and that instance did considerable damage to the supreme court.

Corporations Should Pay for Privileges

The supreme court of New Jersey has held that the towns of that state may tax the road-bed and appurtenances of street railway and other companies using public thoroughfares. This decision is in support of a franchise-tax law enacted in 1900. Under this law New Jersey towns may collect two per cent on the gross receipts of corporations enjoying the privilege of using the public streets. To be sure the corporations object to this tax, but it is strange that all the municipalities of this country have not required corporations to pay for the high privileges they enjoy.

Money in Circulation.

The Washington correspondent of the Chicago Record Herald says that "an indication of national prosperity is to be found in the large volume of money in circulation. This now amounts to \$2,183,576,890, a gain of more than \$100,000,000 over the amount in circulation a year ago. In the last twenty-two years the gain in circulation amounts to the tremendous sum of \$1,368,310,169. The circulation per capita is now the largest in the country's history, amounting to \$28.13. One year ago it was \$26.71."

Can it be possible that the large volume of money in circulation is any basis for national prosperity?

Can it be possible that the bimetalists were not wholly wrong when they insisted that the country needed a larger volume of money in circulation?

The Abuses of Despotism.

"For good or for ill," says the Philadelphia Ledger, "the principle has been declared that the United States may, through congress, govern subject peoples. It is unlikely any abuses will be committed under this principle, but it is a principle that admits of the abuses of despotism."

The Philadelphia Ledger is to be congratulated on its sublime confidence. The Ledger should, however, know that already great abuses have been committed under this "principle," the very abuses, in fact against which our own forefathers rebelled, and for the destruction of which they took up arms.

A principle that admits of the abuses of despotism has no place in a free country.

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and no people can safely depend for their liberties upon the pleasure or generosity of one man or set of men.

The government that sanctions "a principle that admits of the abuses of despotism" has already taken on the elements of a monarchy.

When any men seek to establish, in a free country, "a principle that admits of the abuses of despotism," it is time for men who love liberty to make effective protest against the innovation.

The courts have recently been called upon to restrain market speculation. In this case the judge held that the dealers could not legally sell stocks which they did not own. This would seem a very simple proposition, and yet if the principle were firmly established it would go a long way toward preventing stock market gambling.

Mr. Morris K. Jessup likes to prate about the "bonds between Great Britain and the United States." If the bonds stopped drawing interest would Mr. Jessup take so much interest?

BANKS AND PANICS.

RECENT FLURY ON WALL STREET NOT OVER.

Banks Have Called the Millions of Loans to Aid Their Resources—Withdrawal of Vast Amount from Legitimate Business to Aid Stock Gambling.

A systematic effort is being made to impress the country with the idea that the panic was entirely confined to Wall street and has had no disastrous effect on the finances of the country. It is very difficult for outsiders to grasp the real condition of affairs for the banks of New York are members of the Clearing House which is a close corporation and the weekly statement they give of their united transactions is arranged on a system of averages and will seem to be made to fit conditions and gull the public into believing everything is lovely when the opposite may be the case. For instance the report for the week after the panic gave an increase of the surplus reserve of \$5,172,450. This on its face would indicate that the banks had lots of money on hand over and above the legal reserve requirements though the total reserve had decreased over a million. But during the week the banks had called in loans to an immense amount so that on the average the loans had decreased over twenty-four millions and deposits had decreased over twenty-five millions. The decrease in loans and deposits are the largest on record and show a wonderful shrinkage of business and indicates that the boasted confidence that there will be no bad effects from the panic is not shared by the bank managers or their customers to any great extent.

So unfavorable is this statement that the Financier which is a noted financial publication, says of it: "The current statement, however, seems widely at variance with known facts and that the week before, the bank totals conflicted in several particulars." This is in fact saying that the statements are "fixed" to suit the purpose of those who are at the head of the Clearing House Association and are not to be relied on. If this is so, their other statements which are given to the public in the form of articles in the newspapers controlled by the money power and the trusts and corporations must be received with the same doubts that the Financier casts upon the official statement of the banks themselves.

There is no doubt that the banks are holding a large amount of the watered stock issued by the trusts as part of their security for loans to favored customers and if these stocks are not unloaded on the public before long there will have to be another record breaking statement that will be even more unsatisfactory than the present one.

THE LATEST WAR CLOUD.

There is doubtless much unrest amongst the nations of Europe and if it ever suits the great financiers a general European war would be in progress. Mr. Stead, the Englishman who is a peace at any price man, is now afraid that a war is impending between the United States and England. Mr. Stead, who dwells in the midst of alarms, says the Philadelphia Times, lays in a new one every few days. His latest is that when Congress meets the Clayton-Bulwer treaty "will be torn into shreds and flung in our faces—and it will be necessary then to choose between fighting and eating humble pie." As he thinks John Bull will prefer to fight, he throws out this hint of a gathering storm as an encouragement to the Boers to keep in the field.

The Boers show no disposition to leave the field, but we should not advise them to count too much upon Mr. Stead's alarming prophecy. Whatever may become of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, there is no going to be any war over it or any serious disturbance. It will not even be thought worth while to tear it into shreds, since there is scarcely more than a shred of it remaining, and as to throwing it in anybody's face, it is rather our British friends who have been inopportunistly throwing it in our faces. And yet we have not been very mad about it—at least, not fighting mad.

There is really much more feeling in this country against Great Britain on account of the war with the Boers, whose defense appeals to our sympathies, than on account of an obsolete treaty that nobody clearly understands or greatly cares about. The negotiations for the abrogation of the treaty were bungled last year, but if the time comes when it appears to be actually in the way of any practical purpose, we have no doubt that it can be properly disposed of without requiring anybody to eat humble pie.

The disturbance in South Africa would be a more serious menace to international relations if we were not ourselves so complicated with our colonies and dependencies as to be fearful of having our own record flung in our faces. So the Boers will have to fight on unaided.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

Democratic newspaper writers and orators have for years declared that the public acts of the Republicans belie their platforms and pointed to the legislation enacted by them and their rapid change of front on political and economic questions as a sure proof that such a party was not to be trusted to administer the government. It is seldom however in politics that the claims of a rival party can be substantiated by a conspicuous advocate of the policies of their opponents. There must be something radically wrong when this is the case, especially when the advocate is the

editor of a publication that receives its support from the party who it feels the occasion demands it to decry. Prof. George Gunton has been a consistent Republican and protectionist, yet in the May number of his magazine he publishes an article from which is condensed the following:

Political parties come into existence for the purpose of incorporating certain ideas into the public policy of the nation. So long as a party is vitalized by an idea, whether in the majority or not, it is usually clean and aggressive. On the other hand, it is as natural as for the seasons to follow each other that political parties will sterilize and decline in character and influence in proportion as moral ideas and vital principles cease to be their controlling motives.

The Republican party appears to be nearing, if it has not already reached, this stage. When it was born, in 1856, it came with a mission. Inspired with the moral and political righteousness of its policy, it neither wavered nor weakened, but rose to the occasion with every increase of responsibility. It then commanded the endorsement and admiration of the best minds of every race and nation, and earned the title of "the party of moral ideas." It saved the union, blotted out slavery, and made the United States a nation. Under its leadership for a quarter of a century the nation experienced unparalleled industrial development and prosperity.

Here the Republican party reached the end of its program, and instead of developing in ideas and statesmanship commensurate with the progress of the country, it began to fossilize. It became self-satisfied and indifferent to the high principles it had made historic, and began to bask in the sunshine of office and to rely on the favor of patronage for success.

On every hand the evidence is apparent that the Republican party has practically outlived its reputation as "the party of moral ideas" and is deteriorating into a party of moral indifference, political drift, and "boss" manipulation. It is rapidly losing the confidence of the nation. Republican cities have already begun to elect anti-Republicans and even revolutionary administrations.

A PHILIPPINE FARCE.

The Taft Philippine commission has reported to the war department a form of civil government for the archipelago. Judging from some of the clauses the commission evidently intends to be the "whole thing" itself, though it will allow the Filipinos to imagine, until they discover their mistake, that they are electing their own officers. It may be as the commission claims—"a form of civil government"—and it would appear to be "a form" only, for there is not a vestige of civil liberty. The commission "is expressly empowered to veto any action taken" is one of the provisions, and it would seem that that alone would make a farce of the whole system. They also reserve the right "to remove any official at any time when in the judgment of the commission this is desirable, and in cases wherein an official elected by popular vote does not suit the members of the commission his election can be declared void." If the Filipinos, after they understand the matter, put themselves to the trouble of holding an election and voting, they are much greater fools than they have been represented to be. Taft should remember that "you can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time," but you can't fool even all the Filipinos, all the time.

POLITICAL COMMENT.

General Chaffee's remarks about the Anglo-American alliance have raised up a storm of protests. His friends are trying to explain that it was only an after dinner speech and the general should not be taken too literally.

Negotiations are still proceeding for the purchase of the Danish West India Islands, but the trouble now is that the inhabitants no longer are willing that we should annex them. The tariff on Puerto Rico and the repudiation of our promises to Cuba have opened their eyes.

The Nicaraguans are now ready to concede anything if we will build the canal. They fear the Panama scheme will be taken up, which it will likely be, if there is a chance for Hanna and the Wall street attachment of the administration to make the French pay a good round commission.

Senator Cullom aims to be chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Senate and is making a special study of reciprocity. Don't waste your time, Senator, on reciprocity but examine the tariff schedules, with a view to reforming the most outrageous of them and study to be a statesman and not a servile follower of Hanna and the trusts.

The Manila scandals do not seem to lessen as they are probed, but one thing is strange that civilians and subordinate officials are the only ones that so far have been punished. This result is to be expected where a free press is made a criminal offense, since the deportation of Editor Rice for exposing a few minor frauds in the customs service.

A Democratic panic was predicted if Mr. Bryan was elected, but a suggestion that a Republican panic might also come if Mr. McKinley was re-elected would have been scoffed at by Hanna and Co. and yet the Republican panic has occurred and about the worst one Wall street has ever known. The much vaunted financial legislation of the protective tariff, or great exports do not ensure prosperity and yet we were told either would ensure it.

It is estimated one-third of the dwellers upon earth are habitual users of tobacco.

FEEDING THE ELEECHES

HOW PRODUCERS SUFFER FOR IDLE WEALTH.

A Police Court Dialogue That Explains the Situation—Every Worker's Wages Is Confiscated, Not by the State, but by the Rich.

Recently, during a trial in one of our courts, it became necessary for the judge himself to question a witness, and the following colloquy took place:

Judge—Are you a married man?
Witness—No.
J.—Have you any one depending on you for support?

W.—Yes; a large number of them.
J.—Are they disabled physically or mentally from supporting themselves?
W.—No; they are fully as able as I to support themselves.

J.—Then why do you support these able-bodied persons?

W.—Because the customs and arrangements of our present state of society force me to.

J.—These persons, doing no manner of useful work, and you a poor man, having but your labor, are compelled to give part of it to them?

W.—Yes; I am forced to divide by giving them three-fourths of what I produce.

J.—Is there no way to get rid of these human leeches?

W.—Not at once; for nearly all society especially these leeches, as you call them, insist that this is a natural state of affairs, and has always existed; they are eternally ding-donging in my ears that, were it not for these leeches, I could not work at all, and death would immediately overtake me. But in the near future we'll be able to rid ourselves of them, when they'll have to live off their own sweat.

J.—If you should die would not the leeches have to work?

W.—Oh, no; they hold in reserve a vast number who are about to be overtaken by death from enforced idleness and they would think it a God-sent privilege to toil in support of these leeches.

J.—Would you please give me the name and address of these leeches?

W.—Though it is solely from my labor that their lives are made a continual round of pleasure, still they have the brutal ingratitude to refuse to live in the same locality as myself, and often they will not condescend to live in the same country; and as my constant toil enables them at their pleasure to change their climate, scenery and society, I can not give you their permanent address. For apparent reasons they do not want to be known by their real names, but insist on being known by their nom de plumes.

J.—But what are their names in fact, I am going to have them arraigned before the bar of justice, these ravagers of society.

W.—Their names are CAPITALISTS.

J.—Mr. Sheriff, hustle this witness out of the court room; he's a Populist.—Missouri Socialist.

CUBA LIBRE.

When sailed from Tampa Bay,
(Cuba Libre!)

And our ships got under weigh,
(Cuba Libre!)

As we floated down the tide,
Crowding to the steamer's side,
You remember how we cried:
"Cuba Libre!"

When we spied the island shore,
(Cuba Libre!)

Then we shouted loud once more:
"Cuba Libre!"

As we sank Cervera's ships
Where the southern sea-wall dips,
What again was on our lips?
"Cuba Libre!"

These are foreign words, you know—
"Cuba Libre!"—

That we used so long ago;
(Cuba Libre!)

And in all the time between
Such a lot of things we've seen,
We've forgotten what they mean,
"Cuba Libre!"

Let us ask the president,
(Cuba Libre!)

What that bit of Spanish meant,
(Cuba Libre!)

Ask McKinley, Root and Hay
What on earth we meant to say
When we shouted night and day:
"Cuba Libre!"

But alas! they will not speak,
(Cuba Libre!)

For their memories are weak,
(Cuba Libre!)

If you have a lexicon,
Borrowed from a Spanish don,
Send it down to Washington,
(Cuba Libre!)

—Ernest Crosby, in Life.

THROWING AWAY LAND.

A contemporary rips up the entire land system of the country, especially the practice of endowment by donations of land, in the statement that the State University was endowed by the proceeds of the sales of 82 sections (160 acres each) of lands granted to the state, which having been sold, yield an income of but \$135,000, whereas the university requires \$510,000.

Our contemporary adds that had these sections of land been leased instead of sold, they would now yield an income of \$524,000. In other words, values which would have supported the university and left a surplus of \$14,000, have been, to the extent of nearly three-fourths, given away to speculators. Had this city, at the beginning of American occupation, leased its public lands, instead of throwing them away by sale, there would now be an income from them of more than triple the amount of our taxes, which would have enabled the city and county not only to have constructed, owned

and operated all its public utilities, but to have done so gratuitously, or at an almost nominal charge.

TRUSTS SUPPRESS INVENTIONS

A man living in Chicago has invented a lubricant in which water is a principal if not the chief ingredient. He has demonstrated its value. He has proven to the satisfaction of several railroad managements that it is not only the cheapest but the safest lubricant known to industrial science. These roads are willing to buy this product and use it to the exclusion of all others, at least until a better is discovered.

But here steps in the Standard Oil Company and says to the railroad: "If you use this lubricant and cease buying those manufactured by us, we will retaliate by refusing to ship over your lines."

The business of the Standard Oil is so large no railroad company dare withstand the demand, hence the maker of the new and cheapest lubricant experiences extreme difficulty in marketing his product.

Were the railroads in the hands of the government the Standard Oil Company could not enforce a demand so out of harmony with the laws of legitimate production and distribution.—East Oregonian.

NOT POPULISTS.

Mayor Johnson made a proposition to buy the Cleveland Terminal & Valley railroad for \$2,340,000. The proposition was made to J. H. Wadsworth, representing the Valley road at the meeting of the auditors.

"Think of it," laughed the mayor, "twenty-nine locomotives returned by the Valley railroad for less than \$1,000 each."

"Do you want to buy the Valley road for what it has been returned for taxation?"

"You bet I do!" cried Mayor Johnson, "and I'll give you 40 per cent more than that. Yes, I'll give you three times what you value it at in your tax return."

"Will you take it?"

"I'll make a big cash deposit right here."

"Oh, don't be in such a hurry," said Wadsworth, backing away. "I'll think about it. I don't own the whole road." "All right, think it over," laughed the mayor, turning away. "I'll take it at those figures."—Plaindealer.

The leaders of the real Democratic party today are men who are doing for America what the Hebrew prophets did for the Jewish nation. "These prophets," says the great Jewish scholar, Darmester, "were men to whom justice was an active force. The idea of right was converted by them into a fact before which all other facts pale. By virtue of believing in justice they advanced it to the rank of a factor in history. They taught many to live and die for the right without the hope of Elysian fields. They taught the people that without ideals 'the future hangs before them in tatters.' That the ideal alone is the aim of life, and that it consists not in the glory of the conqueror, nor in riches nor in power, but in holding up as a torch to the nations the example of 'better laws and of a higher soul.'"

"There is nothing in this world," said the president in a speech at San Francisco, "that so promotes the universal brotherhood of man as commerce." What could Mr. McKinley have meant by saying that commerce promotes the universal brotherhood of man? That is not protection doctrine. It is free trade doctrine. And what does he mean by encouraging commerce? Would he abolish the protective tariff, which hangs like a millstone about the neck of universal trade? Has Mr. McKinley become a free trader, favoring open markets and unrestricted commerce? If not, what kind of universal brotherhood it is that he would have us aspire to?—The Public.

King Edward's wages have been raised to \$2,350,000 a year. Some Americans will wonder what Edward does to deserve such a large salary. When they have satisfied themselves on this point they might begin to figure on what John D. Rockefeller does to earn some \$50,000,000 or more a year. We elect a president ostensibly to be our chief executive and pay him \$50,000 a year. But our real executive is Mr. Rockefeller, and he doesn't have to take the trouble to be elected.—Helena Independent.

The insolent assumption of John D. Rockefeller that the wages paid by his oil trust during the past thirty years were a "gift to labor," has caused great amusement among those who are prompt to see the humorous side of things, and aroused the indignation of the serious-minded. But all know that without labor Rockefeller's money would have produced nothing, and that his "gift" was merely an exchange of money for labor, and not a fair exchange on his part at that, if the truth were known.

Will on Graphophone Cylinder.

A wealthy land owner near Smolensk, Russia, died not long ago, and after the funeral his heirs looked vainly for the will, but without success. A few days later a young man, seeing a graphophone on the table in the library, put into it a record which he supposed was that of a popular Russian song. To his amazement and terror, instead of a song he heard the dead man's voice recite the words of the missing will. The heirs were notified of the discovery, lawyers were summoned, and the question then arose whether a will left on a graphophone cylinder would be deemed valid by the courts. This question is now before the supreme court of St. Petersburg.