

The Commoner.

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An Inquiry Answered.

A reader asks for a definition of the word "Democracy" as used by Thomas Jefferson, and also a definition of the word "Republicanism" as used by Abraham Lincoln. If the reader will compare the utterances of Jefferson with the utterances of Lincoln he will find that Lincoln used the word "Republican" in the same sense that Jefferson used the word "democrat." In fact, the followers of Jefferson were first called Republicans, and Jefferson speaks of Republicanism as synonymous with Democracy. For instance, in 1790, in a reply to an address, (see Jeffersonian Cyclopedia, page 754,) he said:

"The republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open and secret war with the rights of men."

In 1793, in a letter to Madison, he said:

"The war between France and England has brought forward the republicans and monarchs in every state so openly that their relative numbers are perfectly visible. It appears that the latter are as nothing."

In 1821, toward the close of his life, in a letter to General Dearborn, he said:

"It is, indeed, of little consequence who governs us if they sincerely and zealously cherish the principles of union and republicanism."

Jefferson embodied in the Declaration of Independence his idea of Democracy and of Republican government, for the word Republican is taken from the word republic, and that means a government in which the people act through representatives chosen by themselves.

Among those who believe in a Democratic Republic, there is a wide difference between those who emphasize the democratic part of the name and want the government as near as possible to the people, and those who emphasize the representative part of the name and want the government as far removed from the people as possible. But Jefferson and Lincoln had confidence in the people—both as to their right to a voice in government and as to their capacity for self-government.

Lincoln was an enthusiastic admirer of Thomas Jefferson, and in one of his speeches said that he drew every political principle he had from the Declaration of Independence.

While there is little or no difference between the meanings of the words "Democrat" and "Republican" as used by Lincoln and Jefferson, each word has a party sense in which it describes the members of a political organization. In this sense the meaning of the word may change as a party changes. The word "Democratic" stands for different policies today from what it did when it described those who supported Mr. Cleveland's administration, and the word "Republican" now stands for

principles quite antagonistic to those which Lincoln advocated. Some think more of the party name than they do of the principles for which a party stands, and such change their principles, when necessary, to maintain their party affiliations.

A Lover of Liberty.

The editor of THE COMMONER has recently met an American citizen of Russian birth whose love for liberty and whose intense devotion to our principles of government ought to serve as a rebuke to those who are endeavoring to obliterate the difference between a republic and a monarchy. He was the son of a well-to-do Russian and received a university education. While in college he happened to see copies of the Declaration of American Independence and the constitution of the United States. The governmental theories set forth in these instruments found a response in his heart, and he became so devoted a believer in government resting for its authority upon the consent of the governed that he was compelled to leave Russia and the estate he inherited from his father was confiscated. He is now building himself up in his chosen occupation with every promise of success. He knows what imperialism means and prizes the right to think for himself and to express his thoughts.

His face glowed with patriotic pride as he declared that he would rather live in this country, even though poor, and be free to believe in our form of government, than to enjoy his family estate and be compelled to live under the arbitrary rule of a monarch.

Those who are so anxious to exploit foreign lands that they look with favor upon a colonial policy do not realize how steadily and stealthily the doctrine of colonialism extinguishes that regard for the inalienable rights of man upon which our government is founded.

The Producer's Share.

The New York Nation turns its face away from its golden god long enough to shout a denial of Mr. Bryan's statement that every decade finds a less proportion of the wealth produced in the hands of the producers. The statement is so easily verified that it is surprising that the Nation, even with its predisposition to take the side of wealth, would deny it. The census of 1890 showed a general and alarming increase in the proportion of tenants and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of home owners, and Mr. George K. Holmes of the Census Department, forming his opinion from the census figures, stated in the Political Science Quarterly that nine per cent. of the families of the United States

own seventy-one per cent. of the wealth of the nation, while the remaining ninety-one per cent. divided among them only twenty-nine per cent. of the wealth.

As an illustration of what is going on one state will be cited now. Mr. Eltweed Pomeroy in an article written for the Challenge has given some tables showing the distribution of wealth in Massachusetts as set forth by the probate of estates. From 1829 to 1831, sixty-one per cent. of the population died without property, 19 per cent. died owning property worth less than one thousand dollars in value, and thirteen per cent. owned property valued at from one thousand to five thousand dollars. About ninety-four per cent. of the people owned about twenty-five per cent. of the property. From 1859 to 1861, the statistics showed that sixty-six per cent. died without property, that twelve per cent. died with property worth less than one thousand dollars, and less than fourteen per cent. owned between one thousand and five thousand dollars worth of property—about ninety-two per cent. of the people owned less than fifteen per cent. of the property. From 1879 to 1881, sixty-nine per cent. died without property, nine per cent. had less than one thousand dollars, and less than thirteen per cent. had property from one thousand to five thousand dollars value—by this time about ninety-one per cent. owned less than ten per cent. of the property.

These figures show a constant increase in the percentage of persons who die without property, and a constant decrease in the possessions of a large majority of the people. The last ten years will doubtless show still greater concentration of wealth. The Nation may try to justify this concentration; it may argue that the speculators and manipulators are entitled to a larger and larger share of the wealth produced, but it cannot disprove the proposition stated by Mr. Bryan.

"Citizen's in Spirit."

Congressman Hull of Iowa, who recently returned from a visit to the Philippines, says:

"Of course it is impossible to make an Anglo-Saxon out of an oriental, therefore, the Filipino will probably never be an American citizen in the broad sense that is understood by all that term conveys to the man born in the United States, of white parents. But as soon as he gets a sufficient education and becomes a little more impregnated with our ideas and loses some of the ideas acquired by a 300 years' association with the Spaniards, the Filipino will be a citizen in spirit, patriotism, industry and education and will be worthy of participating to the fullest extent in all the benefits of this government.

"Of course we will have to govern them with firmness as well as with kindness. I think that