

which the convention had decided to ignore, many who had advocated his nomination were so indignant that they were willing to withdraw the nomination, and even the rock-ribbed democracy of Missouri could not be held to the ticket on election day.

He polled nearly a million and a half votes less than the party polled eight years before when free silver was the paramount issue, whereas with the natural increase in the population he ought to have polled more. If the democrats were willing to overlook his effort to conciliate the gold democrats at the expense of the silver democrats, he ought to be generous enough to refrain from insulting them. Those whom he describes as followers of fads were advocating a financial system which was tried in the United States for eighty-one years and advocated by the party in Congress and in the platforms. The quantitative theory of money has been vindicated by events and Judge Parker's reference to the subject shows that he is as ignorant of the principles of monetary science as the Wall Street crowd, whose views he seems to accept.

But he does not stop with a denunciation of bimetalism, but proceeds at once to make against the anti-monopoly democrats the insinuation which the ultra-corporation element of the republican press is constantly making, namely, that they are opposed to thrift and industry. Judge Parker says:

The lesson to be learned from this is that, whether as Americans or as partisans, we must struggle out of the treacherous bogs of policy and get back to the solid ground of principle. In doing this, the first and most important step is recognition of a fact inherent in our society, fixed in our laws and institutions, and the consistent policy of the democratic party from the earliest days. This is, that honest thrift, the natural fruit of industry, must be encouraged and promoted.

It ought to be clear by this that if we endorse, or accept, or even fail to oppose, any policy which shall directly or remotely suggest even the possibility of confiscation, or which, by any agitation so much as threatens the measure of values, we shall arouse the suspicions and invite the opposition of our people, whether their accumulations are invested in farms, town houses, mines, deposits in savings banks, insurance policies, or in our varied industries wherever found.

The judge's language is important because it shows the standpoint from which he views public questions. He is on the side of the corporations and is making the same arguments that they make. Those who, like the editor of *The Commoner*, had hoped to see him take the side of the masses against the encroachments of predatory wealth are doomed to disappointment. He takes the Cleveland view (he even specifically commends Mr. Cleveland's administration) that the country must take care of wealth and leave wealth to take care of the people. The solicitude shown by him lest industry may be discouraged shows either a shallow understanding of the subject, or that his sympathies are on the wrong side. Those who believe in equal rights to all and special privileges to none are the real defenders of thrift and industry, for they desire to protect the earnings of the average man from the injustice of railway extortion, the larceny of a high tariff and the highway robbery of the trusts.

It is to be regretted that Judge Parker has taken his place with the extreme "conservatives" who oppose all effective reform, but his failure to make his reactionary policy popular last fall will reduce his influence to a minimum. The reform element—the radical element to which he would deny the name of democracy—will control the next convention and give to the next campaign the enthusiasm which was so woefully lacking last year. Judge Parker's backers took the democratic party up upon the mountain and tempted it with the promise of success. When they failed to bring the success promised they lost their only argument. The democratic party will go forward, and the recent victory in Chicago shows the advantage of honesty and courage over evasion and compromise.

OF COURSE IT WILL FAIL

The Des Moines, Ia., *Register and Leader*, a republican paper, referring to the primary pledge plan of organization, says: "It is a simple program," and adds:

"If the condition on which it hinges should be found to exist when the time comes it is a splendid program—that is if the republicans fail to make good. It is true President Roosevelt

is educating the people to demand reforms. It is true there will be unrest if nothing comes of his activity. It is true it will be Mr. Bryan's year if, as he predicts, the administration is just entering the valley of the shadow the democrats passed through during Cleveland's second term.

"But what is there in the record of the republican party to warrant the assumption that it will fail to make good? Republicans have had differences before, and have never failed yet to come together on a working basis and legislate. Why will they fail now? Does Mr. Bryan really look to the senate to balk the president? Does he really believe that nothing will be done to carry out the Roosevelt pledges?"

There is everything in the record of the republican party to warrant the assumption that it will "fail to make good." The *Register and Leader* says that while republicans have had differences before "they have never failed yet to get together on a working basis and legislate." But the *Register and Leader* can not have forgotten that the party has not legislated in the public interests. Whenever the pressure from the people became so strong that it could not be ignored, the republican house passed a measure which seemed to meet, in a degree, the public requirements. But the measure was promptly throttled in the senate.

The policy of republican leaders has been to fight for time in the hope that the storm would blow over. While refusing to pass the Esch-Townsend bill, the senate appointed a committee with power to "investigate" and find out whether there was really any necessity for the legislation demanded by men of all parties.

One reason the republican party will fail to give relief to the people is that that party derives its campaign funds from the very interests that are now imposing upon the public, and the party is under the control of those interests.

Even the republicans of Iowa, under the leadership of Governor Cummins and the editor of the *Register and Leader*, demanded, three years ago, that the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff be removed. Although it is clear that that demand represented the sentiment of the rank and file of republicans in Iowa, the special interests wielded such enormous power in republican party councils that the Iowa platform was amended in a way to suit those interests and the efforts of Governor Cummins and the editor of the *Des Moines Register and Leader* were of no avail.

The *Register and Leader* asks: "Does Mr. Bryan really look to the senate to balk the president? Does he really believe that nothing will be done to carry out the Roosevelt pledges?" If by the terms "balking the president," and "Roosevelt pledges," the *Register and Leader* has in mind the reforms now very generally demanded by the people, that paper may be answered by an editorial statement that appeared in the same issue from which these questions are taken. This is the answer provided by the *Register and Leader* itself: "The republicans are educating the people to demand certain reforms. Unless all signs fail the republicans will fail to satisfy the demands they are creating. The education they are giving will be the best democratic campaign material in 1908."

CONSTITUTION RESTS ON DECLARATION

At this time when some of the prominent republicans are speaking disrespectfully of the Declaration of Independence, it may be well to recall the language used by Justice Matthews in *Tick-Wo vs. Hopkins*, 118 U. S., 356, and quoted with approval by Justice Brewer in delivering the opinion of the court in the case of *Cotting vs. Goddard*, 183 U. S., 78. The language referred to reads as follows:

"When we consider the nature and theory of our institutions of government, the principles upon which they are supposed to rest and review the history of their development, we are constrained to conclude that they do not mean to leave room for the play and action of purely personal and arbitrary power. The first official action of the nation declared the foundation of the government in these words: 'We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' While such declaration of principles may not have the force of organic law, or be made the basis of judicial decision as to the limits of right and duty, and while in all cases reference must be had to the organic law of the nation for such limits, yet the latter is but the body and the letter, of which the former is the thought and the spirit. And it is

always safe to read the letter of the constitution in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. No duty rests more imperatively upon the courts than the enforcement of those constitutional provisions intended to secure that equality of rights which is the foundation of free government."

The doctrine that men are created equal and that they are endowed with inalienable rights is fundamental. The constitution rests upon this doctrine and as Justice Matthews and Justice Brewer, speaking for the court on these two occasions, say the Declaration of Independence is the thought and spirit, and the constitution is the body and the letter. If the letter of the constitution is read in another spirit than the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, it becomes a useless thing. Just now the pride of power and the lust for land have turned many away from the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, but the people will return and again find in that immortal document their safety, their confidence and their hope.

MAJORITY RULE

In the course of his lecture on "The Value of an Ideal," recently delivered at Cincinnati, Mr. Bryan endorsed the fundamental principle of our government, namely, that the people have a right to have what they want in government. A Cincinnati clergyman condemns the principle and insists that in many reform movements it is not the people or a majority of the people who advocate what proves to be a blessing, but one man or a few. The minister insists that to accept this doctrine—that is, that a majority have a right to have what they want—would forever silence the voice of the reformer and make it possible for every boss in every city and state to say that the people have endorsed him and that therefore reforms have no right to be.

The minister simply misunderstood the position taken by Mr. Bryan and the principle for which Mr. Bryan contends. No one denies that reforms start with a minority. The reform is suggested by some one, and it grows as it is discussed until finally a majority endorse it and put it into operation, but this in no wise does violence to the doctrine that the people have a right to have what they want in government.

No reform can be accomplished until a majority of the people have been brought to accept it. Either the majority or the minority must rule. If a minority is to rule, then it must be remembered that there may be any number of subdivisions, and if the presumption of correctness lies with the minority rather than with the majority, then if the minority divides on the question, by the same rule the presumption rests with the still smaller minority. According to our theory of government free speech and a free press enables each one to present his views to the public and our government is founded upon the belief—as Bancroft has stated it—not that the majority "make the right," but that the majority "discern the right," and that a government by the majority presents the safest form of government known to man. It is under just this form of government that the reformer is encouraged and the boss discouraged.

In an open contest the reformer will always overcome the boss if the reform advocated has virtue in it.

PUSH THE WORK

In a letter printed in last week's edition of *The Commoner*, Tom L. Johnson said: "Failure to participate in the primaries is the cause of misrepresentation in the conventions." This truth, so well stated, can not be too often presented by those who appreciate its importance. It is evident that the rank and file of the democratic party are becoming aroused and that many who have heretofore neglected their duties with respect to primary elections are determined to make amends. The many letters received at *The Commoner* office show that the primary pledge plan is as popular as it is practical. Extracts from some of these letters are printed on pages 3, 5 and 7 of this issue. Every letter is an editorial in itself and it is to be hoped that every subscriber to *The Commoner* will carefully read these interesting contributions.

Every democratic newspaper is urged to direct the attention of its readers to the primary pledge plan and call for signatures. If democratic newspapers co-operate in this good work there will be little difficulty in bringing it to a successful conclusion.