

most severely the injustice of present conditions. The ostentatious display of wealth, which has been acquired without the rendition of an equivalent service, and the mutterings and threatenings of those who feel aggrieved by present industrial conditions—these disturb the peace of the nation and furnish a somber background for our much vaunted "prosperity."

Tenantry is increasing and landlordism is growing. Men who have enjoyed the favoritism of the government are obtaining control of the land, erecting great blocks and buildings, and renting to those who have been disinherited.

Gambling upon the market is being substituted for productive industry, and men who neither sow nor reap, but simply control the market are gradually swallowing up the earnings of those who are obeying the injunction to earn their bread in the sweat of the face.

So great is the greed for gain that food is being adulterated regardless of its effect on health and safety appliances are being neglected that dividends may be larger.

Fabulous fortunes and destitution are found on the same square mile, and while costly dinners and extravagant entertainments are being given in one part of the city thousands are dying for lack of proper food in the very shadow of the palaces. Hundreds of thousands of children are forced into the factory and the mine when they ought to be in school; the sweatshop is killing its tens of thousands—and were these not made in the image of God? Mr. Robert Hunter quotes statistics to show that in the largest city in the Union as many as one in every ten is buried in the potter's field, and yet the revelry goes on.

Not only are vast fortunes being made from the operation of special legislation, or in the absence of laws that should be enacted, but our federal systems of taxation are so designed as to bear lightest upon those best able to pay, and the heaviest upon the masses. Nearly all the revenues of the federal government are collected from taxes upon consumption, and taxes upon consumption are levied in proportion to the needs of men rather than in proportion to their possessions. For years the manufacturers have claimed the right to dictate the tariff schedules in their own interest while the consumers have, for the most part, sold their goods in an open market and bought in a restricted market.

Corruption at the polls is widespread. The retiring governor of Indiana sent a message to the legislature last winter in which he declared that in some counties of his state a large percentage of the voters was purchasable—in one county nearly 25 per cent. In some precincts of Delaware as many as 50 per cent of the voters are purchasable, while repeating and fraudulent counting have been unearthed in a number of cities.

With the reign of predatory wealth has come corruption, municipal, state and national. Obtaining enormous largesses from the various governments, the great corporations are able to supply large campaign funds and these campaign funds pollute the suffrage and bribe officials elected with the aid of such funds.

Corruption is the natural and legitimate fruit of the perversion of government. Only those who are able to make the government a private asset in business are tempted to contribute largely to campaign funds. It is a matter of business, and money given to political parties is charged up to incidentals. The president of the sugar trust testified before a senate committee that the sugar trust gave to the republican party in republican states and to the democratic party in democratic states. And in each state, it is needless to say, the contributions were made with the expectation of securing favors in return.

In the city of St. Louis Prosecuting Attorney (now governor) Folk found that almost the entire city council was engaged in boodling. And in several other cities the condition has been found to be almost as bad—in Philadelphia probably worse. In California some of the members of the legislature were found to be guilty of selling their influence, and in several other legislatures investigation discloses the betrayal of public trust. Three United States senators have been indicted for criminal offenses in connection with their offices.

The manufacturers have for a quarter of a century yielded themselves without protest to the "fat frying" process, and considered it legitimate to supply the sinews of war for such members of congress and senators as would agree to reimburse them through legislation.

The federal treasury instead of being employed for the advancement of the public weal, is manipulated by the financiers in their own interest, and money unnecessarily collected from the people is loaned as a matter of favor to the banks, and is thus employed to subsidize the financiers

to oppose a reduction of taxation. The money issuing function of government is selfishly appropriated by private corporations until those corporations have come to recognize as a vested right the valuable privilege of controlling the volume of the nation's money. Not satisfied with domestic pastures the syndicates have insisted upon increasing the army and enlarging the navy for the subjugation of distant races and for the colonization of lands to whose people no hope of citizenship is held out.

This is the situation made known to the public with increasing clearness by speakers, newspapers and magazines. What is to be done? Surely it is time for sober reflection—a time for each one to examine himself and to ask, first, whether he individually is guilty of contributing toward the evils complained of, and, second, what he can do as a citizen to accelerate reform. Two things stand in the way of reform—first, lack of knowledge, and, second, lack of courage. But as cowardice is often founded upon ignorance, the arousing of the public to a knowledge of true conditions and to an understanding of threatened dangers is the primary duty. The Commoner is trying to do its part, but its influence is small except as it can enlist the aid of its readers and through its readers and its exchanges a still larger circle. There are two ways of arousing interest—one is to appeal to pecuniary interest, and the other to conscience. At least 95 per cent of the people are interested in such an administration of the government as will protect each individual in the enjoyment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The farmer has nothing to gain by legislative favoritism. His interest is not in getting his hands into somebody else's pockets, but in keeping other people's hands out of his pockets. The laboring men are almost without exception deeply interested in a policy that will recognize the equal rights of all. The merchant has everything to lose and nothing to gain by the monopolizing of the markets, and but few of the professional men can hope to reap pecuniary benefits from the unequal distribution of wealth which is now going on.

To address a pecuniary interest is humiliating when the appeal can be made upon much higher ground. When we urge the majority—and it is a vast majority—to follow a certain course because it will help them in pocket, the minority uses the arguments as justification for following an opposite course for the same reason, and experience has shown that many are continually deceived as to the side upon which their pecuniary interests lie.

An appeal to conscience can be made to all—to those who profit by existing evils as well as those who suffer from them, and a moral principle is much more easily understood than an economic one.

The Commoner, therefore, appeals to the conscience of its readers and asks their co-operation in the effort to establish, first, the principle that each individual owes it to his Creator and to society to fit himself for the largest possible service, so strengthening his body, so training his mind, and so developing his heart as to reach the maximum of efficiency in his work. Second, to establish the principle that compensation should be commensurate with service, each one drawing from society in proportion as he contributes to the welfare of society. Third, to establish the doctrine that a government is a thing made by the people for themselves, deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed and to be used for the protection of each citizen in the enjoyment of his natural rights and for the doing jointly of those things which the community can do for itself better than individuals or corporations can do for it. Fourth, to propagate the doctrine that each individual as a member of the party should employ his influence to the utmost to place his party upon the right side of every question and to nominate for office only those who are believed to be capable of performing the duties of the office to which they aspire and in sympathy with the common people.

What can one individual do? That can not be ascertained except by experiment. A little girl, raising her trembling voice to give testimony in a small prayer meeting, is credited with starting the revival that has swept over Wales. The persistent effort of a single individual has accomplished wonders. Sometimes by service, suffering, or death in the line of duty, single individuals have started great movements that have revolutionized communities, states and nations.

What can be done? Nay, what can not be done? If every reader of The Commoner will firmly resolve to do his political duty as he sees it and then will earnestly seek for such enlightenment as he can secure, his influence will soon be felt upon the country.

The Commoner reaches a multitude of people. What an army, if organized for service! How its tread will shake the strongholds of evil! What numbers its enthusiasm will inspire!

And how can this army be organized? Not by each waiting for the others, but by each beginning at once. The harvest is waiting. Already there are signs of a moral awakening; in the presence of such responsibilities no one should stand idle in the vineyard.

### THE TRUE PULITZER

The New York World has an editorial entitled "The True Jefferson." It was a waste of time for the World to attempt to tell the democrats of the country about Jefferson, for they know a great deal more about Jefferson and his principles than Mr. Pulitzer does, if one can judge from the editorials that appear in the World. If the World wants a subject upon which it can speak accurately and from personal knowledge, it might give us an editorial on "The True Pulitzer." It might take as its subject the fact that Mr. Pulitzer, after picking out Judge Parker, telling him what to say and do, and running the campaign for him, now advises the party to seek success by following the same course again. If there is any editor in the country who ought to be willing to overlook the defeats of 1896 and 1900 it is Mr. Pulitzer. The party polled nearly a million and a half more votes when it had his strenuous opposition than it did when, eight years later, it permitted him to dictate its policies. As soon as Mr. Pulitzer can draw his thoughts away from the "greenback fury," "the free silver mania," "economic rainbow chasing," "old rotten money delusions," "the divided democracy" and "the complete rout," he might take time to pay a glowing tribute to the gold telegram which he demanded, and show us how a return to "safe and sane democracy" united the party and brought it to a glorious victory.

If "The True Pulitzer" will discuss questions upon their merits it will not be necessary to consider whether the taking of a righteous position will bring the party to success or to a "complete rout," but when he speaks from the standpoint of expediency, as he nearly always does, he ought to be more modest in giving advice, for no one has proved a more dismal failure as a mascot.

### "AT THE OLD STAND"

Some one has been fooling the Wall Street Journal. That publication says that the United States senate is "now out of the control of the forces represented by Aldrich" and that "that fact has been known in the best informed financial circles ever since the Rhode Island senator's departure for Europe while congress was still in session." The Journal predicts railroad rate legislation and other legislation along reform lines at the next session.

The Journal overlooks the fact that although Senator Aldrich left for Europe while congress was in session, the Aldrich machine was "doing business at the old stand." Had there been the slightest danger of the Esch-Townsend bill passing the senate, Senator Aldrich's European trip would have been postponed. Men who are strong enough to represent the interests for which Senator Aldrich speaks are not in the habit of rushing to cover at the first sign of attack; and nothing happened during the recent senatorial elections to change the complexion of the senate. With the exception of the election of LaFollette in Wisconsin and Warner in Missouri, every republican senator elected or re-elected was acceptable to the special interests. It is reasonable to believe that those who demand legislation affecting these interests must be satisfied, so far as the republican congress is concerned, with whatever favors Senator Aldrich and his associates are inclined to bestow.

Referring to the Wall Street Journal's remarkable statement, the Washington Post says: "That some measure providing for the regulation of railway rates will be passed by the Fifty-ninth congress may be set down as a practical certainty. That it will be less radical than the bill that was rushed through the house a few weeks ago, with the understanding that it should be killed in the senate, may be counted on with confidence. That the senate has passed from the control of Senator Aldrich and the forces he represents—that is to say, of the long-time leaders of that body, its brainiest and most experienced statesmen—well, there is neither certainty nor probability of that. The prospect of an executive veto of a railroad rating bill because the senate has stuffed it with dangerous radicalism is too remote for serious consideration."