

FROM THE PEOPLE

R. B. Wilson, Emmett, Idaho—Believing that the democratic party should furnish the opportunity for its each and every member to express his views on the various questions pertaining to public policy, I write you some suggestions, trusting that you will print my letter and comment upon it favorably or unfavorably, as may seem best to you. I suggest that a public caucus be held preceding the primary in each precinct, at which caucus a long list of planks for a platform be formulated and at the primary each democrat be given a chance not only to choose delegates to represent him at the conventions, but also to approve or disapprove of the various possible or probable planks to be adopted in his party's platform. Six years ago the central committee in Idaho chose the delegates from the various precincts to attend the state convention at which convention a platform was written and published. When the county conventions met they could do nothing but ratify a platform thus made. We have improved enough to hold two primaries, one to choose delegates to a county convention, which in turn chooses delegates to a state convention and another later primary to choose delegates to a county nominating convention. Last election the county delegate convention adopted no platform, leaving the state convention to write the platform without the people having had an opportunity to express their views. Such procedure does not tend to arouse the enthusiasm of the rank and file. Democracy puts its trust in the people and should encourage a more direct expression of the people. Referring the platform to the people would have the effect of producing an intelligent and enthusiastic constituency just as the referendum would produce an intelligent and patriotic citizenship.

Charles R. Cook, Salem, Ind.—I have always felt a great interest in The Commoner, and can not do without it. It is always read by others when I am through with it. I have always been an independent voter. I love principle more than party. The people of this country are as much in slavery as the negro was before the war; oppressed by excessive tariffs upon what we eat and wear, coupled with the trust and combinations of capital it is getting to be so burdensome it is almost impossible for one to live and support large families on the wages paid to common laborers. Even skilled labor is handicapped to live as they should. With the enormous prices now in vogue, the question is asked: What are we going to do about it? The answer can be given thus: Vote for the man, not the party; vote for honesty. I am always interested in primary conventions and attend them all and vote accordingly. I am opposed to boss rule and packed conventions. In conclusion, I am opposed to everything that is corrupt and unfair toward the human race and in politics the same.

William Peebler, Nelson, Neb.—I believe The Commoner is doing and has done a great work of education, but there is much yet to be done along that line. Allow me to make a suggestion to the subscribers of The Commoner, a plan I have followed from the first copy issued, and I have never missed one to date. First, let each present subscriber get as many new subscribers as possible, thereby broadening the paper's educational possibilities, and second, never destroy a single copy of The Commoner, but after having read them, be sure and hand them to a voter and call his attention to some particularly excellent article, thereby doubling the value, educationally, of each subscription. Yes, sir, I am as optimistic as the next one, though we are temporarily beaten, yet the people, though bribed by this promise, and betrayed by that leader, will learn that if they themselves would govern, they must educate in the way of true democracy; that is, equal rights to all and special privileges to none. You may count on me every step in the road to do my part in the educational stunt as far as my ability will permit. But there is one recent bunch of recruits that is trying to scramble into the Bryan democratic wagon that I beg our tried leader to scan with a wary eye. I refer to the "political train robbers," as Mr. Bryan denominated them. You know the certain personage who took the Master up into the high mountain and offered Him all the glories of the earth and didn't own or control a foot of it? These recent recruits are ready to offer and are offering much the same way. I say scan and weigh them and their offers warily.

FOR THE SCRAP-BOOK

Come Again

Oh, baby, when you start away,
Away for Sleepy Town,
Oh, when you say your, "Now I lay"—
All in your snowy gown—
I clasp you to me, yes I do,
And snuggle you up when you're through;
I'll bet God thinks a heap of you
Nights when you lay you down!

Babe, dad's a-gettin' mighty old,
His hair is gettin' thin;
But yet the arms stretched out to hold—
The arms you snuggle in—
Will be as loving-strong to do
For you, and hold and keep you, too—
Oh, God and dad think heaps of you,
Come kiss your dad ag'in!

—J. M. Lewis in Houston Post.

The Old Clock Against the Wall

Oh! the old, old clock of the household stock,
Was the brightest thing and neatest;
Its hands, though old, had a touch of gold,
And its chime rang still the sweetest;
'Twas a monitor, too, though its words were few,
Yet they lived through nations altered,
And its voice, still strong, warned old and young,
When the voice of friendship faltered.
"Tick! tick!" it said—"quick, quick to bed,
For 10 I've given warning;
Up! up! and go, or else you know,
You'll never rise soon in the morning!"

A friendly voice was that old, old clock,
As it stood in the corner smiling,
And it blessed the time with a merry chime,
The wintry hours beguiling;
But a cross old voice was that tiresome clock,
As it called at daybreak boldly;
When the dawn looked gray o'er the misty way,
And the early air blew coldly.
"Tick! tick!" it said, "quick out of bed,
For 5 I've given warning;
You'll never have health, you'll never have wealth,
Unless you're up soon in the morning!"

Still hourly the sound goes round and round,
With a tone that ceases never;
While tears are shed for bright days fled,
And the old friends lost forever;
Its heart beats on—though hearts are gone,
Yet love still lives the stronger.
Its hands still move—though hands we love
Are clasped on earth no longer!
"Tick! tick!" it said—"to the churchyard bed,
The grave hath given warning;
Up! up! and rise, and look at the skies,
And prepare for a heavenly morning!"
—Unidentified.

Song of Souls That Failed

We come from the war-swept valleys,
Where the strong ranks clash in might
Where the broken rear guard rallies
For its last and losing fight;
From the roaring streets and highways,
Where the mad crowds move abreast.
We come to the wooded byways,
To cover our grief, and rest.

Not ours the ban of the coward,
Not ours is the idler's shame;
If we sink at last, o'erpowered,
Will ye whelm us with scorn or blame?
We have seen the goal and have striven
As they strive who win or die;
We were burdened and harshly driven,
And the swift feet passed us by.

When we hear the plaudits' thunder,
And thrill to the victor's shout,
We envy them not, nor wonder
At the fate that cast us out;
For we heed one music only,
The sweet far voice that calls
To the dauntless soul and lonely
Who fights to the end and falls.

We come—outworn and weary—
The unmanned hosts of life;
Long was our march and dreary,
Fruitless and long our strife.
Out from the dust and the riot—
From the lost, yet glorious quest,
We come to the vales of quiet,
To cover our grief, and rest.

—Marion Couthouy Smith in McClure's Magazine.

FROM THE PEOPLE

Charles Stephens, Denver, Colo.—A proclamation requiring prospective homeseekers to register at a place in the vicinity of the territory sometime before the drawing takes place works a great hardship on many of the most deserving homeseekers and benefits nobody but the railroads and a few hotel men. I can not see any reason why every proper person can not be given a chance to draw for such land by registering at the place in which they live. This could be done by having them appear before a notary public, some county officer or the postmaster and making the application on forms to be furnished by the government officials. The day and hour of the making of such application could be marked on same by said official, and if need be, witnessed by two or more disinterested persons. These applications could then be forwarded to the land office in the vicinity of the land and numbered either in the order in which they were made or the order in which they were received. This would enable thousands of worthy people to register who can not afford to make the trip so long before the drawing and either remain there until the drawing takes place or return to their home and make the second trip in order to attend the drawing at the time their name is called. Each time a land opening takes place, we find all the railroads of the country making every effort to advertise the same, and as a rule the railroads receive more from the people who go to register than the land to be opened is worth. In order to keep the people on the move and following up these lands opened, they are being divided into comparatively small tracts, such as the Rosebud, Ninta, Crow, Shoshone and Flathead reservations. Instead of having one registration for them all, and then giving plenty of time to each lucky party at the drawing in which to make his selection out of any of them. I believe the influence opposing the latter plan could be found among the railroads.

A. Goodyear, Boston, Mass.—Radical is true, or deeply true. An absolute truth is final. Right to have is right to trade. What warrant has any government to withdraw another person's property, because he chooses to trade? W. D. Bliss' Encyclopaedia of Social Reform argues at length for free trade. (Cheap labor is apt to be inferior in quality or quantity, etc.) Governor J. R. Rogers says trade is beneficial, and should not be restrained by taxation. But why not consider the simple right to copy freely involved in right of life, primarily, or right to have sufficient trust in the omnipotence of righteousness to reveal how rightly, to procure government funds? Every one ought to see some principle of just taxation or a substitute for it. It certainly is not optional with any government. What there is inalienable right to must not be taxed. No taxation should be except enough to pay cost of what the people are morally obligated to have, and I suppose to have supplied for them by the government. Government ownership of mineral resources might pay government debts and then substitute taxation altogether.

S. W. Hickox, Wakefield, Neb.—I believe if every democrat would try to get the voters in his precinct out, democracy would win, but when we stay at home and let the corporations give the delegates the choice of the candidates, we are but their slaves. So I would say: Democrats, attend the primaries, the caucuses and the conventions. Don't fail to vote, and see if you can't persuade at least one of your neighbors to vote for honest government. I am a constant reader of The Commoner, and when I can, I give it to my neighbors. Get them in the habit of reading The Commoner, and you will get them in the habit of voting right. When you find an article in The Commoner that particularly appeals to you, cut it out and tack it up where others can read it. You will find lots of good ones. Get the voters to study politics, and they will vote intelligently. As long as the party stands by the principles advocated by Mr. Bryan, you will find me in the ranks ever willing to do all in my power to help carry the party to victory.