

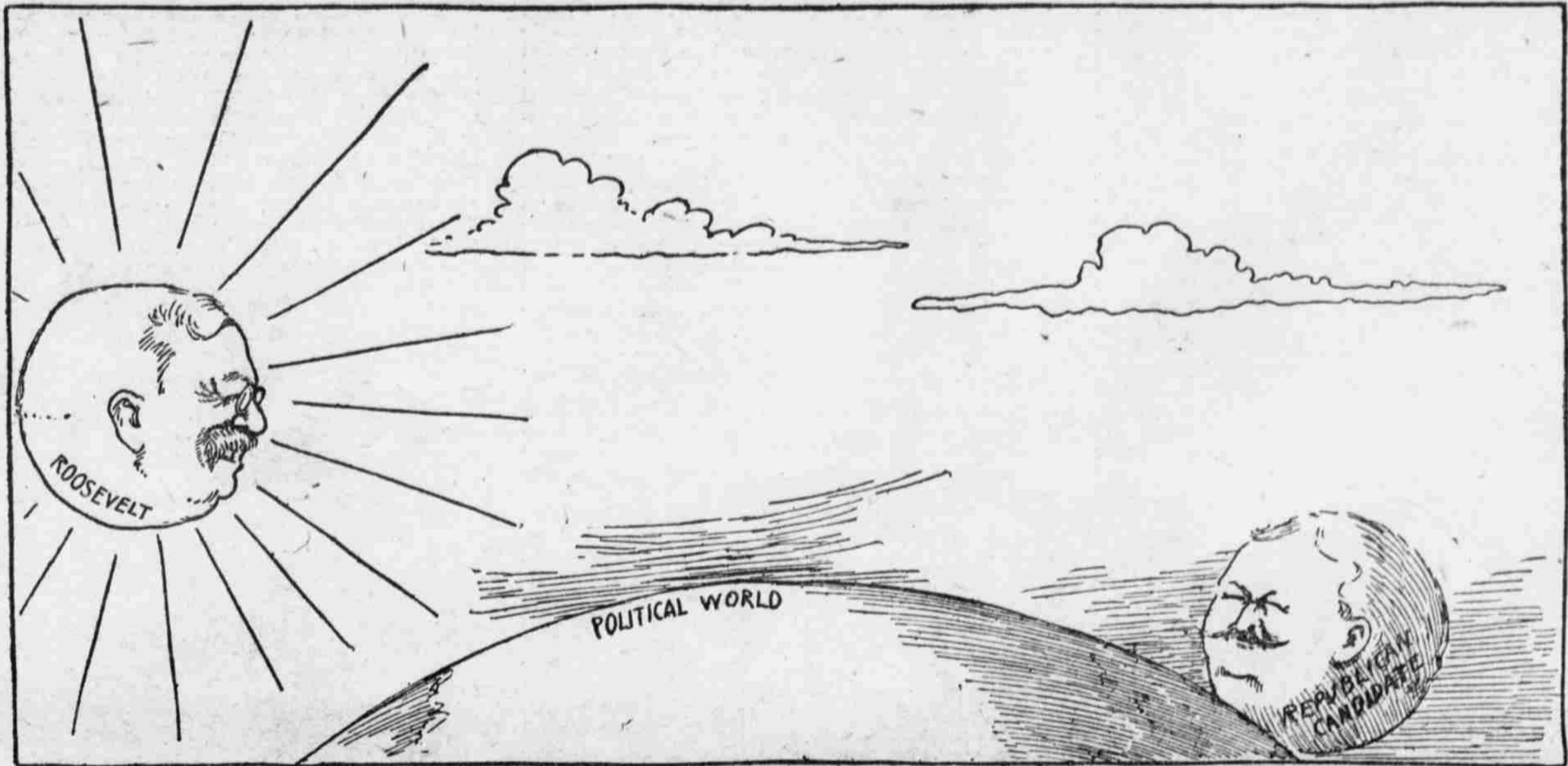
# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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*WANTED---A Republican Candidate Who Will Shine With Reflected Light*

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### A MODEL CONSTITUTION

The Oklahoma constitution is in print and The Commoner ventures the opinion that it is the best state constitution in the United States. It will be discussed in detail later, but this tribute is offered now. It is a people's constitution and the "corn-field lawyers" who wrote it—to use the phrase coined by the New York Tribune—have reason to be proud of their work. It ought to be ratified by a unanimous vote and the democratic party whose representatives framed it deserves a splendid victory as an endorsement. It is a model constitution—the best in the nation.



### A FOOLISH MAN

Of course Mr. Harriman was very foolish for thinking that he was entitled to some consideration after having put up \$50,000 of his own money and \$200,000 of the money belonging to his friends.

## MR. BRYAN ON "THE STATE"

Senator Beveridge's article on "The Nation," which appeared in the March issue of the Reader magazine, presents very clearly the views of those who see no danger in the enlargement of the sphere of the national government. Having himself no ulterior motive and being conscientiously devoted to his theories he presents very baldly and without qualification the position of the advocates of centralization.

He says: "What is the national government whose growing powers are so feared? It is the American people in the mass. And what are the states? They are the same American people split up into forty-six groups. So there can be no danger from the national government except the danger that comes from the American people themselves, acting in common; and, of course, the people are not going to injure themselves or their own interests."

This is a very plausible argument and it would be sound but for the fact that it entirely overlooks the reasons which are urged in the defense of local self-government.

Yes, the people of the states are the same people who act together as parts of the union, but when the people of a state act together on a local matter they are nearer to the subject under discussion and, therefore, can act more intelligently. If the arguments in defense of local self-government are unsound, then the whole theory of self-government is defective. It must be assumed that the people want to do what is right—upon no other theory can we have self-government. It must also be assumed that the people can act most intelligently upon that which they best understand. That they can best understand a thing with which they deal daily is axiomatic; and it is equally true that they will study most those things in which they are individually interested. To illustrate: If I enter a public hall and announce that a distant city is in conflagration, the audience will hear the announcement calmly, although, of course, with regret and with sympathy for those

who are suffering. If, however, the announcement is made that Mr. Smith's house is on fire and Mr. Smith is in the audience, one member of the audience at least will become intensely interested in the subject. If the announcement is made that the building next to the opera house is in flames, the whole audience will become aroused, because every one will feel that he is personally concerned in the fire. So the question which vitally concerns one section of the country, while it arouses the people of that section, may not disturb or at least disturb but little those in a remote part of the country.

"Of course the people are not going to injure themselves or their own interests," says the senator; but suppose the people of one section decide that they have no discernible interest in what is being done in another section, are they likely to study the question as carefully as they should? And if they attempt to act upon a question remote from them are they sure to act wisely? Two questions now before the country may be used for an illustration. Take the race question in the south. The people of the northern states do not come into contact with the black race as the people of the south do, and because the experiences are different in the two sections the views of the subject are different. If a citizen of the north moves into the black belt he soon recognizes that he has a different situation to deal with from that which confronted him in the north, and his views of the subject are likely to undergo quite a change. Even a winter's stay in the south is apt to have an educational influence upon the citizen of the north and he ceases to make sweeping criticisms of the southerners.

The race question on the Pacific coast presents another illustration. The people who come into daily contact with the Orientals have a familiarity with the subject which those cannot possibly have who live in other sections and who seldom see one of the emigrants from Asia. The school question is one that enters into the life of every community and the people who send their children to a school are more concerned in the welfare of