

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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Sidelights on Saloons

One reader of The Commoner has discontinued his subscription because of editorials which have appeared discussing the liquor question. In discontinuing this (former) reader of The Commoner says that he is a saloon keeper, that he is engaged in a legitimate business and that he does not care to read a paper which attacks his occupation. The Commoner is sorry to lose this subscriber and its editor does not know to what extent the editorials have described the business methods of the alienated reader. It may easily be admitted that there are saloon keepers who respect the law and honestly endeavor to conduct their business in such a way as to reduce the evils of drink to a minimum—and the lost subscriber may be one of them—but a business must be judged by its general character and by the conduct of the average man engaged in it—not by exceptional cases. The general character of the saloon is bad and it has grown worse since the application of trust methods to it.

The average saloon is the most disreputable place in the community; it is a bureau of information on vice; it is the first place one would enter to inquire for a gambling hall or for a disorderly house. It is likewise the first place visited by the officers of the law when they are looking for a criminal, and the first place closed in case of riot or disturbance. Those who defend the open saloon do it on the ground that it is a necessary evil and that the use of liquor can be better regulated by license than by prohibition—it is never defended on the ground that the saloon is a center of morals, an educational institution, a social asset or even an economic advantage.

It ought not to be necessary to advance argument or to adduce facts in support of the proposition that one engaged in the liquor business ought not to expect praise—but should be satisfied with toleration. A sidelight, however, is thrown on the business by the newly elected mayor of Milwaukee.

Milwaukee can hardly be called a puritanical city; at least it is not "fanatical" on the temperance question. It has not yet prosecuted the brewer who claims that his beer made the city famous. Its mayor—a socialist—gives to the saloon question a prominent place in his message. He says: "The question of the saloon is one that has been and is extensively agitated. In our city the saloon is regulated under the license system. The saloon keeper who conducts a clean and respectable place should be protected. No trickery to entice him into traps should be condoned. While the law prohibits the sale of intoxicants to minors, and this law should be enforced, at the same time it should be made a misdemeanor for any one to induce a minor to obtain liquor under false pretenses."

Certainly the mayor is "liberal" enough, is he not? He does not favor "persecution," so the headlines declare. But now see what else

he says: "On the other hand, the issuance of a license to sell liquor can not carry with it the permission to maintain a house of ill fame or in any way to abet licentiousness."

What does the mayor mean by this warning? Have any of the saloons been maintaining houses of ill fame or abetting licentiousness? If not, then the mayor's language is an unjust reflection on the saloons of Milwaukee. If the warning was needed, what a horrible indictment the new mayor has presented! If his attention is called to the matter he will doubtless assure the inquirer that he does not mean to intimate that Milwaukee is worse in this respect than other cities. In other words, his criticism applies to the business generally and everywhere.

The vociferous champion of "personal liberty" should devote a little of his time to the by-products of the saloon instead of exhausting his voice declaiming about the "inalienable right" to drink. It is time for the men who want to drink moderately and under reasonable conditions to separate themselves from those who find a pecuniary profit in debauching society.

GOVERNOR HUGHES' APPOINTMENT

The appointment of Governor Hughes to the supreme bench will be regarded by many as a popular appointment. He has been put forward as a reformer, and seems to be considered one by a great many good people, but his reputation as a reformer rests upon a few official acts which show him opposed to grafting and to the individual vices, but no one who will examine his record can doubt that he is in close sympathy with the exploiting corporations. It will be remembered that he vetoed the bill for the reduction of railroad rates after a New York legislature—and a republican legislature at that—had passed the reduction bill. This measure gave to the congested population of New York, the two cent rate now enjoyed by the more scattered populations of the western states, and his veto of it is conclusive proof that he obeys the dictates of the railway managers instead of listening to the voice of the public. He is understood to be a close personal friend of Rockefeller, and the published reports show that the trust magnates have contributed liberally to his campaign funds. He has not hesitated to show that he acknowledges his indebtedness. In 1908 he was the chief defender of the inaction of the republican party on the trust question.

It will be remembered also that he was the first prominent man to oppose the income tax, and his opposition came after Mr. Rockefeller had announced hostility to the income tax amendment. The corporation attorneys who filed an argument against the income tax with the Albany legislature presented the same argument that Governor Hughes did, and these corporation attorneys with Governor Hughes' powerful aid barely succeeded in preventing the ratification of the amendment by the state of New York. What would he do on the supreme bench if any question arose affecting the income tax? His speeches show that he feels no hostility toward private monopolies, and there is no reason to doubt that his decisions would be in line with his speeches.

Governor Hughes exemplifies the individual virtues and naturally demands honesty in the public service, but he is a shining illustration of that peculiar type of citizen developed in this country during the present generation—the citizen who, personally pious, opposed vice and is a punisher of small crimes but shows no indignation at the larger forms of legalized robbery.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Yes, the New York assembly defeated the resolution to ratify the income tax amendment, but let no reformer be discouraged. If it is defeated by only a narrow margin in New York, it ought to carry every other state and the matter can be brought again in New York when the democratic party is stronger.

Human Rights

Mr. Roosevelt has startled France and set the United States to talking by his speech in Paris—the first of his European lectures. He discusses citizenship in a republic, and the sentence which has excited the most comment reads as follows:

"My position as regards the moneyed interests can be put in a few words. In every civilized society property rights must be carefully safeguarded. Ordinarily and in the great majority of cases human rights and property rights are fundamental and in the long run identical. But when it clearly appears that there is a real conflict between them, human rights must have the upper hand, for property belongs to man and not man to property."

It is easy for The Commoner to endorse the sentiment expressed by Mr. Roosevelt in the words above quoted. In fact, Mr. Bryan would stultify himself if he dissented from them, for his words give expression to the same sentiment that Abraham Lincoln uttered in 1859—a sentiment often quoted by Mr. Bryan. If the readers of The Commoner will turn to Mr. Bryan's notification speech delivered at Indianapolis, Ind., in August, 1900, they will find that the second and third paragraphs in that speech read as follows:

"When I say that the contest of 1900 is a contest between democracy on the one hand and plutocracy on the other I do not mean to say that all our opponents have deliberately chosen to give organized wealth a predominating influence in the affairs of the government, but I do assert that on the important issues of the day the republican party is dominated by those influences which constantly tend to substitute the worship of mammon for the protection of the rights of man.

"In 1859 Lincoln said that the republican party believed in the man and the dollar, but that in case of conflict it believed in the man before the dollar. This is the proper relation which should exist between the two. Man, the handiwork of God, comes first; money, the handiwork of man, is of inferior importance. Man is the master, money the servant, but upon all important questions today republican legislation tends to make money the master and man the servant."

It will be noticed that Lincoln's declaration that man is more important than the dollar, or goes before the dollar, is identical in meaning with Roosevelt's assertion that human rights are superior to property rights.

In 1905 Mr. Bryan wrote an article which was published in the Saturday Evening Post in which he discussed the relative importance of human rights and property rights in the following manner:

"While the issue between the man and the dollar seems to be an acute one, yet in the last analysis there can be no issue between human rights and property rights, for nothing more surely undermines property rights than a disregard for human rights, and nothing brings greater security to property than a scrupulous regard for the natural rights of each human being. But we must always remember that human rights are paramount. In fact everything depends upon the establishment of the true relation between the individual and dull, inanimate property. The house and its foundation are indissolubly connected, and we can not think of one without the other. So, human rights and property rights are indissolubly connected. We can not think of one without the other and as, in the building of the house, we must think of the foundation first and of the house as a superstructure, so in thinking of society we must necessarily think of human rights first and of property rights as resting upon human rights. He who talks of property rights as if they could exist without a regard for human rights, speaks as foolishly as one who would attempt to build a house without considering the foundation upon which it is to stand."

Mr. Roosevelt, of course, was not trying to present a new and startling doctrine, but he

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