

**"If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?"**

C. E. Tobey, Nocona, Texas.—Ignorance; that one word tells it all. Ignorance begets indifference, so that crafty, cunning men easily appropriate the earnings of the millions. Ignorance is the cause of nearly all our suffering, physical and mental. One of the greatest problems of our times is how to educate the masses. What time has the man or woman who has to labor with hands and brain for food, clothes, shelter, every day in the week, to study economic questions so complicated that great statesmen disagree over? The generous space given by The Commoner to its readers is educational and will help open the eyes of many but still the vexed problem is how to teach the common people how to use their latent sleeping powers. Thine for the "cause that needs assistance."

B. P. Bush, Greenford, O.—The people do not get what they want, because they do not know what their real wants are. The almighty dollar has a great deal to do with it, but there is a greater cause that has been at work for more than seventy years, to my personal knowledge. The great idol of the present day is prohibition, worshiped in nearly all the churches. How do you suppose the devil laughed when he, after many different trials and inventions, which he tried that wore out? Why, he finally invented the anti-saloon league and says to the sanctimonious preachers to walk in and pledge themselves to serve the hydra-headed serpent, the old devil, and preach against God's word, diametrically against it. A few years ago the church had abolition in it instead of the gospel; you could scarcely go into a church but what you would hear a lecture on slavery instead of a gospel sermon; today it is prohibition—ungodly prohibition which has demoralized the church. You can not worship God and the devil at the same time and unless there is a reformation in the church they, the people, need not look for what they want. Prohibition has undertaken to moralize the world, at present with local option, which is one of the devil's plans. Local option gives the people the right to determine by ballot whether the people have a right to use intoxicating liquors or not. If there is one of a majority in favor of prohibiting it is a sin and against the law and you dare not sell or give away. Now suppose we ask a legislature to pass a law to prohibit church-going and public worship where the people were opposed to it entirely; now apply local option, take a vote on it and the result would be that the church opponents would have a majority of one; then the churches are stopped. Now if any preacher will undertake to preach then prosecute him; put on \$1,000 license, treat him in the same manner as the saloon man; and if he gives any religious instruction put the law upon him; if he is a respectable man put on the \$200. You may think this is foolish. Well it is; but the one is no more so than the other; they are both gifts of God to man. Christ has established the Christian church, and God had His church from the beginning and no man or devil has any right to destroy it. So He has given man strong drink as a blessing and no man or set of men or devils have any right, with or without local option, to take it from him. There is but one remedy that will give the people what they want and that is reformation, and that must come through the church. In the first place she

must put out prohibition and all prohibition preachers. Have God's word preached in its purity; temperance as far as God's word goes, but no farther; temperance in all things; and if the church gets right free government will be purified and people will be satisfied and there will be a great party that can not be overcome until the people thereof will become corrupt. When that reformation takes place then the people will get what they want. I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but one thing it appears to me that I can see clearly, that you can not advance morality by your anti-biblical laws. We had intemperance from the beginning and will have it to the end of the world. The remedy is found in God's word and there only.

A. C. Wright, Germantown, Pa.—My answer would be as follows: The ills which the people suffer, in the main, are brought about by the following causes: Corporations entering into election contests with candidates and contributions; controlling the making of our laws by lobbying; delegating their duties as public servants to others; and entering into conspiracies of monopoly with others, all of which are acts exceeding the powers granted in their charters. Now for all of these abuses there is a law as old as the law of incorporation, which is probably little understood by the lay mind, and hence the people feel that our servants have done their full duty when they have appointed investigating committees, or brought suit and recovered under the Sherman act or some other. But why do not the public servants redress our wrongs in the proper way, or is it because our so-called reformers are the worst of the fraud? We saw in the insurance investigation in New York plenty of evidence that these companies had exceeded their power. But we heard of no institution of any suit to forfeit their charters. Let the people insist that their servants act up to their free duty, forfeit a few charters for violations of power and it will not be necessary to haggle over the making of more laws for the supervision of corporations.

T. A. Bradley, Danville, Ky.—Who are the people? As a close observer for the past eighteen years, I have been able to see two kinds of people—"the people" and the "common people." "The people" are those who first brought African slaves and sold them to the southern people, who then, through sentiment, sought to set them free by war, in order that "the people" might sell their gold (three for one) or charge twenty per cent to carry on the war. It was "the people" who demoralized silver and brought declining prices, but had the gold to take the place of silver at a premium, and draw semi-annual coupons in gold, all free of any tax. "The people" have selected the presidents for the last forty years from the states of the north and middle-west, because they were rich stockholders, or were identified with large corporations or were captains of industry. Did they not also select Roosevelt, who could ride two horses at the same time, each going in opposite directions, who busted all the trusts and put in prison all the grafters with "my policies?" Did they not inaugurate the high protective and prohibitive tariff, and say the tax was paid by the importer and not the consumer? Did not they also select Taft, who raised the tariff downward, with their friends, the

captains of industry (would not every horse thief and embezzler prefer to be tried by their pals?) until everything is out of sight? Do not "the people" go the Washington just before every election, to confer with the president and to restore confidence for another four years? What is confidence? I understand it to mean that when Morgan, Ryan and Harriman put up two hundred and sixty thousand dollars for a campaign fund that they will be permitted to skin "the common people" for four years more. Do not "the people" teach a Sunday school class on Sunday and tell "the common people" to be good, and on Monday do they not buy it all back for the memorable two dollars? When Uncle Sam has a panic and is short of funds don't "the people" come to his rescue with the dough? Have not "the people" controlled legislation from state to nation, with gag rule and ship subsidies, postoffice irregularities, sugar bounties, lumber trust, steel trust, cotton and tobacco trusts, rubber trust, railroad corporations, and land grabs from time immemorial? Is not every department of the government reeking with filth and alive with graft furnished by "the people?" In fact was there ever a government run by "the people" so full of censure and which so completely used the stool of apology? Have not "the people" attempted to bury the only patriot and statesman that has appeared before the American people since Washington, Jefferson and Jackson? William Jennings Bryan, who has represented "the common people" has been extremely philanthropic, in that he has been their leader, and has written every platform, inaugurated every movement and exposed every system of graft. He has been truly the favored one, for while representing "the common people" he has likewise saved the country through "the people." He has been president for twelve years although not permitted to occupy the chair. He has been called a dreamer, a theorist, a populist and all kinds of pet names, and he has passed away and been buried until we seem to be living in the age of the resurrection, but each time he comes forth with resplendent brightness and has only turned the other cheek. Without him where would "the people" be and where also would "the common people" be. If we have been benefited in fact, is it not through measures advocated by him? Did not "the people" say that the national bank was the best system ever, only to lately confess it bad? The same national bank that destroyed the legal tender treasury notes issued by Lincoln, substituted black backs, which was not a legal tender, for duties on imports and interest on the public debt. Tariff tax and bounty, the mother of trusts, has broken the solid south and caused Rhode Island, so ably represented by Senator Aldrich by which he is much benefited, with only an area of one thousand and eighty-one square miles and a population of 470,081, to make more money by protected industries, than five of the largest agricultural states of America. "The people" advocate all kinds of tax except the income tax and the corporation tax. Do not "the people" vote for all of this and also "the common people?" "The common people" through William Jennings Bryan advocate the election of the United States senators by direct vote of the people; also the initiative, referendum and recall, but "the people" are opposed to it and vote against it. Another instance where "the people" rule and get what they want. Do not "the people" support the floater, just before each election, and do not "the common people" support him the remainder of the four years? Do not "the people" select the candidates and meet the negroes just before

election at every country school house after night and tell him how and for whom to vote? Do not "the people" and also "the common people" alike, vote for and elect these candidates? Don't "the people" follow the example of William J. Bryan in traveling over the country and get in touch with "the common people?" Have not "the people" adopted every measure incorporated in Bryan's platform for "the common people" for the past fourteen years? And at last in his own state when his own "the common people," drunk with wine, turned him down; did not the republicans swallow him hook and line? Since "the people" have exhausted every known method to destroy him, at last they have decided to swallow him, but watch what a Jonah he will be. Now according to the axiom, that things that are equal to the same thing, are equal to each other, if "the people" select the candidates, make the laws and vote for them and also "the common people" vote for them, do not "the people" rule and do they not get what they want?

G. W. Darnell, Blessing, Texas.—The reason that the people don't get what they want is they don't rule. When they rule their servants and instruct them then they will get what they want. The government is the people, not a few servants that serve few masters. The tariff is a blind to cover up the fool peoples' eyes to keep them from seeing the main issue that confronts their interests. The tariff is the tabled duties that is imposed upon the masses for the interest of the few that grows rich on their labor by laws for their benefit created by our public blind leaders which eats out the life of our nation, cancer-like. Space forbids me from enumerating the duties imposed upon the labor of the people, but there is a tax from birthplace to grave and who pays this great burden? The producer of course. Without production there would be nothing to tax, consequently there would be no tax. I read The Commoner and I don't see any way that is suggested to control this robbery. The initiative and referendum would give the people a chance to instruct and refer their works to the people. That's all right for that much, but where is any form of government under Heaven that can be used that way for the benefit of the whole people without changing its whole system. What rot! Taft says God knows. Yes, and William knows also. The tariff is a profit system. William J. Bryan is no fool, but is he honest? Now brother, let us see how you stand—for the laborer or producer. Suppose, William, that we take all the profit of the manufactured article where would the tariff go? Oh, that would not do. Why? Because the poor producer could then buy back what he produced, and that would be robbing capital. Who was it that created capital? Sure it was labor. Then reasonably all this is labor's own, all but the earth and wind and water. Why that would kill the local option quarrel. Yes, and every other quarrel on earth. Wouldn't it William? Hush, I haven't any more to say. Good by, William.

T. H. Baum, Wanchese, N. C.—The people do rule and get what they vote for, but not what they want. I could mention a lot of reasons why they do not get what they want, but must be brief, so will only mention a few: First, ignorance is a great hindrance with a large per cent of the voting public; they do not read as they should and do not know, and a great many do not care how they vote. Second, coercion and intimidation has vast influences with a large per cent of the laboring class, causing them to vote against their will. Third, a lack of independent