

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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An English Classic Becomes Timely Reading for American Democrats

Something like three years ago David Lloyd-George, speaking in the house of commons, said: "Every grain of freedom is more precious than radium, and the nation that throws it away is the most wanton of prodigals."

Political Treason

It is probably the work of sensational newspaper writers, but reports are still being sent out to the effect that conspiracies are being formed against Hon. J. Hamilton Lewis, the democratic candidate for the senate in Illinois, and Judge W. H. Thompson, the democratic candidate for the United States senate in Kansas. Any democrat who contemplates joining such a conspiracy had better read Governor Wilson's "Haman" speech. It used to be thought smart to thwart the will of the people, but that day has passed. The public official who embezzles power today finds himself branded as a criminal. If he claims to be a democrat and attempts to overthrow the will of the people he proves that the claim is false. A post mortem examination of such a man—and he is sure to die young—would show that he did not have a drop of democratic blood in him.

VIOLENCE INTOLERABLE

The conviction of the labor organization officials on the charge of using dynamite against the property, and even against the lives, of those opposed to them in labor contests ought to have a salutary influence. The great majority of the members of organized labor—in fact, almost all—are not only opposed to violence but understand that a resort to violence brings great injury to the cause of the working men. But such as have countenanced violence should learn from the Indianapolis and Los Angeles cases that the people of the country will not tolerate lawless attacks on either life or property. Labor has its grievances and these grievances demand speedy redress, but this redress must be secured through the orderly processes of government as a result of public discussion. If any labor leader has imagined that he could help his co-workers by taking the law into his own hands let him learn from these recent cases that such a course does his cause more harm than any open enemy could bring to it.

OUR LEADERSHIP IN PEACE

The following resolution was introduced last summer by Congressman (now governor) Sulzer of New York. It should be passed without a dissenting vote. The United States deserves to lead in the peace movement. The peace congress should be convened by all means.

"H. J. Res. 335. In the house of representatives, July 9, 1912. Mr. Sulzer introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the committee on foreign affairs and ordered to be printed.

"Joint resolution to authorize a joint assembly

of the national legislative bodies of the nations of the world to be held in the United States, and to extend an invitation to said national legislative bodies.

"Resolved by the senate and house or representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled, That the president be, and he hereby is, authorized to extend an invitation to all the members of the national legislative bodies of the various nations of the world to assemble in Washington, District of Columbia, in the United States, during the fall of the year of nineteen hundred and fifteen, to discuss matters relating to universal peace, and make recommendations for such action as will enable said national legislative bodies to be of greater service in promoting concord and peace among the nations of the earth."

A GOOD DEMOCRATIC MEASURE

A measure pending in congress and giving to the states absolute power over the shipment of liquor is good and ought to be enacted into law. It is called the Kenyon-Sheppard bill and proceeds upon sound democratic theory. Long ago Mr. Bryan favored such a measure, and in *The Commoner*, April 22, 1910, he wrote an editorial, in which he said: "Interstate commerce is used to override state laws. What democrat is willing to put himself on record against the proposition that the right of the people of a state to control the liquor traffic is more sacred than the right of liquor dealers to dispose of their product in dry territory and in violation of the law? Mr. Bryan believes that congress should pass a law recognizing the right of each state to prescribe the conditions upon which intoxicating liquors can be transported, sold and used within its borders. He also believes that the federal government should dissolve partnership with law breakers and no longer issue licenses for the sale of liquor in communities where local laws prohibit its sale. If it is thought unconstitutional to discriminate, in the issue of licenses between different communities the same end can be reached by reducing the license to a nominal figure and requiring the applicant for a federal license to give written notice to the local authorities, and newspaper notice to the local public of his intention to apply for a license. Now let those who oppose these propositions meet them with arguments."

BORROWING TROUBLE

Some of the newspapers are borrowing a good deal of trouble over the relations existing between Mr. Clark and Mr. Bryan. Neither is saying anything against the other, but if they were criticising each other what difference would it make? Mr. Clark has earned his re-election as speaker—why should any one ask whether he likes or dislikes Mr. Bryan? Certainly no friend of Mr. Bryan would make that a test. There is a constant tendency to over-estimate the personal element and under-estimate the importance of the principles and policies involved. If either Mr. Bryan or Mr. Clark allow personal feeling to interfere with service to the party and to the country it will be time to condemn the one guilty—why anticipate improper conduct?

HENRY COFFEEN

Mr. Bryan's circle of friends is again broken—this time by the death of ex-Congressman Henry Coffeen of Sheridan, Wyoming. He was an ideal congressman, able, honest, courageous and ever at his post. He met life's responsibilities like a man and lived up to the expectations of his friends. His genial smile and hearty greeting will be missed. Peace to his ashes. The Commoner extends sympathy to the members of the family.

A Central Bank

"Financial America," a financial publication, printed in New York, prints an editorial entitled, "A Central Bank." The editorial is printed in full in another column of this issue but the first paragraph is particularly interesting and is as follows:

"Currency reform will not down. The latest is, indeed, the most acceptable that has come to our ears, for some time—in fact, throughout the whole campaign. What a surprise it would be—how amazing, how astounding—if the democrats should swing around to the point of view that would permit their vision splendid to rest on nothing but a central bank."

Some advocates of the central bank have referred to Leslie M. Shaw as one who favors the central bank plan, but an interview with Mr. Shaw carried by the United Press, under date of Washington, January 8, gives a somewhat different idea. That interview follows:

"If the Aldrich plan for the proposed currency reform is adopted, Wall street will be placed in absolute control of the country for a period of fifty years," was the declaration of Leslie M. Shaw, secretary of the treasury under President Roosevelt, to the Glass currency committee today.

"The object of congress is to relieve Wall street from that control, which it now exercises over the country, as I understand it," he said. "But I believe that probably you will find opposition from most of the large banks of the country. The relief, which must consist of some form of supplemental currency, should spring into existence when needed, remain in use as long as needed and then be automatically retired with equal promptness, and this supplemental currency may be of a character identical with what is in daily use, lest its very presence invite suspicion and disaster.

"This will relieve the country from dependence upon Wall street, and it will relieve cities of one hundred thousand population or less from dependence upon cities of a million or more.

"It will be financial emancipation and for that reason, if for no other, the big banks of the country will oppose.

"I am surprised that all the banks owned or controlled by the United States steel people and all groups whom the author of the bill admits now dominate our financial affairs should unite in support of the measure, if, as Mr. Aldrich claims, it is going to take that control away. I have seen no evidence that these people have become wary.

"The plans, if worked out, will form a compulsory association of all the national banks and trust companies."

"Financial America" is right on one point. It would be "a surprise," it would be "amazing," it would be "astounding," "if the democrats should swing around to the point of view that would permit their vision splendid to rest on nothing but a central bank." Undoubtedly there are some men posing as democratic leaders who would be quite willing to give their aid toward the fulfillment of this Wall street dream. But they are in the minority and "Financial America" may rest assured that at least upon this central bank idea the spirit of Andrew Jackson dominates the democratic party.

AN UNINTENDED FAVOR

The reactionary papers are, unintentionally, of course, rendering the democratic party a service by misrepresenting its attitude. By deceiving the progressive republicans into the belief that the democratic party is going to backslide, the reactionary papers are encouraging the progressives to keep up their fight. As the democratic program develops the progressives will learn better but by that time they may be entirely weaned away from republicanism.

SULZER IS JEFFERSONIAN

Governor Sulzer's inauguration was characterized by Jeffersonian simplicity—an example that might well be followed in a country like ours. His inaugural address was Jeffersonian also and thoroughly sound. The Commoner congratulates New York's chief executive on his splendid beginning and wishes him every success.

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