

## The Commoner

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### CHANCE

If chance could fashion but a little flower,  
With perfume for each tiny thief,  
And furnish it with sunshine and with shower,  
Then chance would be creator with the power  
To build a world for unbelief.  
—Fred Emerson Brooks, in the Gravedigger.

One good result that has been noticed following the war is the fact that it has taught all the typewriters and printers how to spell Hohenzollern without stuttering.

Lieutenant Governor Howard of Nebraska, one of the big progressive leaders of the state, rises to pertinently inquire what reason can be advanced for fixing a maximum price upon the wheat that a farmer raises that does not apply equally to fixing a maximum price upon the agricultural implements that he must purchase in order to harvest his wheat.

Apparently here and there are cunning and ambitious men who have the idea that if they descant long and loud about their own patriotism and pose long enough under the calcium they will be called upon to serve in office when the time rolls around for another election. They have misread history. It is the man who fights the real battles and not the sham battles of his country that gains the honors.

There can be no justification for a war that exacts of one man his service in the field and his blood upon the altar of patriotism but which at the same time permits other men to stay at home and fill their pockets with money made out of the conditions of war that exist. Congress owes it not only to the people but to the principles of democracy to see that no foundation is left upon which to base a charge of this sort of discrimination.

The nation is pouring out its treasures of men and money in order to insure a successful issue of the war on behalf of democracy into which it has entered. The man who hangs back, who refuses to contribute his share, who places obstacles in the way of the government getting the necessary men and money, has no one but himself to blame if he is pilloried as a disloyal citizen. This country having once embarked upon war, there is but one duty for every good citizen and that is to give of himself to the end that it is won by us.

Upon this nation rests the task of feeding the allies until peace and restoration come. This is not an impossible task. The Lord has let His face shine upon the fields and the crops are bounteous. There lies, however, upon everybody the obligation to exercise a wise conservation of food supplies so that there be enough to go around. There is no economy in underfeeding, but it can be wisely practiced by purchasing only sufficient food for all needs and utilizing everything bought so that there be no waste. The full garbage pail can not exist in the same family with the full dinner pail.

## The Dependent Family

The President has acted wisely in exempting from the first call married men with dependent families. The family is the unit of society and the man who takes upon himself the responsibility of adding one to the number of the nation's households deserves special consideration as compared with the man who has not made this contribution to his country's strength and stability.

The race must go on, and the family is a necessary link in the chain. Where children have been born there is still more reason why the married man should be exempted until the unmarried list is exhausted.

And "pecuniary dependence" is not the only fact to be considered. The child needs a father's counsel as well as a mother's care. And the mother, too, is entitled to consideration. A husband's death throws upon her a double burden — she has committed no sin and does not deserve such a punishment.

It sometimes requires courage to live up to these obligations, and the President has rendered a real service in making it easier for the patriotic husband and father to claim exemption until there is actual necessity for his enlistment.

W. J. BRYAN.

### RUSSIA'S WEAKENING

The weakening of Russia in front of the enemy would be a misfortune at any time—it is a calamity in the present crisis. It encourages the war party at Berlin as nothing but military success could, and at the same time it weakens the democratic sentiment in Germany as nothing else could. If Russia, as a republic, had won military victories, it would have hastened the overthrow of the autocratic rule that has converted Germany into a military camp and made the old world a slaughter house. The situation is to be deplored.

A remedy should be found if possible — it would save a republic from disaster and us from an unexpected burden.

For years there has been operated across the river from Fort Leavenworth a number of saloons that were planted there for the purpose of enticing soldiers across the bridge into Missouri. These conditions were known to the people of Missouri, but they allowed them to continue. When the fort was designated as the recruiting and training station for the new army, the President exercised his authority and closed these saloons. The reason was that the government did not desire these soldiers made unfit for service by being poisoned through drink. An object lesson like that ought to be of immense value to the people of Missouri, who have refused to adopt prohibition because it interfered with the personal liberty to get drunk. It ought to impress Missourians with the fact that they are preferring a pretended personal liberty to personal efficiency in their men.

No greater practical service was ever rendered the American people than when President Wilson put forth his hand to stay the mad scramble of business to push prices beyond all reason and all justice. The last year has witnessed the depressing spectacle of profits-mad men abandoning all principles of fair dealing that are concerned with reasonable profits and extracting the last possible penny from the consumers. In 90 per cent of the cases no justification existed for these increases, manufacturers and dealers vying with one another in seeing how much profit they could extract. Speculation was the belled ram of business that led the flock, and when it was killed by executive order the downward trend of prices was at once noticeable.

Airplanes were used by the United States to supply the people of Germany with copies of President Wilson's answer to the proposals of the pope with reference to peace. The fact that this was the only feasible way to reach any of them would seem to dispose of the claim put forward by pro-Germans that Germany is as much of a democracy as the United States.

### THE PASSING OF WHISKEY

The manufacture of whiskey in the United States and its territories ceased on September 8, when the prohibitive clause of the food control act became effective.

This measure, while designed primarily for the period of the war as a means of saving the food grains used in the manufacture of whiskey, will have a far-reaching effect on the moral and economic life of the nation. The saving in grain for use as foodstuffs is alone a very large matter, for it is estimated that of the 100,000,000 bushels of grain used every year by the distilleries a large per cent was used to manufacture whiskey.

September 8, 1917, will go down in history as marking a triumph for the forces of moral reform. The stopping of the manufacture of whiskey, even if intended only for the period of the war, will give the people of the country an opportunity to experience the benefits derived from the abolition of whiskey. The history of temperance reform is never backward, and the benefits that will come as a result of this forward action of the federal government will probably mean the passing for all time of whiskey and its horde of attendant evils.

While it is to be regretted that the food control measure did not exclude the manufacture of all intoxicating liquors, the promised final emancipation of the nation from the thralldom of whiskey is the greatest blessing that has come to it in a generation.

## The Indiana Situation

Indiana has gone dry. Will the democratic party in that state reorganize on a prohibition basis and put itself in harmony with the moral sentiment of the state, or will it insult the conscience of the party and the commonwealth by abject surrender to the liquor interests? The first answer to this question will be given when the state committee selects a new chairman, but that is only the beginning. If the liquor interests win, every man who votes with the wets should be retired—the party will meet defeat until it is set free from the domination of the breweries, distilleries and saloons. The temperance element in the democratic party should take up the fight at once and continue it until the democratic party is emancipated. The Indiana delegation disgraced itself at the democratic convention last year by selecting a brewer to represent it on the resolutions committee. The state convention smeared the party all over with the slime of the saloon. The democrats in the legislature did what they could to redeem the party, but it remains for the voters of the party to purge the organization of those members who are controlled by the liquor interests.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BEGIN.

W. J. BRYAN.

Progressive democrats must be upon guard at elections for a number of years to come against a new menace. Everywhere reactionaries will employ the opportunity offered by the absorption of the people in the war to creep into office. They will pose at home as intense patriots anxious to strike a blow at the enemy and vociferous in their denunciation of everybody who doesn't yell as loud for the flag as they do. After the war is over reactionaries who profit by the control of officers and legislative bodies will seek this end by capitalizing the popularity of men who think as they do about progressivism who may have gained renown in the clash of arms. Now is a very good time to make a few notes on the record of men who are planning to use the war to hobble progressivism in the democratic party.

The voters of Iowa will be called upon on the 15th of October to give old John Barleycorn, banished by the legislature, his knockout blow by passing a constitutional amendment forever forbidding the sale and manufacture of intoxicants in that state. The progressive character of the people of Iowa, their love of home and their detestation of evil, makes it really unnecessary to call upon them to rise and administer the sentence of banishment to booze in that commonwealth. Iowa has had experience with prohibition and with high license, and its citizens are in an admirable position to judge where lies their best interests.