

# Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

## CLEVELAND AND TARIFF REFORM.

The Richmond Telegram, which announces editorially that it would be willing to vote for Mr. Cleveland again, although preferring some one else, takes Mr. Bryan to task for doubting Mr. Cleveland's fidelity to tariff reform. It says:

If he (Mr. Bryan) is an honest man he must admit that Mr. Cleveland, whatever may be his sins, has for twenty years been the earnest, consistent and unswerving advocate of low tariff, the present live issue, and the only rational means yet discovered to properly curb the trusts, and yet he tries to produce the impression that Mr. Cleveland is opposed to low tariff. Until we read this we believed that Mr. Bryan was at least honest and sincere.

Mr. Cleveland's message sent to congress near the close of his first administration did not contain a discussion of the principles of tariff reform; it was merely a protest against the accumulation of the surplus. The whole message might be condensed into the epigram which did service in 1888, "Unnecessary taxation is unjust taxation."

After receiving credit for the message he favored the adoption of a platform in 1888 which on the tariff question did not differ materially from the republican platform. The convention of 1892 was compelled to reject the platform prepared by Mr. Cleveland and his friends, and the campaign that year was fought upon a platform which was far more radical than Mr. Cleveland or his managers desired. When the campaign was over Mr. Cleveland refused to call congress together to take up the tariff question upon which the party was united. He waited until the financiers demanded further legislation in the direction of the gold standard, and then he called congress together and divided his party by trying to compel its support of a bill identical in purpose and almost identical in language with one introduced by John Sherman a year before.

When congress did get a chance to legislate upon the tariff question, more than a year after the campaign of 1892, he became disgruntled because the bill did not contain the specific provisions which he desired and refused to sign the measure, allowing it to become a law without his signature. The Wilson bill was a much better tariff measure when it passed the house than when it came back from the senate with amendments, but as passed it was the best that could be secured under the circumstances, and Mr. Cleveland did not show any great interest in tariff reform when he refused to sign the bill and gave the republicans a weapon to use against it.

In 1896, when Mr. McKinley, the representative of ultra-high tariff views, was a candidate, Mr. Cleveland threw all his influence to his election, and after the election, at the Waldorf dinner, boasted of his part in the republican victory. He defended his action on the ground that the money question was more important than the tariff, but whatever his excuse was he suppressed his hostility to high tariff long enough to help install a protectionist administration. In 1900 he again, by silence, threw his influence to the side of high tariff, although he contended that the money question was dead and even though he had denounced imperialism as a menace to the very existence of the republic.

Now this is his record, and the editor of the Telegram will not dispute a single fact herein stated. Yet he insists that if Mr. Bryan is an honest man he must admit that "Mr. Cleveland has for twenty years been the earnest consistent and unswerving advocate of low tariff." If the editor of the Telegram will examine the record he will have to admit that Mr. Cleveland has neither been earnest nor consistent nor unswerving in his advocacy of a low tariff. On the contrary, he has by his conduct shown very little interest in the subject of tariff reform, and even his speeches (which have been more consistent than his acts) do not disclose any broad understanding of the principles which control the question.

As to the second proposition, that a low tariff is "the present live issue" and that it is "the only rational means yet discovered to properly curb the trusts." The Commoner has already spoken. Imperialism is a live issue; the money question must be alive or the republicans would not be attempting to secure an asset currency, branch banks and a redeemable silver dollar, and the trust question, while relating to high tariff, is even broader than the tariff and cannot be settled by putting trust-made articles on the free list. An industry that can live without a tariff can be controlled by a trust without the aid of the tariff. A high tariff enables the trust to charge extortionate prices, but a trust that can export in competition with the world can exist under absolute free trade. While the Commoner advocates and urges the putting of trust-made articles on the free list, it goes further and insists upon legislation which will make a private monopoly impossible. Mr. Cleveland, while thundering against the trusts, has never suggested a remedy. Neither do those suggest a remedy who are willing to abandon all other questions to concentrate the fight on the tariff question.

Although the party has been defeated on the tariff question oftener than on any other issue, the Commoner still believes that a protective tariff is wrong in principle, unwise in Administration logic is a queer sort of thing when you investigate it. The administration demands that the friars get out of the Philippines because the natives do not want them there. But the administration persists in remaining there in spite of the wishes of the natives.

Why do the republican papers take such an interest in the reorganization of the democratic party? Certainly not because they fear reorganization.

The republican organs continue to manifest a wonderful interest in the success of the reorganizers.

policy and unnecessary in practice. But the Commoner is not willing to abandon the people's interest on other questions merely to give standing in the party to those who advocate nothing else that is democratic and never advocate tariff reform when it interferes with the plans of the money changers. Much less is it willing to encourage those who proclaim great animosity toward industrial trusts and at the same time secretly plot to fasten upon the people a money trust and a banking trust. The democratic party must meet every issue as it arises, and it must defend the people's rights from encroachments from every quarter.

**AS A TRUE DEMOCRAT.**  
Commenting upon the letter written by David B. Hill to the effect that he was "still a democrat—very still"—in 1896, the New York World says:

As a true democrat Governor Hill could only have broken his silence in that campaign to expose the fallacy and to denounce the essential dishonesty of the demand for the free, unlimited and independent coinage of silver at the false ratio of 16 to 1.

Then the World says that democrats ought to be very grateful to Mr. Hill for keeping "very still."

If "as a true democrat" Mr. Hill could only have broken his silence in 1896 "to expose the fallacy and to denounce the essential dishonesty of the demand for the free, unlimited and independent coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1," what was Mr. Hill in 1900 when we are told he gave sincere and cordial support to the democratic ticket?

The platform of 1900 contained a demand for the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1. Mr. Hill's friends claim that in that campaign he was sincere in his support of the ticket. Was he "a true democrat" in 1900 when he broke his silence and yet failed to "expose the fallacy and to denounce the essential dishonesty" of a plank in the national platform? Or was he "a true democrat" in the campaign of 1896 when he was "still—very still—?"

**STRIKING FIGURES.**  
The Kansas City Journal, republican, in an editorial entitled "The Profits of Annexation," says that the "grand total paid for all our landed dominions, except the sums recently paid to Spain, was \$52,200,000, an amount which is exceeded by the annual output of Kansas farms alone."

While the Journal is indulging in comparing figures, it might point out also that the increase in the appropriations made for the navy for the year 1903, over and above that made for the year 1897, the year immediately preceding the Spanish-American war, is represented by the sum of \$49,262,718. This increase is very nearly equal to the grand total paid for all of our added landed dominions prior to the Spanish war.

The Journal might also point out that the increase in the appropriations for the army for the year 1903 over and above similar appropriations made for 1897 is represented by the sum of \$68,277,528, a sum largely in excess of the grand total paid for all of our added landed dominions prior to the Spanish-American war.

In 1897 our total appropriations for the army and navy amounted to \$52,608,853; for the year 1903 these appropriations will reach the enormous sum of \$170,208,821. This is an increase of \$117,540,248. This does not take into consideration the \$20,000,000 which we paid for the Philippines or other expenditures which our policy of imperialism will make necessary.

**TRUSTS BEGIN TO THREATEN.**  
While Mr. Littlefield denies that he has been asked to prepare an anti-trust bill for the president, the press notice to the effect that he was working on such a bill scared the trust managers and as a result protests are already arriving. Mr. Wellman, in the Chicago Record-Herald, says that "hundreds of letters and telegrams are pouring in on the president at Oyster Bay urging him to go slow on this trust business. Capitalists, bankers, and heads of big insurance companies and managers of great railroad and other corporations are trying to intimidate the president into abandoning his program. Their idea is that he will hurt business, and they do not hesitate to predict that if a panic were to come the president's war on trusts would be held responsible therefor!"

This sounds very familiar. These are the same people who opposed bi-metalism and threatened a panic. That is their favorite threat.

Mr. Wellman says that the president is not scared, but it is evident that the chief executive is spending a good deal of time explaining that he is only after the "bad" trusts.

Mr. Wellman says that "in the president's opinion the worst evil of modern trusts is not monopoly or restraint of trade, but the era of wild speculation in capital stocks brought about by the efforts of promoters to gain great fortunes by printing millions of share certificates and working them off on the public." Well, the trusts need not fear much harm from a president who does not object to private monopolies, does not object to their methods or to the destruction of individual enterprises, but only objects to the frauds practiced on stockholders by promoters.

It would seem that the president has either been scared out or that he never had much intention of interfering with the trusts.

The press dispatches report that the amnesty proclamation was read in Manila, but no mention is made of the Declaration of Independence and government by the consent of the governed.

There would be a better chance for harmony if some would-be party managers would play on a democratic instrument instead of fooling with the republican horse-fiddle.

"Attorney General Knox is going for the trusts!" shouts an administration exchange. He's been going for them ever since they started him.

## MONEY FOR STRIKERS

SIGNIFICANCE OF MOVEMENT TO SUPPORT MINERS.

Protected Manufacturers and Mine Owners Also Raise Money, but with a Very Different Object in View—A Few Facts.

Secretary Wilson of the coal miners' organization told the miners' convention at Indianapolis that it would cost \$500,000 per week to support all the men now on strike in the anthracite region. He figured that an assessment of \$1 per week on the soft coal miners would provide half of this sum, and he believed that the other half would be supplied from outside sources.

The raising of this large sum of money will involve no small sacrifice and self-denial on the part of men whose earnings are by no means princely with all the alleged protection afforded them by Republican statesmen against the "pauper labor of Europe." It means the cutting off of a good many things with which they and their families cannot dispense without considerable discomfort.

There are other people who contribute money too. There are people who have a good deal to contribute. Many of them are employers of the miners who propose to contribute to the support of the strikers.

But there are differences. The miners contribute money for an honest purpose—to feed the striking miners and their families. There is no concealment about it because there is nothing about it to be ashamed of.

The employers contribute money to pack conventions and secure the nomination of men for Congress and to promote the election of men to both houses of Congress who can be relied on to maintain the sacred tariff. They contribute money not only to secure the election of men who will stand up for Dingleyism to the minutest letter, but also to pay their lobbies and their attorneys in Congress and the knowing statesmen who have to be propitiated. They do not advertise these facts.

The miners' contribute to the subsistence of their striking fellow-workers with small hope of ever getting a dollar of their money back. The employers get every dollar back. That does not tell the whole story. They contribute for corrupt purposes only a small part of the swag which the tariff laws they buy and pay for enable them to wring from American consumers of their products.

The miners contribute to a union of workmen. The employers contribute to a union which embraces all the beneficiaries of the protective tariff. They contribute to the most gigantic monopoly combine on the face of the earth—a combine which embraces thousands of millions of capital and practically all the politicians of the republican party and which through an infamous perversion of the powers and functions of government wrest hundreds of millions every year from the people, including their own working men and women, for whose benefit they falsely pretend their tariff is intended.

**Now a Potters' Trust.**

There is now a prospect of a pottery trust.

Representatives of the principal potteries of the country met in Chicago yesterday to discuss the formation of an association to control the output and prices of all the establishments in their line in the country.

This, we are to understand, means that they are beginning to compete with one another and to cut under the prices to which they are legally entitled under the Dingley tariff.

A good many years ago when there was talk of reducing the tariff the potters met and indignantly protested against any reduction on articles competing with their products and proclaimed to all the land that they were entitled to the home market.

By that they meant that the American people had no right to buy crockery where they could get it at prices fixed by world-wide competition, but that they, the American potters, had a right to extort some 50 per cent more than competitive prices from their countrymen.

A Republican Congress agreed with them. They seem to have got along until now without competing among themselves and to have taken their full pound of flesh under the Shylock tariff, but now they must get together in a trust or the long-suffering public will at last get the benefit of a little competition among the potters who have a right to skin them under the shelter of laws.

**Less Talk of "Anarchy."**

Within the last two years there has been a notable increase in the number of "anarchists" who deny that it is a "reared right" of corporations to combine for the suppression of competition and hold that the power which grants special privileges may regulate their use or withdraw them when they are abused. Henry Clevins is not regarded generally as a scatter-brained socialist, yet he says things of the trusts which would have horrified the conservative business world not so very long ago. A long step toward correction of evils developed in the concentration of corporate wealth and power is marked by the fact that the subject can be discussed without exciting suspicion that revolution is being plotted.

**Moody Gives Good Advice.**

A good deal of trumpet-blowing is heard in connection with a bill which Congressman Littlefield of Maine is supposed to be preparing at the alleged instance of President Roosevelt.

He is going to show the Republican Congress—after election—how to bridle and tame the rampant trusts "without sacrificing the tariff, which is sacred." President Roosevelt has got out an injunction against the beef trust under existing law and is thinking about enjoining the coal trust and perhaps some others. All this is done without interfering with the "sacred tariff," and the people who keep on paying war taxes for beef and coal see how utterly useless it is. As Mr. Moody says, the only way to stop trust extortion is to take away from the trusts their tariff protection. This is a pretty bold statement of the truth to come from a member of the administration, and it is decidedly refreshing. We commend the idea of the secretary of war to Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Littlefield.

**United for Public Robbery.**

The Cuban reciprocity fiasco has demonstrated again the unity of the protected interests. At the beginning of this session of congress many Republican leaders even did not understand what a powerful bond existed in the greed for government aid. No sooner was the issue fairly before Congress than the "infant industries" came trooping to the aid of the beet sugar people. Franklin's dictum, "Let us all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately," became the motto of the protected industries. The strength of organized greed has been alarmingly proved in the events of the last few weeks. The Cuban reciprocity leaders find that the Republican party has created an artificial monster which it cannot control.

**No Matter Who the Swindler.**

Just what difference it will make to the American eaters of meat whether they are swindled by one big lawful company or by an illegal combination of six concerns has not yet clearly appeared in the columns of the trust defenders. The people of this country don't care a rap whether the prices of the necessities of life are artificially enhanced by verbal or written agreements, outside of the law, between firms that are natural competitors, or by a formal legal consolidation of these natural competitors. What they want is freedom from extortion and it is becoming, we think, more and more clear to them that that is something that they will never get from the Republican party as at present controlled.

**Mean and Vicious in Every Way.**

It is probably the demoralizing influence of our pauperizing tariff to which should be attributed the tendency of men in business to beg of Uncle Sam. It has always been accepted as a sufficient reason why a manufacturer should have more protection than he was not making money or was not making the profit he thought he ought to be making. The meanness and viciousness of the whole wretched business have just been exhibited for the disgust and instruction of the American people by the shameless greed of Oxnard and his fellow-workers, who have prevented the country from doing its plain duty by Cuba. Such a showing ought to make an end of the whole rotten system.

**Day of Reckoning to Come.**

Rebuke and punishment await the Republican party in the near future. The settlement with the people will be a settlement exceedingly costly to the political organization which has surrendered the people to the oppression of the trusts. This truth of treachery is so well known to voters that there is no way by which Republican speakers or machine organs can longer distort its meaning. The majority party in the Congress now just ended has, indeed, the best of reasons for alarm. That party has wrought its own undoing in so blindly obeying the evil commands of the trusts.

**True Republican Policy.**

It does not become a Republican newspaper to say a word about the policy of drawing upon the national treasury to meet deficits incurred by expositions like those at Buffalo and Charleston. The Republican party is in the business of giving the people's money to individuals and enterprises not one-half so deserving as the average exposition. Until the whole system of special privilege is done away with every state and county fair ought to have the same consideration that is accorded to protected industries. No one should have a monopoly of the swag.

**Must Get On Without Protection.**

Mr. Schwab's declaration of the mammoth proportions of the steel trust, more colossal even than they were supposed to be, will at least serve the purpose of strengthening the popular demand that the steel industry, so thoroughly dominated by this great trust, shall not command higher prices for its products than it is entitled to and collect them through the assistance of a protective tariff.

**Not Their Own Masters.**

The Republicans purposely made the Dingley tariff higher than they would have otherwise made it in order that they might reduce it by reciprocity, but they have been unable to reduce it in the least, by reciprocity or otherwise. Is it at all doubtful whether the Republicans are their own masters or are controlled outright by the tariff-subsidized interests?

**Not Much Difference.**

There is not much difference between Canada and the United States after all. While Canada offers protection to those who rob the American government, the United States offers protection to those who rob the American people—the beef trust and the steel trust.

## A KIDNAPED POODLE

HERE is a story of an unseasonable ruse in love, and a kidnaped poodle. Billinger and Batterson were rivals for the good graces of Miss Mayhew, and Miss Mayhew was dotingly fond of her pug, Chicot.

It was after a visit to his adored one that Billinger was struck with a great idea.

As he turned into the avenue he met a butcher's boy whom he remembered as having, on rare occasions, by reason of a reputation for unimpeachable integrity, been intrusted with the precious Chicot on rainy days when, despite the weather, it was deemed desirable that the animal should be exercised. Billinger stopped the hastening youth and addressed him something in this wise:

"Young man, are you ambitious?" The boy grinned amiably, for he knew Billinger, and responded succinctly: "Sure thing."

"Tis well," quoth Billinger. "Have you any objection to laying forthwith the foundations of the princely fortune that will one day be yours?" The boy grinned again and guessed not, whereupon Billinger, with many admonitions to secrecy, unfolded his plot.

The details of the conspiracy are not important. Suffice it to say that one rainy morning about ten days later the boy appeared at Billinger's office in John street with a much-ledragged and altogether rebellious Chicot, whom an office boy was straightway deputed to tie to the safe in Billinger's sanctum.

"Well done, good and faithful servant," said Billinger solemnly to the butcher's boy. "Behold now, how virtue is rewarded." And he gave his fellow conspirator more money than



MISS MAYHEW

he had ever seen at any one time in his life.

Then he glanced triumphantly at the captive Chicot and went out to luncheon in high spirits. "What I will do to that pestiferous pup," said he to himself, "will be what the etiquette books describe as a general sufficiency."

Alas for Billinger. While he was treating himself handsomely at a neighboring cafe, who should drop in at his office but the hated Batterson, whose partner had a law case in Billinger's hands.

The first object that met his astonished gaze was the form of the mud-bespattered Chicot. Now it happened that Batterson had received by telephone the awful news of Chicot's taking off. "Funny thing," he thought. "Blinger must have found the pup." But then he remembered that Miss Mayhew had said that she had asked Billinger to advertise for him. He remembered this the more distinctly because he had offered his own services to that end, and had been anything but pleased to find that he had been anticipated.

A great light began to illumine the obscurity of Batterson's mind. He passed into the hall, carefully closing the door behind him, and re-entered Billinger's private office by the other door. Batterson untied the rope that fastened the dog to the safe, leaving the other end still tied to that substantial piece of furniture.

Then, taking the joyous Chicot in his arms, he stole silently out into the hall, closing the door behind him, and walked down eight flights of stairs. Peering cautiously out into the street, he rejoiced to see no Billinger, and, bearing his armful of muddied dog, fled precipitately toward Broad street.

**Must Get On Without Protection.**

When Billinger returned from luncheon his first thought was for Chicot. In vain he searched the office. Chicot was not to be found. He summoned the head clerk. Nobody had entered his sanctum, declared that functionary, but Mr. Batterson. "Batterson!" cried the unhappy Billinger, and collapsed into a chair. "Did he take the dog away?" Certainly not, the clerk replied. Mr. Batterson went out as he had entered, and he was perfectly certain that he had no dog concealed about his person. Billinger dismissed the clerk and

curled his luck for five minutes without repeating himself. Then, in desperation, he closed his desk and sent for a cab. The suspense was unendurable. He had made up his mind to know the worst at once.

The man who answered his ring would see if Miss Mayhew was at home and ushered him into a well-remembered drawing room. As soon as his eyes became accustomed to the dim half light he was aware of a figure in the chair by the window. The next instant he recognized it. It was



LORD BLITHERINGTON

Batterson. In his lap lay a forlorn black beap whose name was Chicot. Billinger was speechless. He rose and took one step toward the door. Flight was his purpose. Nothing else was left him now. Too late! At that very instant Miss Mayhew entered the room. A handkerchief was pressed to her eyes, and if there had been sufficient light it could have been seen that they were red. Billinger stood miserably aside. Batterson advanced proudly to the middle of the room, but before he could speak the poodle leaped from his arms and rushed with joyous yelps upon his mistress.

Batterson was clothed in a proud humility, and as he opened his mouth to speak Billinger shuddered in his dim corner by the door.

"Er—er," stammered Batterson. "Er—I was so fortunate as to find Chicot, you see."

"Yes, yes," cried the joyful mistress of the dog, "thank heaven. I was afraid I should never see him again. But where—how, oh, tell me! I beg you." Billinger waited as waits the convicted criminal to hear his sentence. Batterson cleared his throat.

"Er—not far from my office—in John street," he said, "as I was going to luncheon." Billinger seized a chair to keep from falling. He could hardly realize that he was to be spared.

"The poor, poor doggie!" cried the lady. And to think he had walked all the way down there. I can't think how he failed to be killed by a trolley car or a truck or something. It is simply marvelous. How can I ever thank you enough?" And she pressed a kiss upon Chicot's black, wet muzzle.

"You have no idea how all this



BATTERSON

has upset me," went on Miss Mayhew "especially coming at a time when I was so happy—when I so wanted everything to be serene and joyous." Billinger's reprieve was too recent for speech, but Batterson managed to say:

"Eh? How do you mean? I don't understand."

"Of course you don't," said Miss Mayhew. "How should you? But when that wretched boy came to tell me he had lost dear Chicot I was just writing to you and Mr. Billinger to tell you of my engagement to Lord Blitherington."

Billinger and Batterson went dolefully down the brownstone steps arm in arm. The war was over.

"I say, old fellow," said Billinger, mournfully, "I know a place around the corner where there's a chap who makes the best mint julep in New York."

"Eh? What?" said Batterson, absently. "Oh, I don't mind if I do."

As they sadly turned the corner they met an automobile careering madly up the avenue. A pair of feet reposed upon the dashboard. Behind the feet appeared a mouth between whose lips was held a long, fat, black cigar. The face was the face of the butcher's boy. He was having the time of his life.

**Immensity of the Ocean.**

If all the land on the globe above sea level were shoveled into the North Atlantic it would only reduce its depth from an average of two miles to one mile.