

Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

The Strike.
A strike is on between organized labor and the steel company, and it seems to involve the right of labor to organize for its own protection. President Shaffer, who represents the men, is confident of success, while the officers of the steel trust as yet show no sign of weakening. Mr. Shaffer says that the men will not resort to force and that there will be no destruction of property. Along as this promise is kept, public sympathy will be with the laboring men.

The right of labor to organize ought not to be questioned, and yet the growth of trusts is directly opposed to the interests of the laboring men, and, as every trust is a menace to the labor organizations, it is strange that any laboring man votes with the trusts. When the head of a great corporation controls all the factories which employ skilled labor in any particular line, he is very likely to dictate terms. Capital does not need food or clothing. If it remains idle for a month or a year its owner simply loses his income for the period of its idleness, but with the laboring man it is different. His hunger cannot be suspended; his need for clothing and shelter knows no cessation; the children they are when a strike is ordered they could remedy their grievances without a strike or loss of employment.

The steel trust may prove a blessing in disguise if it convinces the wage earners of the country that a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable.

No Middle Ground.

If anyone thinks that plutocracy can be placated by an abandonment of silver, let him read the New York Sun. That paper has earned the right to be considered the chief exponent of the money worshipping element in American politics. Instead of thinking the Ohio democrats for ignoring the money question it warns them that anti-trust legislation would be more dangerous to the country than free silver. It says:

"We demand the suppression of all trusts. There is a monstrous proposition here. There are any way of carrying it into effect industrial disaster more widespread and ruinous than has ever fallen upon the country would be the result. There would be a commercial cataclysm. The amount of capital and labor dependent upon these combinations is so vast that to crush them would be to bring on unparalleled calamity. The country would be left with the free coinage of silver would have been a fly bite."

"So, we are to have a panic and all sorts of calamity if we destroy the trusts? Well, this is discouraging. But it only shows that there is nothing through all the republican policies, the same vicious principle and every policy is defended by the same brutal argument: 'Accept our policies; submit to our demands, or we bring on a panic!' Some think that they can make peace with the money trust and then fight the other trusts, but it is a vain hope. There is no middle ground. The democratic party must be with the people entirely or against them entirely. The moment it begins to compromise it loses more than it can possibly gain."

A Permanent Criticism.

"The San Juan Potosi Riot. News, commenting on the supreme court decision in the insular cases, says: 'We are and are not part of the United States. We are and are not citizens of the United States. We are and are not to have our money back. The tariff is not to be voted. The constitution does and does not extend and its limitations do and do not apply.'"

"Upon these points the justices disagree five in favor and four against. Are we or are we not, or are we not?"

This about covers the case. The editor of the News should remember that there is a "perhaps" before the freedom of the press in "our possessions" now.

After Secretary Wilson has latched the sugar trust into millinery by providing enough raw sugar to keep all the refineries going will be kindly provide a way of smashing the oil trust, which has a cinch on all of the raw material in its line.

Political conditions become corrupt because vice is continuous in its operation while virtue is often spasmodic. The many who simply want good government arouse themselves occasionally to secure some necessary reform but the few who make money out of legislation are always alert and active.

Let the democrats of Ohio vote the ticket and then begin the next day after election to organize the congressional districts so that it will not be possible for a corporation democrat to secure a nomination.

If the Ohio democrats want to get a good idea of the reform let them examine Mr. Watterson's plans and specifications for a platform and then read his praise of the Ohio platform.

The steel trust should treat with the striking steel trust workers. It might result in ending a drought that threatens to dry up all the water in the steel trust stocks.

Salisbury and Chamberlain insist that the war in South Africa is over. But British agents are still scouring Missouri for rebels.

WILL LEARN LESSON.

SHOUTERS FOR M'KINLEY TO LOOK FOR JOBS.

Consolidation of Railroads Will Throw Thousands Out of Their Jobs—Another Result of the Reign of Trust Servants at Washington.

The employees of the railroads will suffer by the combination that the railroads have perfected and a good many will be hunting jobs in a few weeks. They will thus be thrown into competition with the higher paid clerks in other lines of business and eventually force lower wages than even now prevail for this class of labor. The Railroad News says: "It is reported that the offices of railroads in the different combinations located in all principal cities throughout the country will be consolidated. The report is revived in connection with the Morgan-Hill syndicate operations. After the offices of individual lines under the same ownership have been brought together it is said that thousands of solicitors and passenger agents will be eliminated in the interests of economy."

When these men voted to elect a Republican congress, and nearly all of them so voted, they helped to intrude the combines and trusts in power and their only hope now is to join the attacking force of the Democrats and force under these combinations that free competition may again prevail.

SENATORS, TRUSTS AND GAGE.

The Protective Tariff League and the Home Market Club of Boston, who look through the same glasses and see nothing but ruin for the country under the trusts are protected, have been making a fight for some months to get Mr. Gibson out of the office of counsel to the treasury department and have Mr. Washburn, Senator Lodge's private secretary, appointed in his place. Senator Lodge and other senators have been aiding the trusts in this matter and in the haughty manner of Republican politicians demanded that Secretary Gage at once make the appointment and followed it up by a telephone message asking why the removal and the appointment had not been made. Secretary Gage, whose vertebrae is not very rigid, did not resent these demands and succumbed to the trusts.

Noting these facts, the New York Times says: "But it would give great joy to some millions of the American people if some time the head of a department who dearly loved a fight would send back to his insulters through the mails or over the telephone wires messages of loud defiance, accompanied by opinions on the character and habits of place-hunting senators, enlivened by epithet and glowing with justified anger."

A DEMORALIZED REPUBLICAN.

Senator Foraker, who was coquetting with the Democrats but a few months ago, has now turned over all his fire apparatus to Senator Hanna to save his political neck and help the latter foot the treasury with ship-subsidies and rob the people with protection for the trusts. Louis Post in the Public says: "Senator Foraker, of Ohio, makes a better candidate for reelection than he would make for Mrs. Irving's offer of \$1,000 to the successful man who can carry on his affairs for a month without lying. While delivering the opening speech at the Ohio Republican convention he tried to fool the people by declaiming against municipal ownership of public utilities as enlarging the field and opportunities of the political boss." So gravely and with such oiliness he said, that one might suppose Senator Foraker had never heard of "the field and opportunities of the political boss" in connection with utilities, which his good friend and copartisan, the delectable Senator Quay, has in Pennsylvania utilized beyond the dreams of avaricious power—without municipal ownership. Yet some of Mr. Foraker's hearers must have known, as Mr. Foraker doubtless did himself, that with municipal ownership, nothing like so great an abuse of power over public utilities would be possible.

THE TRUSTS ADVANCE PRICES.

The Republicans have been claiming that the trusts are good things, that they raise wages and increase trade and generally benefit consumers. This optimistic view does not give with the facts that are daily coming to light. The latest exposure of the rapacity of the trusts is the increased price of the Window-glass trust is demanding of its victims. The Florists Exchange publishes the following letter: "Toledo, O.—J. J. Jackson has let the contract to Bostwick, Bryant & Co. for 215 boxes of glass to be used in the construction of the big greenhouse to be erected for Henry Crane & Co. of East Toledo. Some idea of the profits of the trusts can be gathered from the fact that last year Mr. Jackson bought for \$2.50 a box the glass for which he now pays \$5.60 per box. Previously to that the glass had sold at \$1.50 a box."

Is this not indirect violation of our laws, or are there no laws by which these men can be reached?"

T. H. NORTON.

Highstown, N. J.
The Glass trust is a monopoly which the Republican protective tariff fosters with an average tax of 3 1/2 cents a pound on common window glass, which is practically a prohibitive duty, as all the glass of this kind imported in 1900 was \$1,565,924 in value.

The increase in price of nearly 200 per cent is doubtless in consequence of the lack of competition and since the rival manufacturers have been bought out by the trust, so that every man that builds a house pays a direct tax to the trust and this in consequence of the protective tariff.

NOT A SUBJECT FOR CONGRATULATION.

The enormous taxes wrung from the people during the past year through the war taxes and other internal revenue sources, besides the tax collected under the protective tariff is a great satisfaction to Republican newspaper organs.

GOSPEL OF GREED.

AGAINST WHICH ALL REFORMERS MUST SOON UNITE.

Ownership in Air—Rights of Real Estate Owners Above Their Land—Can Men Rightfully Claim Ownership of Atmosphere.

The value of land in a great city has long been recognized, but few people, perhaps, have realized how far up and down real estate ownership extends. A lawsuit just decided in New York has settled the fact that a man can get damages if his neighbor encroaches for even a few inches on the air above the land to which he has a legal claim. The evidence in the case just decided showed that the wall of a twenty-story building on Broadway overhangs the land adjoining, at the first cornice of the building three inches and a quarter; at the second cornice three inches and three-quarters. At the New street end there is an overhang of one and one-eighth inches, and in addition to this there are overhanging cornices and swinging shutters. The owner of the air encroached upon got opinions from experts that the consequent injury to him was from \$50,000 to \$250,000, says the Boston Globe.

HUNTING A PLAIN FACT.

That industrious bunch of professional office seekers known as the Industrial Commission, are playing hide and seek with a fact that is in plain view of those who want to see it. The fact that the air encroached upon got opinions from experts that the consequent injury to him was from \$50,000 to \$250,000, says the Boston Globe. Judge Lawrence of the supreme court has awarded to the sufferer \$5,000 damages. He says that the defendant will be enjoined from maintaining the cornices and swinging shutters, the injunction to take effect when the plaintiff decides, if at all, to carry up his building, which is four stories high, or to erect another higher building. If the defendant agrees to pay the \$5,000 the plaintiff must give up an equitable claim for the encroachment of the wall. The defendant must also declare that he will make no claim of adverse possession for the time the cornices and shutters remain.

REPUBLICAN BRIGANDS.

When ten thousand men struggle to participate in a public meeting as the people did in Philadelphia a short time ago, the Republican machine and to take steps to elect a district attorney who, for well doing, has been turned down by the ring, there is some hope that the people will triumph. The Republican machine was denounced by Col. Alexander K. McClure in unsparring terms. He said: "A bewildering succession of public robberies, the like of which no state has ever known, compels the people of this commonwealth to make war today upon the most corrupt band of political brigands ever organized in the United States." And yet with the present election laws in Pennsylvania it will be found almost impossible to defeat them.

WINNING THEM OVER.

They are beginning to find out in Cleveland that Mayor Tom Johnson is no humbug and that he is earnestly and honestly endeavoring to bring about true and wholesome reforms. The Cleveland Press, which has been radically opposed to him, has now come over to his side. It realizes that "All true lovers of justice will applaud the mayor's work for the smoothing down of tax inequalities and will hope for his ultimate success. The human goose squawks less, as the feathers are plucked from him, if he can witness the denuding of his fellows."

THE TRUSTS DO DISCRIMINATE.

Bradstreet, in a late weekly review of the iron and steel market, said: "Advices from British markets are that American steel billets are being offered at very low prices, which, in view of the strength of billets at home, may be taken to indicate that American manufacturers are in the export business to stay." This is the strongest evidence that has been offered to prove the case of the tariff reformers, that the trust is selling to foreigners for a much less price than to our own people and the protection of the Dingley tariff that allows the trust to do this, should be repealed. Senator Allison and other Republican United States senators who have denied that the trusts are doing this please take notice.

Government irrigation of the arid lands of the western states is sure to come in the future when the density of population demands it, but the Cheyenne plan will only lead to a few men gobbling all the water rights and leave the people who work the land to pay outrageous water rents. The Philadelphia Record says: "Congress is to be asked next winter to set aside all money received from public land sales in fifteen western states and sales territories to be used only for constructing reservoirs in semi-arid sections. The states may thereafter sell the completed works to 'actual users of water.'" This is the latest plan approved by western talent in convention at Cheyenne for saddling the cost of irrigation on the federal treasury. There is millions in it—if it can be made to work.

The Hanna system of winning elections is a unique one. Promise anything and buy all in sight, would be a fair way of putting it. Senator Scott of West Virginia, was the head of the promising bureau, and he does not seem to have been chary in making them, especially to the old soldiers. The administration, after election was over was not so free in redeeming these anti-election vote getters and Evans is still commissioner of pensions, much to the disgust of General Dan Sickles and the other veterans. Hanna should make McKinley redeem these drafts on credulity.

SWISS RAILROADS.

They have a very crude and oppressive way of handling the railroad business in Switzerland. About two years ago the government bought the entire railroad system of the nation and proposed to show what it could do. After increasing the wages, reducing the hours of the employees, and reducing the tariff to one-third its former rate on both freight and passengers, the officials were not satisfied, and put in a system of season tickets, by buying one of which for \$16 you can ride on any railroad in the nation as often as you please, as long as you please, and at any time within its limit that you please. Did you ever hear of such oppression? Was tyrannical ever more tyrannical? How glad we should be that we live in a free country where we have to pay three cents a mile to travel, have to use the ticket on the day of purchase or lose it; where we have to sign our name and prove our identity to every conductor; where we are looked upon with suspicion whenever we present a coupon ticket, for fear we have patronized a scalper; you bet, how thankful that we live in a free country. And what is worse, the government of Switzerland receives enough returns to pay interest on \$100,000 a mile, which it paid for the railroads and is laying by a sinking fund that will wipe out the debt in fifty years. But then the Swiss are heathens, and don't know nothing about it. "Rah for corporation-owned railroads and freedom!"—Appeal to Reason.

A POLITICAL BANK SWINDLE.

The Seventh National Bank of New York City, has been closed by the Comptroller of Currency under circumstances which indicate that some gigantic stealing has been going on. The cause given by the Comptroller for his action was that \$1,500,000 of the bank's money had been loaned to a firm speculating in railroad stocks, practically without security. One sum of \$300,000 was given to the firm on checks drawn on a fictitious deposit in another bank. The comptroller some days ago ordered that the entire loan be paid or that the bank suspend business. The directors pretended to comply with the order, but in reality simply disposed of \$1,000,000 of good securities, retaining the worthless securities put up by the speculators. Hence the order to discontinue business.

The Seventh National Bank was in part owned by the Heath family, of which Perry S. Heath is the political member. As assistant postmaster general he secured the deposit of immense sums of money order money in it, and otherwise favored it. Its failure under such circumstances simply adds one more scandal to the name of the man who had to retire from office because of his connection with the Cuban postal steels. He still stands high in the admiration of the Republican Literary Bureau, but this last "incident" makes it practically certain that he will not again be placed in a responsible position.

SELLS PEARL FOR \$17,500.

Poor Wisconsin Clam Fisher Gets Fortune for a Find.

Resting in a plush case in a burglar-proof vault in the Fine Arts building is what is said to be the largest and most perfect pearl ever found in America, says the Chicago Tribune. A few weeks ago it was a clam on the bottom of the Mississippi river. Its present owner, H. Deakin of the Deakin Art rooms declares that he refused to part with the gem yesterday for \$40,000. His price is \$50,000. A poor Wisconsin clam fisher near Prairie du Chien on May 24 caught several clams. When he returned to his home he opened shell after shell with little or no luck. A few minutes later his wife picked up a large shell, which he had examined without finding anything. Then the clam fisher heard a cry. His wife had discovered the largest pearl he ever had seen. He sent for a pearl dealer of Prairie du Chien to come and see what he had found. The expert arrived and bought the pearl for \$17,500. At first the fisher would not part with the gem, and insisted he would have it mounted for his wife to wear. Finally he sold it after the dealer had promised that it should be named "Queen Mary" in honor of the wife of the fisher. After his first sale the gem changed hands twice, and then became the property of Mr. Deakin. The Prairie du Chien dealer sold it for \$25,000, while its present owner refuses to make public its cost to him. Connoisseurs who have examined the pearl since it was brought to Chicago pronounce it the most wonderful ever found in America. They also say it is equaled by few in the world. Its weight is 103 grains, while the average pearl weighs from two to five grains. It is almost a perfect pear shape, measuring over three-quarters of an inch in length and five-eighths of an inch in diameter. It is of a pink hue and exceedingly lustrous.

IT IS OVERPRODUCTION?

There are more doctors being turned out than can secure patients. There are more lawyers graduating than there are clients. There are more bookkeepers, stenographers and typewriters qualifying than there are positions. There are more mechanics, electricians and engineers than there are places to fill. There are more laborers than there are holes to dig. There are too many farmers producing too much to eat, there are more houses built than the people can occupy. There is more clothing produced than the people can wear out. There is overproduction everywhere. Yet thousands and thousands die from want of medical care. Men lose their little homes because too poor to pay lawyers' fees. Men die from want of things to eat, that the farmers produce. Some freeze to death in the streets because they have no money to pay house rent. Some perish from want of sufficient clothing to protect their bodies from the winter's blasts. Yet there is an overproduction everywhere, and enough for the poor nowhere.—Baltimore Labor Advocate.

INDIA'S BALANCE OF TRADE.

The following items are taken from an article published in the Boston Pilot of July 7, under the title of "Starving India." This article had a number of facts and figures taken mostly from "Yearly Famine in India," by George E. Buell of Rochester, N. Y. The wheat crop of India in 1899 was 232,585,000 bushels. The average annual wheat crop for the last eight years was 234,057,750. Over 35,400,000 bushels of wheat were exported from India in 1899; 16,509,740 bushels is the average amount annually exported from India for the last eight years.

Note from the above figures that India raised a little less than the average of wheat last year; but that she shipped out of the country two and one-eighth times more than the average shipped.

BURDEN UP BY MILITARISM.

In the general deficiency bill reported to the House \$21,850,000 for military and \$3,973,345 for naval purposes are carried. Added to the regular appropriations for army, navy and pensions, which aggregate \$388,942,102, this will bring the total appropriations for these purposes made at this session of congress up to \$424,265,248. But does this imposing row of nine figures clearly convey anything to the average reader's mind as to his individual share of the enormous burden? We fancy not.

It will help the average American man to grasp it better if we say that if he is the head of the average family of five persons he will have to pay this year just about \$28 as his share of the taxation necessary to meet this vast military outlay.

This is the larger tax per capita for military expenditures than is borne by the people of any other nation on earth. And if it were only taken in direct taxation, so that every head of a family of five received his yearly bill "for military purposes, \$28," there would be a revolt against it that would break the party responsible for it.

FREE RAW MATERIAL.

Protectionists favor putting "raw materials" on the free list, but they do not have the least conception of what constitutes raw material, because if they did they could not be protectionists. The farmers are entitled to the same care and attention at the hands of congress that any other class is, including the manufacturers. Then if the manufacturer is entitled to his raw material free, the farmer should have his free, too. Now, the products which the farmer does not produce himself, but has to purchase as the product of another, would include his clothes, farm implements, furniture, crockery, etc., and I should like to see the tariff law constituted that would place these articles on the free list and have any protection left for the manufacturer.

A New Engagement Ring.

The fashionable jeweler of the day have decreed a new style in engagement rings, which, if generally adopted, will rebound to their profit. It is a pear-shaped stone, preferably a diamond, the setting almost invisible, the circle very thin. If a colored stone is chosen instead of a diamond the accommodating jeweler will surround it with the tiniest of diamonds, making a brilliant line of white fire, but the individual stones so small as to have the effect rather than the appearance of gems, says the New York Commercial Advertiser. A row of five diamonds encircled with many rubies is also a favorite engagement ring. Rubies mean "felicity in love" and diamonds—or at least to own them—signify good luck it goes without saying.

Agricultural Scientists Honored.

The authorities of the Paris exposition have awarded a gold medal to Professor W. G. Johnson of Springfield, Mass., formerly state entomologist of Maryland. The medal is bestowed in recognition of his scientific research in the interest of agriculture and as a collaborator on the exhibit of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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