

Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

That Populist Influence.

The reorganizers are always complaining of the influence which the populists have exerted upon the democratic party in recent years. Whenever a reorganizer wants to find fault with the democratic platform or any part of it, he denounces it as populist. The fact is most of the things which are complained of as populist were advocated by the democrats before the populist party was organized, and that which the democrats did borrow from the populist party was indorsed by practically all of the democratic party prior to the Chicago convention. Take for instance the question of free silver. The democratic party in congress had for years been contending for every thing which the Chicago platform indorsed. Time and again before there was a populist party nearly all of the democrats in both the house and senate had voted for the financial system indorsed by the platform. They had voted for free coinage and for unlimited coinage; they had voted for a bill opening the mints at the ratio of 16 to 1 without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation, and no national democratic platform had ever announced a different doctrine. The Chicago convention opposed the national bank of issue, but in so doing it was entirely consistent with the party record.

The Chicago platform indorsed the income tax. It had been indorsed in the previous populist platforms, but it had also been embodied in the revenue measure passed by congress in 1894. Comparatively few of the democrats in the house and senate voted against the income tax. Senator Hill of New York, being the most rabid of its opponents. While it was known to the democrats in congress that Mr. Cleveland did not favor an individual income tax, he voted for the bill containing this tax to become a law without his signature. The opposition to the income tax plank has not been directed so much to the principle involved as to the wording of the platform, and the wording of the platform was not suggested by anything the populist party had ever said or done.

Government by injunction was also denounced in the Chicago platform, but it will be remembered that the United States senate had already passed, practically without opposition, the bill which the democratic platform commended.

These are the propositions usually referred to as populist, and yet, while the populist and democratic party agree on these propositions, they are thoroughly democratic, and no democrat can consistently object to them merely because the populist party favors them.

But why should men who voted the republican ticket find fault with the populists who supported the democratic ticket? Should men who supported the Palmer and Buckner ticket feel aggrieved because the populists were more anxious than they to secure the reform for which the democratic party had been working? If men are to be judged by their actions rather than by their words, the populists are much more in sympathy with democratic principles than those who spend their time criticizing and carping at the populists.

Something More Than Independence.

The imperialists claim that the American colonists simply struggled for independence from Great Britain and did not lay down a rule for the government of future generations, is well met by an extract from a speech delivered by Mr. Lincoln February 21, 1861. On that occasion the great republican said: "Away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the younger members have ever seen—'Wæm's Life of Washington.' I remember all the accounts there given of the battle fields and struggles for the liberty of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton, N. J. The crossing of the river and the contest with the Hessians, the great hardships endured at that time, all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single revolutionary event; and you all know, for you have been boys, how these early impressions last longer than any other that I recollect thinking of then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for. I am exceedingly anxious that that which they struggled for, that something even more than national independence, that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world at all time to come—I am exceedingly anxious that this union, the constitution and the liberties of the people, shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be happy, indeed, if I shall be a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, His almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle."

The Lincoln (Neb.) State Journal, republican, usually called "trust," has earned during the first nine months of its existence \$85,000,000. Does the highwayman "earn" the money he takes from his victims?

Dr. Loeb claims to have discovered the death microbe and a means of rendering it harmless. This is encouraging. Perhaps the good doctor will in time discover the trust microbe and a means of rendering it harmless.

Talk about amending the constitution should be postponed until a commission has time to investigate and report whether there is enough left of the document to sew a patch to.

Administration organs have not yet ceased berating Webster Davis for having the courage of his convictions. Mr. Davis has been guilty of the heinous crime of doing his own thinking.

Mr. Hanna will not work industriously at the labor-capital harmony job until after he gets that Ohio legislature off his hands.

PROGRESS IN TREE SURGERY.

Lives of Many Are Now Saved by Timely Operations.

There has also been very great progress in tree surgery. The methods of treating trees and shrubbery when it became necessary to apply the knife or pruning shears. Many a tree is living today that would have died a few years ago from causes that would then have brought on death, but which today are successfully treated.

An instance of this progress can be seen in the Simon Cameron tree, as the spreading elm near the footpath leading from New Jersey avenue to the south wing of the capital in Washington is called. This tree received its name because it was the favorite of Senator Simon Cameron. Mr. Cameron interested himself in saving the tree with the result that it was allowed to stand in the center of a space that would otherwise have been covered with a granolithic walk.

The tree flourished until a year ago, when an amputation became necessary. One of its big limbs, showing signs of decay, was cut off. The operation was successful enough, but the wound being left open, in the course of time decay set in. The decay was working into the vital parts of the tree and would have killed it in a few years, but recourse was taken to an operation that is now very frequently applied in tree surgery. The decayed portion was scraped off and a covering of asphaltum was placed over it to arrest further decay. The tree is now as well off, says the Washington Star, as would be a man with a limb amputated and properly dressed with antiseptics. In the course of time the wound will probably be healed and the tree will be perfectly healthy again.

COOKING BY THE SUN'S RAYS.

Novel Plan Invented by Man from San Francisco.

Cooking by the heat of the sun is a novel idea, but suggests economy, and is certainly practicable if there is no exaggeration in the claims made by a San Francisco inventor in behalf of a newly patented contrivance.

The apparatus consists of a sort of oven made in the shape of a rectangular box, open on one of its four sides (through glass) to the direct rays of the sun, and similarly exposed on another side to solar rays reflected from a series of prismatic mirrors. Inasmuch as the box and mirrors are adjustable at various angles, the rays of the sun may be concentrated upon the inside of the oven at any hour of the day.

The oven is set upon one edge. Whereas the upper two sides are of glass, the lower two sides are of wood, and the whole box is covered with glass sides, is double-walled and lined with felt and sand. Thus, glass being also a nonconductor, the heat that enters the box does not easily get out again. In fact, it does were water inside, it is claimed that it would quickly boil on a sunny day.

The internal arrangement of the oven consists of three shelves which remain horizontal no matter at what angle the box is placed. On these shelves baking is done. Along the top edge of the box extends a flat piece of metal, hollow inside, into which hot air is admitted from the oven beneath. This is a boiler, and the inventor says that one may cook a steak on it nicely.

One advantage of the solar method of cooking it that it is clean. No fuel has to be supplied, and there are no ashes to remove. It is a process that recommends itself most strongly, therefore, to the neat and thrifty housewife.

History of Irish Poplin.

Lady Carey who died the other day, was a benefactress of Ireland in this way: She was the first person to wear in Paris an Irish poplin dress. It was in primrose yellow with a design in gold thread, and so much admired that the foremost ladies at the court of the Tuilleries asked her where she bought the poplin, and upon learning the address, wrote for patterns. Marie Antoinette ordered one in lavender, enriched with a gold pattern; the Princess Marie one in blue and silver, and Princess Clementine one in pink and silver. Irish poplin was first manufactured in Dublin by Popeline, a Huguenot refugee. It became the rage and was greatly worn on occasions of high ceremony, as rain did not spoil it. Poplin became a favorite dress for the public promenades at fashionable hours. All its French imitations, the wool being less carefully treated, cockle and lose luster when exposed to the least shower. Balzac dresses some of his grand ladies in poplin. The Princess Clementine wore a plaid poplin gown the day the late Queen Victoria first landed at Trepont to visit Louis Philippe and Marie Amelle at Eu. Irish poplin is still much worn by the children of the wealthy, and is thought to go well with Irish giplure.—London News.

Barber's Cunning Bid for Trade.

"I perceive," said the barber, "that you have yourself and that you are a right-handed person. I know that you shave yourself and that you are right-handed because your hair, where it ends in front of your ears, is blocked out by the razor at unequal lengths. It is much longer, a full quarter of an inch longer, before your left ear than before your right one. These inaccuracies show me that you shave yourself, and the longer hair on the left side shows you to be right-handed. For you have, you see, a better, freer reach with the right hand, and in the first stroke of shaving that you make on the right side the trained muscles of your arm cause you unconsciously to begin higher up. If you were left-handed the hair on the left side would be the shorter."—Philadelphia Record.

Consumptives in Australia.

According to Dr. Sidney Jones, 16,000 consumptives are moving about Australia annually.

TARIFF AN OUTRAGE.

V. J. BRYAN DENOUNCES LEGISLATION FOR PHILIPPINES.

By J. P. Killip on the Oppression Practiced by England Upon Her American Colonies—Secretary Gage's Report Korea's Republican Financial Views.

The Philippine tariff measure passed by the house of representatives, practically by a party vote, is one of the most shameless pieces of legislation ever proposed by any party, and it ought to seal the political fate of any man who supports it. England, in her oppression of the American colonies, was never guilty of anything more cynical, and even Spain, whose despotism aroused Cuba—even Spain herself—protest in behalf of the oppressed public leaders practice with seeming enjoyment. While the West Indies were under the rule of the Castilian they enjoyed free trade with the mother country, and had representation in the imperial parliament, but the Philippines, after co-operating with us against Spain, were bought like chattels from a vanquished foe, and placed under the control of high-priced carpet bag officials. Now they are to be shut out from our markets by a tariff wall constructed to enable a few American manufacturers to grow rich at the expense of the rest of the people and denied representation in the legislature which taxes them. The Democrats in the house of representatives have greatly strengthened their party by their vigorous opposition to the measure. The short time given for debate in the house makes it imperative that the Democrats of the senate shall prevent to the public through the Congressional Record the facts relative to colonialism as thus far developed.—The Commoner.

Make a Clean Job of It.

The Republican majority in the American house of lords ought not to confine themselves to reducing the minority representation on the several committees. Why not cut off that representation entirely? It would make but a minor difference, anyway, and it would be entirely consonant with the idea of absolutism which has found so much favor in doing the national business within the past three years or so.—St. Paul Globe.

The President's Advisers.

The American Anti-Trust League filed a protest against the confirmation of Attorney General Knox. The opposition was based upon the ground that he had not prosecuted offenses against the anti-trust law even when those offenses had been brought to his notice. The senate committee, however, reported in favor of the attorney general's confirmation, taking the position that the president has a right to choose his advisers.

Secretary Gage's Report.

What the Acceptance of His Recommendations Would Mean.

In his annual report Secretary of the Treasury Gage has recommended a shipping subsidy; the repeal of minor war taxes; a central bank; the creation of a national clearing house of national banks; the enlargement of the limit of subsidiary silver coinage to 120,000,000, and the asset currency plan.

Concerning the latter proposition, secretary Gage's recommendation embodies practically the provisions of the present bill. The McCleary bill, the secretary of the treasury should be fully convinced as to the propriety of this plan. He thinks that at least two beneficial results would follow. He thinks that \$60,000,000 in United States bonds, now in security, could be gradually released for sale in the general market. The impounding of the greenbacks as security for the bank notes would, he thinks, relieve the government from all the burdens now incident to their redemption to an extent of \$200,000,000. For the balance of \$140,000,000 in legal tender notes which would then be outstanding, the 150,000,000 in gold now held as a special redemption fund would soon be excessive. It is thus reduced to 140,000,000 the greenbacks would be more virtually what Secretary Gage thinks they ought to be in reality, gold certificates, says the Commoner.

In reality, Secretary Gage's plan contemplates the actual retirement of the greenbacks and the substitution of a national banking currency for the present currency. It is a plan which would be a great relief to the national banks in addition to the enormous power they already possess, the privilege of doing an immense amount of business on wind. This is "sound finance"; this would be the realization of "a wise and business-like financial policy," according to the Republican theory. This represents, in the most presentable form, the purpose of Republican financiers. The American people have not yet begun to realize the responsibilities they were assuming when they elected and re-elected the Republican party to power; but lay by day the plans of Republican leaders are being unfolded; and "little by little, but steadily, as man's march on the grave," the Republican leaders are transforming liberty into license, and no one need be surprised if "asset currency" and branch banks, in a short time, become realities.

Merely an Entering Wedge.

The new subsidy bill is by no means a satisfactory measure to the men who have fathered it, but they are anxious to get some measure recognizing the principle of ship subsidies through congress and are willing, because they must, to wait for what they most desire until they can ask for it on the ground that congress must stand by the policy it has inaugurated and perfect it. The aim of this bill is to capture the support of western members who revolted against the bold, obnoxious features of the former bill, on the ground that the new bill is harmless. But for the purpose of getting some kind of a subsidy measure through as a starter Senator Frye and the rest would not consider this ill worth fighting for.—Boston Herald.

An Issue for All Democrats.

We have free traders and tariff revisionists and some protectionists in the party. We have silver men and anti-silver men as well as gold men; those who believe in taking the power to issue currency away from the banks and those who believe we should keep the Philippines and who favor the most rigid control of public and quasi-public corporations and those who believe in state ownership of public utilities. We have men who believe we should keep the Philippines and who believe we should let them go. But there is not a man in the entire country who calls himself a Democrat that believes in the political absolutism which prevails to-day under the control of the Republican party in national affairs.—St. Paul Globe.

How We Regard It.

Congress has killed the Mississippi reformatory. They Republican tariff return is justly

measures which close our ports to articles imported from the Philippines, said that the Philippines would refer to us as the stepmother country rather than as the mother country. It is a point well made, but it might be stated even more strongly. A stepmother often shows great devotion to and makes great sacrifices for the children of her husband, but no nation has ever administered a carpet bag government with benevolence or even justice.

No Great Armament Needed.

It is time that all who believe in keeping the United States free from the heavy military burdens which now handicap the great nations of Europe, morally as well as financially and industrially, should make themselves heard. There is no evidence that the American people as a whole desire anything more than a strictly defensive navy, and the existing fleet has some beyond this limit. This country has never performed a greater service to the world than by demonstrating its ability to get on without great armaments.—New York Evening Post.

Tariff the Paramount Issue.

While all Democrats do not agree on the tariff, they are more nearly harmonious on that than any other subject. It is not a new question and the long-maintained Democratic position on the question appeals more and more to the sense of right and justice of intelligent voters. It should be a leading issue in the next campaign if the party is to make a campaign along defensible Democratic lines. If not it doesn't matter whom it declares for or against.—Nashville American.

Make a Clean Job of It.

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Gage's Scheme Not in Favor.

The reception which the financial community accord to Secretary Gage's proposition for a central bank should dispose of that abstract scheme. It is to be regretted that the secretary's last report should not have been more practically suggestive. It was almost entirely barren of sensible advice. Not for a long time, if ever in its history, will the country come to the idea of a centralized banking system.—Philadelphia Times.

The Most Amazing Injustice.

Schley, the man who fought and won the battle, is allotted less than one-seventh as much prize money as he has been paid to Sampson, and less than one-fifth as much as the sum allotted to Chadwick. If these figures were not official they would seem impossible. Comment is superfluous. They constitute the most amazing injustice in the records of this government.—Philadelphia Times.

Peril of the Trust System.

The peril of the present system of trust capitalization is plain. The general public is in profound ignorance of trust conditions. Investors necessarily take undue chances when they buy trust securities. There should be at least a reasonable guarantee of safety to investors as well as to consumers. This guarantee must be found in publicity as one measure of regulation.—St. Louis Republic.

His Co-Operation Not Wanted.

The Washington Post says: "There are a great many people who would be glad to co-operate with the Democratic party as it formerly existed." Undoubtedly, and Messrs. Hanna, Frye, Gage, Foraker, Quay, Addicks, Platt, and others might be named as a few of the many. Democracy, however, has ceased to hunt for that kind of co-operation.

The Systems Are Irreconcilable.

When oil and water mix harmoniously with the utmost ease and clarity the Chaffee idea of rule in the Philippines and the Taft idea of governing the people may work together with good effect. Until such a phenomenon occurs, however, civil rule and military sway in those islands are altogether likely to "clash" and disagree at a hundred points.—Boston Globe.

Gen. Chaffee's Dilemma.

In forming an opinion as to the capacity of the Philippines for self-government, General Chaffee, the military governor, is somewhat embarrassed by the fact that he cannot decide for the Philippines without deciding against the interests of the carpet bag officials and exploiters who find good picking in "our new possessions."

Prospect of a Disagreement.

Mr. Hanna and Mr. Cleveland will be on the committee to devise ways and means by which capital and labor may be brought into harmony. It is highly probable that the committee will disagree. Mr. Cleveland is out of politics and Mr. Hanna is in politics. That will make the difference.—Dallas News.

The Farmer Wants His Whack.

After paying the wages of a nurse for the other fellow's infant industry all these years, it is not strange that the farmer likes to believe that somebody ought to hire a nurse for his own sugar industry.—Detroit Free Press.

AS TO BRANCH BANKS

SECRETARY GAGE RECOMMENDS A GREAT CENTRAL TRUST.

Immense Power of Such a Financial Institution Would Be a Constant Danger—Object of the Promoters of Such a Scheme Shown by The Commoner.

In his annual report Secretary Gage recommends a great central bank. He says that the existing system does not afford "the highest assurance of protection" and does not establish "a bond of cohesion, the power of co-operative action, the ability to coordinate for the general good or for mutual defense," such as would be provided by a central institution with multiplied branches. Those who have carefully observed the part which the banking institutions have played in the politics of the country will obtain a hint of the enormous power a central bank with "multiplied branches" would wield when they observe that the promoters of the proposed system believe that between the banks as organized to-day, there is no "bond of cohesion," and no "power of co-operative action." Mr. Gage says that the proposition for a large central bank with broad powers for establishment of branches "offends the common instincts of our people," and may be looked upon at present as impossible of realization. We may accept this language, then, while giving no encouragement for the immediate present, as holding out the hope that after a while, when the people shall have become quite accustomed to Republican impositions of all kinds, the "common instincts of our people" may be violated with impunity and even a central bank may be established.

If this proposition does now offend the "common instincts of our people" what manner of official is this who holds out the faintest hope that the offense may yet be given?

The "common instincts of our people" have provided the safeguard of our liberty and have insured the perpetuation of free government. If Mr. Gage should finally succeed in establishing this "offense" to the "common instincts of our people," he must either effect a complete change in those "instincts" or he must place the people in such a state of servitude that they will not be able to give expression to their "common instincts." The central bank is not the only Republican proposition that offends the "common instincts of our people," and yet in many other instances the Republican party has ignored these "instincts" and established un-American policies without the slightest regard for public criticism. May it not be possible that Mr. Gage has some warrant in believing that the time will come when even on the question of a great central bank, the "common instincts of our people" may be defied with impunity by the Republican party?—The Commoner.

Facts of Living Interest.

"Out of the statistical and technical aridness of the secretary of the treasury's report," the New York World has produced these facts of living interest: The government taxed the people last year \$699,216,530—which is \$251,694,625 more than its receipts for the last fiscal year before the Spanish war, 1897. It spent \$621,598,546—which is \$255,824,387 more than it spent in 1897. If taxation were at the same now as it was four years ago, and the expenditures had increased to their present figures, instead of reporting a surplus of \$77,000,000 the secretary of the treasury would have to report a deficit of \$273,876,641. If expenditures were the same as before our colonial experiments and taxation were up to its present height, the report would have been of a surplus of no less than \$333,522,371. No wonder President Roosevelt speaks of the Philippines as a "great burden."

The People or the Trusts.

It will soon be, if it is not now, a question of whether this country is to be ruled by the people or by the trusts and corporations. We hear much of "influence" in the present congress. The subsidy bill is said to be supported by powerful influence, the athman canal is threatened by other influences, fair treatment of Cuba depends on the result of the fight between the two great influences and the relation of our statesmen to them, and so on. One wonders where the people come in.

The Attorney General's Duty.

Washington reports agree that there is little likelihood that the attacks on Attorney General Knox and the opposition to his confirmation will amount to anything, and that the attorney general will be confirmed when the question is reached in the senate. This is probably a correct forecast, but some of those opposing the attorney general are very much in earnest, and out of the debate may come a clearer perception of the duties of that officer in the enforcement of the laws.

A Hint from History.

Sir Robert Peel and William E. Gladstone were the strenuous upholders of protection till everything was going to ruin. Then they became, as McKinley apparently purposed, the apostles of freer trade, and as such their names have gone into history. The protection theory is bound, sooner or later, to be overthrown. The history of protection in England will be repeated here. Protection is war; trade, commerce, is peace; there can be no lasting agreement between the two.

The Navy We Need.

No patriotic American judges the money necessary for a navy for defense, but a navy for imperialistic conquest or simply to gratify the collector's passion of those high in national authority is a useless burden on the people. We do not need a navy "whose hammering guns," to employ the rhetorical words of the president in his message to congress, "beat out the mastery of the high seas," but for purposes of defense only.

Building a New Tariff Wall.

The coal trust that has acquired control of all the coal landings and harbors on the Ohio at Louisville and Jeffersonville has the clie about where it wants them. It has secured by its deal a new kind of tariff wall and can levy its tolls on all coal that passes through its gates.

The Voters Will Think.

Sharp practice may prevent any agitation of the tariff question in congress, but it doesn't suppress the thoughts of the voters who think without the aid of a machine.

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can be bought for eight thousand and in the meantime has not yielded nearly so large a profit as the bank. This is not an uncommon illustration, but many farmers who have had a similar experience are still willing to allow the bankers, the trust magnates and the protected manufacturers to make the laws.

Wasting Time in Congress.

Sixteen closely printed pages of the latest issue of the Congressional Record are devoted to private bills presented in the house and referred. They number 1,338. The serious debate of the session occupies less than three pages of the Record. All these bills are referred to congressional committees and most of them will in due time come back to the house for passage. It is a physical impossibility for any committee to examine them carefully. They will generally be railroaded through and passed by a system of trading favors. In many instances the country will thus be made to pay unjust claims. But the mischief does not end here. Much of the energy of congressmen must be wasted in committee work that is of no national importance. It is absurd that the congress of the United States should devote a large share of its exertion to trivialities that might properly occupy the attention of a council of a small town.

Makes a Convenient Loophole.

Some members of the house of representatives in the Philippines revenue law should originate in the house because the constitution provides that all bills for raising revenue shall have their origin in that body. Congressman Overstreet of Indiana, however, is reported as saying that the Philippines bill may originate in the senate, as it is "not a revenue measure within the meaning of the constitution." This expression, "within the meaning of the constitution," seems to be a very convenient one, and is often used in the course of the purpose of covering a multitude of sins.

May Have Made Mistakes.

From the fact that various directors of the new Northern Securities company who are directors also of the railroads which this company owns have found it necessary to resign from one or the other it is to be inferred that the "eminent legal authorities" who undertook to steer the big combine safely through the breakers of the law made at least one mistake. Probably in the course of time it will be found that they overlooked some other points. Murder will out, no matter how "eminent" the legal authorities retained in its behalf may be.

Silver Issue Not Dead.

But silver is not dead. Not only that, it cannot be killed. Silver, in the abstract, is not the issue. The farmers of Iowa and the planters of Alabama do not care for your silver or its price. They are silver men solely because they will not tolerate the contraction scheme of the big leaders of the Republican party, and if all the silver on earth were annihilated now, the fight on that principle would be carried on as fast as conditions made the fight necessary or available.

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