

**Commoner Comment.**

**ABOUT MEXICO.**

Silver is Mexico's largest export, and her public men understand that legislation against it would not only reduce the export price and thus lessen the ability of Mexico to pay her debts abroad, but it would finally lead to the discarding of a money which she produces herself, would compel her to mortgage herself to foreign financiers to secure the money necessary to do the business of her country.

Mexico's leaders, from the president and his cabinet down to the members of congress, governors and lesser officials, have been increasing the gap between the outside world and the country by being, and they know that Mexico, a great silver producing country, could not discriminate against silver and join in the scramble for gold without immediately increasing the gap between gold and silver, a sufficient evil, and drive other silver using countries to the yellow metal. It is likely, therefore, that Mexico will adhere to silver in spite of the incipient economic fluctuations in exchange rather than invite the greater perils that would come from an adoption of the gold standard.

It is evident from what is going on in the United States and in the great money making centers that the financiers are determined to take from the people any advantage that might come from an increased production of gold.

Schemes are being constantly devised for increasing the demand for gold, and the strain upon it. If the money changers have their way the demand will not only be made equal to the supply, but even greater than the supply to insure an era of falling prices, a condition beneficial only to the owners of money and fixated upon the masses.

The quantitative theory of money is now generally admitted. It is a well recognized fact that a doubling of the population without any increase in the supply of money would raise the price of wheat, and so it is also understood that a doubling of the gold using population without an increase in the supply of gold would raise the purchasing power of each dollar. The director of the mint is already discouraging the production of gold, and the financiers are doing what they can to increase the demand for it. These efforts cannot be successful without serious injury to the producing classes of the world. The people in gold-using countries ought to be grateful to Mexico for standing against the policy of restriction to keep silver a part of the currency of the world, for, to the extent that silver is used, the strain upon gold is lessened.

Some imperialists add that Mexico furnishes a complete answer to the arguments of imperialists. In the first place, those who say that we cannot haul down the flag when once it has been raised will find that our flag once floated over Chapultepec, the rocky hill that rises abruptly from the plain of Mexico and which was for ages the citadel of the Montezumas. When the treaty of peace was signed our flag was hauled down and brought back more than 800 miles to the Rio Grande. This only proves that the flag can be hauled down but subsequent history shows that it was better for the history of the Mexican republic to float over the Mexican people than that the character of our government should have been changed by the policy of flag waving over subject race. Mexico has made more progress under the stimulus of self-government than she could have made under a carpetbag system such as imperialists would have it. Her officials are of the same race and blood as her citizens, and they are knit together by bonds of sympathy that are impossible when a foreign master rules a country. The imperialist attempts to appeal to a patriotic sentiment and argues that our flag must float over the Philippines because American soldiers died there. He will visit Mexico and he will find in the suburbs of the capital an American grave yard where the stars and stripes are raised at sunrise and lowered at sunset. In the graves owned by the United States, the soldiers of the Mexican war, known and unknown, are buried and an American citizen, an appointee of our government, sees that their graves are kept green. Here on Decoration Day flowers are brought, and the sleep of these soldiers is none the less sweet because their companions in arms are getting the same attention. He will observe the principles of the Declaration of Independence rather than convert a republic into an empire.

Again, the imperialist will find in Mexico more progress made in the last thirty years than he can find in India during the hundred and fifty years of English rule. And in Mexico the imperialist will find more progress developed by the inspiring doctrines of civil liberty and inalienable rights than England has ever sent to India to conduct her colonial government.

All things considered, Mexico's experience is illustrative of the growth of democratic principles by Americans. The friendship existing today between the United States and Mexico is based upon an identity of interests and upon a growing identity of ideas. If any conflict arises between the United States and European countries in respect to the enforcement of the Monroe doctrine, Mexico is likely to be our staunchest and most valuable ally.

It will not be difficult for real democrats to get together on real democratic principles. The trouble will come when an effort is made to get real democrats together on republican principles.

In addition to saying that he would accept the imperialist nomination for governor of Ohio, Mr. Herrick says that the main thing for Ohio republicans to accomplish is the return of Mr. Hanna to the senate. This looks like it ought to be good for a little reciprocity on the part of Mr. Hanna.

Most of the democrats mentioned for the presidential nomination by republican organs have earned the recognition of those organs by assisting them in bringing about the triumphs of republican leaders.

The imperialistic papers are so enthusiastic in describing the riches of the Philippines that it is easy to understand why their editors believe in the doctrine that this nation has been providentially selected to exploit the Filipinos.

When senators are elected by direct vote of the people the people will stand at least an equal show with the trusts.

The republican senators who oppose keeping their platform pledge to the territories are victims of ingrowing sense of honor.

**A REAL TRUST FIGHTER.**

The Globe-Democrat in a recent issue tells how President Diaz of the Mexican Republic thwarted the Standard Oil company. According to the Globe-Democrat the oil trust got control of a Mexican railroad and attempted to freeze out a rival by putting a prohibitive rate on oil from the competing well. The matter was brought to the attention of the president and he at once put the legal machinery into motion and the railroad soon had to choose between the restoration of the old rate and a forfeiture of his charter. The result was that the railroad reduced its rate for carrying oil and the Standard Oil company had to meet the competitive price of oil.

Our president could do the same thing in effect if he desired to do so. He could really and actually exterminate the trusts he could do so in short order. He could prepare a bill making unlawful for any corporation to use the mails, railroads or telegraph lines in a fact that they propose to do. A corporation showed that its stock was not watered and that it was not trying to monopolize any branch of merchandise. His power to appeal to the people and to the courts is really a power to attention upon a question would enable him to secure the passage of a really meritorious law—but such action would antagonize the money power and bring about defeat in the next national convention.

**ARE AT AGREEMENT.**

The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Press recently reported that "after the purpose of the administration's anti-trust bill had been explained, opposition not only dissolved but actively ceased." This prompts the Omaha Bee, a republican paper, to ask, "Have the trusts capitulated? The Bee says that the trusts have decided wisely if it is a fact that they propose not to attempt to prevent legislation. Does any one really believe that the trusts have capitulated? Is it not more reasonable to believe that, as stated by the Washington correspondent, in response of the Chicago Record-Herald, the so-called anti-trust program of the Roosevelt administration has met with the approval of the trusts because it is simply because that program does not contemplate serious legislation.

The New York Commercial Advertiser refers seriously to the nomination of Grover Cleveland by the democrats in 1904. The Commercial Advertiser says that Mr. Cleveland wrote a letter congratulating the trusts on his course in the coal strike. The New York paper adds: "This would go far to indicate that the two men are not widely apart in their views as to the proper course to be pursued in the matter of the coal strike." It is doubtless true that Mr. Cleveland's attitude toward the trusts is not widely apart from that of Mr. Roosevelt or any other republican who has no serious intention of providing the people material relief from trust impositions.

Like monarchs, the magnates of the trusts may die or collapse from nervous prostration, but they will be succeeded by others, and all history shows that those born to the purple are apt to have less regard for popular rights than the founders of dynasties.

How is this for Conservatism? It was no obscure member sitting down away back, it was no Populist, it was no cheap Democrat bidding for socialist votes that bobbed up in the house at Washington and proposed that Uncle Sam "take possession of all coal, coal beds and coal mines in the United States and all lines of transportation of coal."

It was the Republican chairman of the house judiciary committee who proposed all that.

It was a man chosen for his supposed coolheadedness, conservatism and respect for the constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof as head of the most conservative committee of his house.

It was a man chosen by the Speaker of the House, who is supposed to stand very near the head of the Republican party of the country—the party which denounced and hooted and jeered the expropriation plank of the New York Democratic platform last fall—the plank which the Democratic nominee for governor of that state made haste to repudiate.

It was John J. Jenkins of Wisconsin, a Republican supposed to stand at about the farthest remove from revolutionary socialism, who proposed to distance the trusts from their platform and give the country a tremendous send-off in the direction of state socialism.

What has happened to the Republican party lately? It looks a good deal like a panic and a general run for the tall timber.

**Famines and Taxes.**

The worst features of what is called the coal famine are due not so much to a scarcity of coal as to a scarcity of money.

Newspaper accounts of the pitiful scenes at various distributing points in Chicago show that thousands of the people who are in prospect of a period of hardship and distress. All of the public and private agencies for the relief of the poor have the same report to make. If they can get money they can get coal. Most of the people who are suffering from lack of coal are suffering also from the lack of many other things.

A great deal of political capital was made a few years ago when, during the course of a severe winter, it was found that many people were suffering from the necessities of life and some soup kitchens were established with an ostentation which derived not a tittle of its vigor from the knowledge that they could be referred to later on as frightful examples of what happened to the country when not more than an attempt was made to take the law into a week. The scheme is it should be remembered hereafter that with the country enjoying what everybody who can gain the ear or the eye of the public is disposed to call wonderful prosperity the distress among the poor this year is as keen as it ever was and the measures that now seem necessary to relieve it are quite as comprehensive as they were in 1894-5, when alms-giving became fashionable because it seemed to reflect upon a political and economic policy which the majority of the people then looked upon as discredited.

It should not be forgotten, either, that every pound of coal, every piece of beef and every article of clothing now distributed among the suffering poor is taxed roundly to promote the prosperity of somebody.

**Who is the somebody?**

**Real Breeders of Socialism.**

The chief teachers of socialism in this country are those who have ostentatiously paraded their power under present conditions to conjure enormous wealth from combinations, from

**TIME AS A CURE-ALL.**

**DOLLIVER HAS CURIOUS REMEDY FOR TRUST EVILS.**

**Iowa Statesman's One-Sided Philosophy—The Longer the People Endure Corporation Greed, the More Externation Will the Monopolies Prove.**

Senator Dolliver's remarks at a New York banquet hold out a curious remedy for the evils complained of as to the trusts.

"Within twenty years," he said, "every trust magnate of to-day will be dead or in a sanitarium for nervous diseases, and the world will be looking for trained men to do the world's work."

This is a solemn subject, but the years that are expected to work such havoc among the trust magnates will not pass more lightly over the heads of others. In twenty years most of the men who are honestly attempting to curb the trusts will be dead also, and as for the victims of these combinations—the people who are compelled to do without things that they need—if they are not dead or in sanitariums they will be in asylums and hospitals and poorhouses. So Mr. Dolliver's philosophy is no philosophy at all. It is a one-sided fatalism which does not look at the other side and which does not even recognize the wisdom of the ancient philosophy which found expression in the words: "It will make no difference a hundred years from now."

Sir Edward Coke said many years ago that "corporations cannot commit treason, nor be outlawed nor excommunicated, for they have no souls." So far as time and death and decay are concerned they have no bodies, either, and in one form or another they live forever.

People who wait for time to cure the evils of combination and monopoly will be disappointed. There are some things in the world which grow stronger with age. The longer the victims of trusts endure their oppressions the less likely will they be to take effective measures against them.

Like monarchs, the magnates of the trusts may die or collapse from nervous prostration, but they will be succeeded by others, and all history shows that those born to the purple are apt to have less regard for popular rights than the founders of dynasties.

**Mexico and the Monopolies.**

Mexico has a clear idea of what to do with protected industries when they exact unreasonable prices. There is a wheat ring in that country which, aided by the tariff on grain, has been screwing up the price till the bakers have reduced their rates on American grain and there is to be cheap bread again in the City of Mexico. The policy of the government is to break up all monopolies that raise the price of living things. The present government favored the same policy it would employ the same means.

**The Speaker's Dangerous Power.**

The power vested in the Speaker by the rules which give him absolute control of committee assignments is one of the most dangerous features of his office and subject to the gravest and most radical abuse. That it has been used in the past to debauch the minority as well as to terrorize the majority there can be no question. And so long as the Speaker retains this check on free speech and honest thought he will remain—and must remain—the dictator, not the servant of the house.

**No Hope of Tariff Revision.**

There is every indication that the high protectionists are carrying an amount of steam on the tariff question which will certainly explode their boilers. The hide-bound tenacity with which they spurn every suggestion in their own ranks for rational treatment of that question foreshadows internal dissension among them pregnant with disaster. It is perfectly obvious that there will be no tariff revision until the Republican party goes out of power.

**The Method of Pickpockets.**

For the coal trust to claim that the independent operators are keeping up the price of coal is an absolute falsehood. If the trust were so disposed the independents could be driven to the wall in a week. The scheme is plainly and simply to confuse the public mind while it is robbed. It is the method of pickpockets who work in couples. One of them brushes up against their victim to distract his attention, while the other fleches from him.

**A Ridiculous Contention.**

It was very surprising to hear Mr. Payne and Mr. Dalzell argue in the House that the removal of the coal duty would make no appreciable difference in the importation of coal. If that is the case it affords all the better reason why the duty should be removed, not only temporarily, but permanently. It is ridiculous to contend for the preservation of a duty that has no effect.

**A Better Use for Their Money.**

Instead of raising money to embellish Roosevelt in bronze for his services in behalf of arbitration those foreign nations who are so much interested in the matter would build a better and more pertinent monument by devoting themselves more assiduously to cultivating the Hague Tribunal. That institution has been languishing, though its services have been needed.

**Too Much Fashion in the Army.**

Army officers complain that they cannot financially keep up with the latest changes in uniforms. More attention seems to be devoted to fashion plates than to seeing that there are enough competent men to use the coast-defense machinery.

**Leading Up to Trouble.**

Read Admiral Evan's war message men behind his guns. More guns, more men, more men more guns, more men and guns more ships seems to be the naval program. When it is finished we shall probably see more fighting.

**TRUSTS IN CONTROL.**

**MONOPOLIES DICTATE LEGISLATION BY CONGRESS.**

**With the Idea of Fooling the People, the Trusts Will Permit Mild Legislation Against Themselves—Roosevelt Satisfied With "Some Kind of Action."**

Trust legislation is possible, but hardly probable, at this session of Congress. A compromise bill will pass the House of Representatives, shorn of all that will really curb the trusts. The bills prepared by Attorney General Knox and introduced in the House of Representatives by the chairman of the Judiciary committee, were found, after consultation with the Republican managers of the Senate, to be too drastic to command a majority of the votes and a compromise bill is the result which is as harmless as a sucking dove.

President Roosevelt, his attorney general, the Judiciary committee of Congress and the leaders of the Republican party have all had a hand in incubating this innocent bill. A prodigious amount of work has been expended on it; for it is quite difficult to compose a bill that will read like a trust-hunter and yet be a trust shelter. The bill is to be harmless to the trusts, was acknowledged by the personal organ of the administration, the Washington Star of Jan. 16, when it said:

"Two important facts appear to-day in the situation concerning possible anti-trust legislation: First, the legislation proposed by the House will not be drastic. Second, that there is a disposition on the part of the trust interests to accept the legislation and permit it to go through the senate, if it is not of a drastic character.

Private information comes to the capitol to-day from trust sources that it may be possible to reach an agreement which will permit the enactment of mild legislation regulating the trusts, and that if assurances can be given that the perfected bill will be of a character so conservative as to merely satisfy the President's demand for "some kind of action," no obstacles will be placed in the way of the bill in the senate."

These are extraordinary admissions for the Star to make. First, that THE TRUSTS WILL PERMIT MILD LEGISLATION. Second, that President Roosevelt will be satisfied with SOME KIND OF ACTION.

What do you think of that? The trusts will kindly permit Congress to pass a law nominally against themselves. So here we have the flat-footed assertion by the newspaper organ of the Republican administration that the trusts own Congress and dictate any and all laws they think desirable or expedient. Democratic newspapers and orators have claimed this for some years, but it has always been indignantly denied until at last the disgraceful truth is admitted.

But what is the matter with President Roosevelt that he should also come to be satisfied with any legislation the trusts may dictate? Is the trust-hunter so anxious to be again nominated for president that "some kind of action" against the trusts will now satisfy him? Democratic newspapers and speakers have always given the President credit for honesty of purpose, whatever his shortcomings, but here we have his personal organ, which is inspired from the White House, acknowledging that the President has joined the other leaders of his party in trying to fool the people with fake legislation against the trusts.

Another eminent Republican, at a crisis in the history of the country said: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time." It is to be hoped that the people will not be fooled more easily to-day than they were in Lincoln's time.

**An Absurd Tax.**

We have many burdensome and foolish taxes. The best of the protective tariff taxes takes more money from the people than it puts into their treasury; the worst—and they now are the most numerous—produce but little revenue and take \$10 or \$100 from the people for every dollar turned into the public treasury. The trusts get the difference as a "rake-off." All this, however foolish, is done in the name of "protection"—a supposed economic system or principle apparently approved by the people.

But there is another tax, extremely burdensome to industry, foolish and unnecessary as a financial measure, without reason in economics or ethics, and which forms no part of "protection" or of any other political system on which the voters have expressed themselves.

The tax of \$1.10 per proof gallon on distilled spirits, commonly called alcohol, is indefensible from any standpoint, unless possibly for the purpose of encouraging illicit stills and protecting the poisonous wood alcohol industry. That is, 40 cents of this \$1.10 is indefensible.

As this tax is levied primarily to produce a revenue, it should be placed at the point which will yield the most revenue. This point, as shown by the commissioner of internal revenue in 1897, is at 70 cents per gallon. The higher tax not only produces less revenue, but has increased the number of illicit distilleries from 1,018 to 1,905. The higher tax also greatly increases the use of adulterants and increases the harmful effects of alcoholic beverages.

But there is a more important reason for placing this tax at the lowest possible point consistent with our revenue requirements. Grain alcohol is one of the most important of our raw materials. Because it is a universal solvent, it forms the basis of the drug and pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. It is also important in the manufacture of varnishes, chemicals and in the mechanical arts. In some industries, wood alcohol can be and is substituted, but as it is poisonous and dangerous and naturally costs three times as much to produce as does grain alcohol, its use is en-

**A WORD IN SEASON.**

**IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ADVICE, COURTEOUSLY GIVEN.**

**Whole Current of Young Man's Life Probably Changed for the Best by Well Meant and Kindly Admonition Gently Offered.**

It is impossible to correctly value a good word spoken under favoring conditions. An illustrative incident is related in the experience of Hon. John Mahin, the veteran editor and publisher of the Muscatine Journal, whose sturdy antagonism to the liquor traffic and the drink habit is of more than state-wide knowledge. Some fifteen years ago, traveling upon a train from Muscatine to Kansas City, Mr. Mahin entered the lavatory of the sleeper as the train approached the latter city. Hanging from the wall was the coat of a young man from West Virginia. In the pocket was a flask of liquor. The West Virginian, an intelligent, manly appearing fellow, courteously offered Mr. Mahin a drink, which, of course, was declined. When their talk was completed and they were again seated in the coach, near each other, Mr. Mahin, attracted by the young fellow's gentlemanly bearing, ventured a kindly word of admonition against the practice of using intoxicating beverages. "That is what my mother has been telling me," said the young man.

"And where will you find in all the world any one more deeply interested in your welfare, one who loves you more devotedly, than your mother?" inquired Mr. Mahin.

"That is true," responded the West Virginian in recognition of the kindly intent of the advice of the older man, "but the young lady to whom I am paying attention has also given me the same advice."

"Then you have the most powerful of all motives for breaking away from the habit," said Mr. Mahin, "and let me urge upon you the great importance of such a course and its influence upon your future career," and a conversation ensued, in which the young man promised to abandon the drink habit.

Three weeks later Mr. Mahin was traveling over the same road on a train from Kansas City and was accompanied by the West Virginian, who recognized him. "I have not kept my promise," said the young man. "I was visiting an uncle in Kansas City. There was a social gathering at his house at which wine was served. All partook but myself. Afterwards my uncle, who uses beverages, commanded me for declining, so you see I had not lowered myself in his esteem by refusing to drink."

Fifteen years rolled by and the Christmas tide of 1902 was approaching. One day there came to the residence of Mrs. John Mahin at Muscatine an express package from Chicago. It contained a beautiful gift clock, and with it came a note recalling the circumstance on the train which we have related. It was from the West Virginian, now a successful western manager of a large manufacturing industry in the east. He had steadfastly adhered to the promise he had made in grateful remembrance asked the acceptance of a memento to mark a kindly deed that affected a turning point in his life.

"The incident reveals its own moral. It is found not only in the wisdom and firmness of purpose of the young West Virginian that made a man of him, but in the kind and discreet counsel given him by one whose advice was not obtrusive, but was none the less honest, earnest and effective. Too few people realize how great a good may be achieved by a kindly word uttered in the right spirit and at the right time."—Burleigh Hawk-Eye.

**ONE OF HERMANN'S TRICKS.**

Magician Puzled a Select Company of Bohemians.

Not many months before his death the magician was a guest at the famous but now defunct Whitechapel club, the rendezvous of Chicago Bohemians. On the night in question a venerable Japanese priest was present. In probably course of a few tricks Hermann picked up a deck of cards and asked someone to select a card. The seven of clubs was the card drawn from the pack and it was shown to the spectators, but not to the magician. The card was replaced in the deck, which was shuffled and then handed to one of the spectators. "Look through the deck, please," said Hermann.

The holder of the cards did as requested. "Is the card that was drawn in the pack?" asked the wizard.

"No, sir," answered the spectator.

"What was the card?"

"The seven of clubs."

"Well, gentlemen, if one of you will kindly unlace the prelate's shoe, you will find the card that has vanished from the pack."

After a smiling protest the Japanese priest unlaced his shoe, and there, to the amazement of all, was found the seven spot of clubs.

**A Rival to Ping Pong.**

The latest Parisian development of ping pong consists in substituting for the ball a light feather made of colloids and for the racquets rods of wire, the ends of which are flattened and feathered. The game consists in driving it backwards and forwards, not by force, as in ping pong, but by the repellent action of the wands, which are previously electrified, the purpose by an energetic rubbing.

**A Four-Footed Porter.**

One of the most zealous officials on the southeastern and Chatham railway is four-footed, and is stationed at West St. Leonards station, London, England. He is a fox terrier, who comes on duty at 2 o'clock (with his master) every day and conveys letters, by mouth, from the booking office along the line to the nearest signal box, and vice versa. This four footed porter allows no one to intercept him, and waits patiently till the door is opened for him.

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