

# Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

## A DISASTROUS VICTORY.

In the election of Mr. Wells as mayor of St. Louis, the reorganizers have scored a triumph. The democrats of St. Louis and Missouri will, however, find it worth their while to calculate the cost of the victory and to prepare for the struggle that awaits them.

In November, 1900, the republican national ticket received 60,608 votes in St. Louis, and the democratic national ticket, which Mr. Wells refused to support, received 59,941. At the recent city election Mr. Wells received 43,012 votes—nearly seventeen thousand less than the democratic vote of last fall, while Mr. Parker, the republican candidate for mayor, received 34,840 votes—about twenty-six thousand less than the republican vote of last fall. Mr. Merriwether, a democrat in national politics running on a middle ownership platform, received 30,568 votes and Mr. Filley, a republican running on an independent ticket received 2,058 votes. It will be seen that the total vote cast for mayor was large for a local contest, amounting to about ninety per cent of the vote cast last fall. If Mr. Wells and Mr. Parker had polled the same proportion of the total vote that the national candidates of their parties polled in 1900, Mr. Wells would have received about 55,000 votes and Mr. Parker about 55,500.

It is impossible to ascertain how many democrats voted for Mr. Merriwether and how many voted for Mr. Parker, just as it is impossible to say how many republicans voted for Mr. Wells and how many for Mr. Merriwether, but it is reasonable to suppose that the republican vote which left Mr. Parker was largely to Mr. Wells, while the democratic vote which left Mr. Wells went principally to Mr. Merriwether.

Mr. Wells lost at least twelve thousand democratic votes, if he gained no republican votes, and to this must be added a sum equal to the republican votes received. If, for instance, he received 10,000 republican votes the account would stand thus: For Wells, 33,000 democratic votes and 10,000 republican votes—total 43,000 votes. But if he gained 10,000 republican votes, this would show a loss of 23,000 democratic votes, while the reorganizers afford to trade 22,000 democratic votes, good at all elections, for 10,000 republican votes, good only in local elections and when a republican is nominated on the democratic ticket?

If Mr. Wells only received 5,000 republican votes, the account would stand: Wells, 38,000 democratic votes and 5,000 republican votes—total, 43,000. This would show a loss of seventeen thousand democratic votes, or an exchange of three democrats for one republican. Is there anything in this victory to boast of? If the democrats who voted for Mr. Merriwether had followed the example set by Mr. Wells and voted the republican ticket, Mr. Parker would have been elected by a considerable majority.

But what of the future? The Republic with commendable frankness recommends a national application of the St. Louis plan of harmonizing. It says:

"St. Louis has supplied the example of a thoroughly united democracy. With little evidence of reluctance all elements of the party joined in the recent campaign. They worked together harmoniously and voted without scatching.

"To obtain national ascendancy this unification must proceed heartily all over the country.

"With a united democracy the party is certain to win the next national election. The republican party has drifted so far away from American principles that the revolt of the people will be overwhelming when the forces naturally democratic are found acting together.

"The St. Louis democracy has set its face to the future. Give us such a union of popular forces in all the states and the next national election will be from that moment won."

This is exactly what might have been expected. Mr. Wells was not nominated because the reorganizers were especially interested in a good municipal government; he was nominated because he represents a corporate element which calls itself democratic, as a matter of habit, but gives its pecuniary and political support to the republican party. It will never be found supporting a democratic ticket unless that ticket is selected and controlled by those who have some special privileges which they desire protected by the government.

If the democracy of St. Louis had defeated Mr. Wells, the democracy of Missouri would have spared the fight which must now be made. The contest which resulted in the Pirtle Springs convention was fought over the silver question, the fight which is now opened will be a broader one and will involve the very existence of the party.

The Republic will lead the Francis-Wells element and will be supported by the railroad attorneys and corporation agents as well as by the gold standard advocates. Every democratic newspaper in the state will be compelled to take sides and a contest which might have been settled in a day, if confined to St. Louis, will keep the state stirred up for the next four years.

What is the use, it may be asked, of opposing the Republic-Francis-Wells combination? Why not allow it to control the party organization? The answer is found in the election of 1894. Such a slump in the democratic vote as

The London Daily News is authority for the publication of the conditions to be imposed by Denmark upon the United States in the case of a transfer of the Danish West Indies. Its Copenhagen correspondent says:

"I am enabled to state, on the very best authority, that Denmark has communicated to the United States the following conditions for the sale of the Danish West Indies:

1. Four million dollars to be paid to Denmark.
2. The population to decide by vote whether to remain Danish or to be transferred to the United States.
3. If the vote is favorable to the

that which occurred in that year or in St. Louis a few days ago would give the state to the republicans. There is no room in the country for two parties representing republican principles; unless the democratic party faithfully and courageously opposes plutocracy all along the line, it has neither chance nor reason for existence.

If the St. Louis contest had been purely a local one, The Commoner would have taken no part in it, but as it was a link in the chain—a part of a plan, national in extent, to republicanize the democratic organization, this paper called attention to the facts and pointed out the purpose of the reorganizers. The daily papers outside the scheme and since the election the rejoicing has been general among those self-styled democrats who have twice aided in electing a republican president. The election of Mr. Wells was a disastrous victory for the democracy of St. Louis, Missouri and the nation.

## TWO INCIDENTS.

In Santiago Bay Admiral Sampson was nominally in command, but the battle that resulted in victory for the Americans was commanded by Admiral Schley. Because Sampson was nominally in command, it was held by the administration with which he is a prime favorite that Sampson was entitled to all the honors of the great victory, and to all the material favors resulting therefrom.

General MacArthur is in command in the Philippines, and when Funston went out to capture Aguinaldo he was under MacArthur's orders. Strange to say, however, Funston is actually given the credit for Aguinaldo's capture, and is rewarded with a position as brigadier general in the regular army.

It may be, however, that the character of the reports from the commanding officers had something to do with the administration's attitude. Although Sampson was at least 100 miles away when the battle was raging he wired to Washington: "The fleet under my command offers to the nation as a Fourth of July present the destruction of the whole of Cervera's fleet."

General MacArthur cabled Washington in these words: "Splendid co-operation was through Commander Barry, officers, men, Vicksburg indispensable to success. Funston loudly praises my navy. Entire army of the island in thanks sea service. The transaction was brilliant in conception and faultless in execution. All credit must go to Funston, who, under supervision General Wheaton, organized and conducted expedition from start to finish. His reward should be signal and immediate. Agree with General Wheaton, who recommends Funston's retention brigadier general regulars."

There is a marked difference here in the attitude assumed by the commanding officers toward their subordinates. The two dispatches speak for themselves, and all to the great credit of MacArthur.

**THE YOUNG MAN'S CHANCES.**  
The million dollar salary voted to Mr. Schwab by the steel trust caused numerous republican editors to write enthusiastic articles on the opportunities offered to young men by the great corporations. The subject has now been taken up by debating societies and the school boys are investigating the matter for themselves. That Mr. Schwab's rise to fame and fortune has been rapid there is no doubt, neither is there any doubt that his present position is attractive to many, but the very fact that his case has attracted so much attention is conclusive proof that it is extraordinary. He has won the capital prize in the industrial lottery, but where a system of monopoly offers such an opportunity to one man it closes the door of opportunity to thousands of others equally able and deserving.

When all the great industries are controlled by trusts, there will be a remainder of the employees will be condemned to perpetual clerkships with no possibility of independence in the business world.

If the present tendency toward consolidation becomes permanent it is only a question of time when the principal positions in the corporations will go to relatives and favorites, and descend from generation to generation. Competition puts a premium on brains; monopoly puts a premium on blood.

Young men, and old men for that matter, will find that industrial independence will give a sufficient opportunity to a large number of people while the trusts will give an unusual opportunity to a small number of people.

Mayor Harrison won a great victory. To be elected the third time mayor of the second city of the United States is a high compliment to him personally and officially.

If the trans-continental railroad lines can get hold of the canal across the isthmus, that waterway will be of very little value to the public, so far as the lowering of freight rates is concerned.

National lawmakers who have not pledged themselves to vote for the shipping subsidy bill need not remain away from Europe this summer on account of the expense incident to the ocean voyage.

United States, then the inhabitants to become immediately not only American subjects, but American citizens.

"Products of the island to be admitted to the United States free of duty."

"It is supposed here that Washington will not readily accept the third and fourth conditions."

A few years ago it would not have been considered necessary for any nation to insist upon such conditions for our nation would have suggested them, but recent events have made it necessary for nations dealing with us to provide for the future welfare of their subjects.

## THE FIRST DEMOCRAT

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

Hated by Every Traitor to the American Flag—Was Loved by the Man Who Drove John Bull Out of This Country—Memory Still Hated by Their ilk.

Thomas Jefferson was a courageous leader and a comprehensive statesman. A nobler man, a purer patriot and a more unselfish lover of his kind than any man up to his generation never lived. He made enemies of all the enemies of popular government; friends of its friends. Himself a member of one of the "first families" of Virginia, he organized the movement to abolish the feudal institution of primogeniture and entail which locked the land of the ancestor from generation to generation away in the hands of the eldest son. He succeeded amid the wails and lamentations of "respectable society" in establishing equality of inheritance, and for this he was never forgiven. He dissolved the connection between church and state, laid deep and enduring the foundations of religious liberty, and for this, bigotry and fanaticism tore at his character, though the increased life and vigor and the wide progress of religious movement through a disenthralled and unpenalised church amply vindicated his wisdom. He laid broad the foundations of our present system of free public schools, and for this he was proclaimed a "Jacobin" and a "leveler." He compressed the whole substance of free government into a few lines of the Declaration of Independence, and for this his memory is traduced wherever tyranny and oppression abide. From his post in Paris he directed the movement that forced the bill of rights into the federal constitution, and for this the monarchists of his day cursed him and the imperialists of today breathe their little spite. When Hamilton was pronouncing the federal constitution "a crazy old hulk" and his party was by brazen usurpation of power monarchizing the federal government, Jefferson organized the movement that hurled from public life the apostates to popular liberty, and for this the "roar of foaming calumny" still echoes round his name. In the memorable language of Henry Clay, "In 1801, he snatched from the rude hand of usurpation the violated constitution of his country, and this was his crime; he preserved that sacred instrument in letter, substance and spirit, a priceless heritage for the generations to come, and for this he can never be forgiven." The work and teachings of Jefferson constitute today the great bar to that selfish and sinister "spirit that is forever perverting government into a scourge and a curse." Despite the ravings of the Henry Cabot Lodge and the whole brood of modern congenial Tories, he stands in history the monumental civic figure of the natal days and formative years of the American republic.—Mishawaka Democrat.

## THE MERIT SYSTEM DEAD.

Indianapolis News: It looks more and more as if the old battle for the merit system will have to be fought all over again. President McKinley has revived the spoils theory to such an extent that he has to devote hours every day to the work of filling offices that are already filled and that, too, by republicans. He is wearing himself out in the work of distributing spoils. If now there is to be further "loosening up" we shall see another unseemly rush of place hunters.

## ASSIMILATION.

About 350 years ago the Portuguese started out to civilize and Christianize the barbarians in one of their colonies on the southern coast of China. They have finally reduced these natives to a happy state of benevolent assimilation. The people are ignorant and brutal. They have been reduced to a state of abject slavery. The women have become beasts of burden, because they are cheaper than mules, and they are worked twelve hours a day for a wage of from three to five cents. The Portuguese are a slow people—it has taken them a long time to finish this blessed work, but as we are a young, thrifty and energetic people it is hoped that we may reach the same happy conclusion in the Philippines during the present century.—Nonconformist.

## MONOPOLY'S GREAT STRIDE.

Houston Post: If ten years ago any man had been bold enough to suggest that four men would ever absolutely control practically the entire railroad system of the United States he would have been laughed at. If any man yet exists who has no fears, in view of the rapidity of the movement of consolidation in all departments of our industrial life, he is deliberately ignoring alarming developments patent to all.

## GETTING READY FOR MORE DEBT.

Philadelphia Record: Hawaii when annexed to the United States was in debt nearly \$5,000,000, not including about \$750,000 due on account of the postal savings system of the islands. Under the terms of the resolution of annexation \$4,000,000 of the debt and the postal system accounts are to be paid by the United States and the treasury department has already set about the task. By the end of the current fiscal year the Hawaiian debt will have been reduced to a sum of \$600,000 or \$700,000, and the speculative island financiers will have a clear basis for further schemes involving the issue of public obligations.

## WHAT DISTINGUISHES A DEMOCRAT.

Milwaukee Journal: There are but few cases in which the two great parties occupy contradictory positions about the objects to be accomplished. In these cases the democrat is always for the less authority, the stricter construction of the law, the greater liberty of the individual, for influence and time as against force. It is a method of thought, a philosophy of life, which distinguishes a democrat from all others. A democrat believes in himself and will not call on the government until his individual power is exhausted. A paternalist goes to the government at once. There you have it.

## AN ABANDONED SOVEREIGN.

New York World: The most significant fact in connection with the Platt-Odell contest for the bossship in this state has been quite ignored. The fact is the abdication of the lawmaking power—the utter abrogation of popular self-government so far as the legislature is concerned. The vital function of free popular government, representative legislation, is absolutely suspended under boss rule. It is simply a question whether Platt or Odell is to dictate laws. This is the more important—the really fundamental—fact disclosed in the conflict for control at Albany.

## MR. GRIGGS AND HIS "SERVICE."

Speaking of his retirement, Attorney General Griggs says: "My service has covered a period that comprises mere great events than any other in the history of the country except during the civil war. I went into the cabinet just a few days before the Maine was blown up and I am retiring just a few days after Aguinaldo has been captured. Personally the 1st of April will be a great relief to me. It will be the first day in nearly six years that I have not had an official mail to attend to."

It is true, as Mr. Griggs says, that the period of his service, comprises some great events, but what a pity it is that he could not point to some personal achievements during that time as well as to those of the army and navy! What a pity that he could not remind the people that the records of the federal courts during his service

held evidence that he had done his duty; that those records showed him as the successful prosecutor of those great combinations which have been violating the laws of the country.

What a pity that he cannot hand the papers of his office over to his successor and say to him: "These things have I done in accordance with my oath. Do thou as well."

But he cannot do this. He cannot do any of these things. All he can do is to hand over the empty office files to him who takes his place. As Griggs has been so will his successor be. What significance will there be in the winks which they will exchange!—Chicago Chronicle.

## THE SPOONER BILL.

The "Spooner bill," which gives to the president autocratic power in the Philippines, having failed of passage in the ordinary way, has been tacked on to an appropriation bill and the conspirators are attempting to accomplish by indirection that which they failed to secure by fair means.

This bill gives the president absolute power to grant all kinds of franchises in those unfortunate islands, and the plundered people have no protection from the greed of the speculators whom the president favors.

The opposition presented several amendments to the measure, among which was one that all franchises granted should be subject to final ratification by congress, but this was voted down, and if the bill passes in its present shape all the valuable franchises of the country will be stolen from the people who own them and given away to foreign millionaires. It is thus that we benevolently assimilate the barbarian.

## CHILDREN AS SLAVES.

FIFTEEN HOURS A DAY FOR \$1.50 AND \$2.00 WEEKLY.

## THE SLAVERY OF THE BLACK MAN A HEAVEN IN COMPARISON TO THAT OF THE POOR WHITE CHILDREN—TRUSTS "OWN" THE LEGISLATORS.

"I stood in the door of a humble cottage shadowed by the factory's massive walls. The mistress of this home was the wife of a gallant Confederate soldier. They had seen better days. Death had kindly come to him, and he slept. The remorseless hand of necessity had driven the widow and her children out from the old homestead to the humble cottage. As I stood the gates of the factory swung open and amid a hundred children hers came. They were young children. The kindly walls of the nursery should have been around them. There was no spring in their steps, no light in their eyes, their cheeks were white, and I thought, standing in the presence of the children of this Confederate soldier, I would give every spindle and loom in the South to bring back the light to their eyes and see the roses bloom again upon their little cheeks.

"I would like to see every boll of cotton whose white bosom opens to the warm kiss of Southern suns spun and woven in the South, but there are prices I would not pay for it.

"We are standing today, at the gate of the grandest manufacturing empire the world has ever seen. The men of the North and East, with spindle and loom and treasure, are coming to our cotton fields. The laws of nature, stronger than all the laws of man, compel them to come. But mark this truth, they are coming as our masters. Our children and our children's children are to be their servants. I would put no restraining hand upon their coming. I would fling wide the gates and bid them enter, but so help me God, I would never give them our children until their little bodies had grown beyond the nursery walls and the light of knowledge had dawned in their souls.

"Last night I sat with my wife by the fireside of our comfortable home. I watched my 7-year-old boy lay his head upon his mother's lap and close his tired eyes in sleep, and I thought except for the goodness of God he might be numbered among the thousand little toilers in the mills of the South through the long hours of the night. And then, with justice in my mind and pity in my heart, I said, 'I will do for the children of my people what I would have them do for mine.'"

## MOTHER OF TRUST.

During the last campaign the Bryan men contended that the protective tariff furnished a firm foundation on which to build a superstructure of trusts. The Republicans denied this contention and said that the tariff did not protect the trusts.

Now Congressman Babcock, chairman of the Republican congressional committee and a member of the ways and means committee of congress, has introduced a bill to repeal the tariff on almost all lines of steel products and openly acknowledges that the object of the repeal is to head off the trust formation of a gigantic steel trust now in progress of organization.

Isn't this a dead give away? A leading republican tries to repeal a part of the tariff because it protects trusts. This gives the lie direct to the Republican organs and orators of the last campaign. It clearly admits that the Bryan men were right and that the McKinley men were wrong on the tariff question.

All the benefit the people will get out of this bill is that they will know beyond doubt that the Republican party is a liar and the father of liars. It was not intended that the bill should pass—it was only a grandstand play to the galleries—it was done in order that the party might claim that it had done something to prevent the formation of trusts—the bill was introduced so late in the session that it could not possibly be passed—it is a fraud as usual—a false pretense to deceive the people—a lie for political effect—a hypocritical attempt to deceive the masses without in any way injuring

## CHILDREN AS SLAVES.

FIFTEEN HOURS A DAY FOR \$1.50 AND \$2.00 WEEKLY.

The Slavery of the Black Man a Heaven in Comparison to That of the Poor White Children—Trusts "Own" the Legislators.

"I stood in the door of a humble cottage shadowed by the factory's massive walls. The mistress of this home was the wife of a gallant Confederate soldier. They had seen better days. Death had kindly come to him, and he slept. The remorseless hand of necessity had driven the widow and her children out from the old homestead to the humble cottage. As I stood the gates of the factory swung open and amid a hundred children hers came. They were young children. The kindly walls of the nursery should have been around them. There was no spring in their steps, no light in their eyes, their cheeks were white, and I thought, standing in the presence of the children of this Confederate soldier, I would give every spindle and loom in the South to bring back the light to their eyes and see the roses bloom again upon their little cheeks.

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Part of a speech delivered in the Georgia legislature by Hon. Seaborn Wright, on the anti-child labor bill.

In the cotton mills of the South little boys and girls 9 and 10 years of age are employed in the factories, working in some cases fifteen hours a day, for \$1.50 and \$2.00 a week. Laws have been proposed making it illegal to employ any child under 12 years of age, but in every instance the owners of the cotton mills have been able to get the bills defeated. The conditions in some of the cotton mills are so frightful that the children are not able to endure the work but a year or two. When such things as this are common, it seems like a hollow mockery to talk of ours being a civilized nation, and yet from pulp and press there is constantly going forth the boastful declaration that this is the most enlightened country on earth, destined by the Almighty to carry civilization to all peoples. It is time that we look matters squarely in the face and admit that there are children and women in the United States who are being ruined in health, forced into sin, and barely escaping starvation, all to the end that giant corporations may be enabled to pay large dividends on watered stock. Perhaps the cries of the children will stir the hearts of a people whose ears are deaf to reason.

"Even as ye did it unto one of these, ye did it unto me."

## THE PINCH OF LAND MONOPOLY.

People generally are prone to associate land monopoly with ownership of large tracts of land, by one or more persons; such ownership as exists conspicuously in the sparsely settled states and territories of the far west. In the mere matter of area, land monopoly does prevail in these regions. But it should be borne in mind that land monopoly pinches hardest where land values are greatest—which is always in and near the populous cities. Every growing town in the United States is honeycombed with object lessons showing how shrewd men, by availing themselves of the chances offered by our unjust laws and customs, are able to accumulate fortunes that they do not earn.

Here is a case in point: A few years ago H. H. Kohlsaat, then and now a wealthy journalist, purchased a small piece of ground in Chicago, where he resides, for \$210,000. The ground is located on Dearborn street and Custom House place, and is only 75x67 feet in area. Though in the heart of the business district, the land had never been improved. After holding the property fifteen months and enjoying the spectacle of seeing other and more enterprising citizens make valuable improvements all around it, Mr. Kohlsaat sold the land for \$350,000 in cash. By that one deal he made a net profit of \$140,000.

Large cities are the places to find land monopoly blooming all the year round. With such inducements for making money by mere speculation, why should not men with money and selfishness speculate, and keep on speculating, in natural opportunities, instead of being wealth-producers?

But if all men were land speculators and none were wealth producers, the human race would soon perish from off the earth. Just and scientific taxation would soon put an end to a system that compels industry to enrich idleness and go hungry itself.—Ralph Hoyt in The Star.

## WHY LABOR HATES HIM.

During the past two or three years a new phase has come into use in connection with labor disputes. Several strikes have been caused by the "readjustment of wages" as it is now called by employers. The following story very well illustrates the meaning of the "readjustment of wages" in many instances:

"Mr. Scroggs," said the bookkeeper, "this past week I did the junior clerk's work as well as my own. This being pay day, I thought it only right to remind you."

"Very good," said old Scroggs. "Let me see your salary is \$12 and the clerk's \$6."

"Yes, sir," replied the bookkeeper, beaming expectantly.

"Then working half the week for yourself is \$6, and the other half for the clerk is \$3. Your salary this week will be \$9."—Independent.