

# The Commoner.

VOL. I. NO. 4.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, FEBRUARY 13, 1901.

\$1.00 a Year.

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## Militarism.

During the last campaign the democrats pointed out that republican success would encourage the party in power to increase the standing army. The republicans evaded the question for the most part and, when they were challenged to meet it, resorted to subterfuge and deception. They claimed that the army then in service was made necessary by the war in the Philippines and called attention to the fact that the increase expired by limitation in 1901. They pretended to believe that the army could be reduced before that time if the republicans won at the election and the Filipinos were assured that there would be no change in the administration. These arguments ought not to have misled anyone because the President, two months before hostilities broke out at Manila, asked for authority to raise the army to one hundred thousand.

A republican House of Representatives passed a bill giving him the authority and the democrats and their populist and silver republican allies in the Senate secured the limitation which the republicans were afterwards so anxious to hide behind. The election resulted in a republican victory even more pronounced than the leaders of that party had expected, but the war in the Philippines did not terminate and then the imperialists came out from under cover and boldly demanded an increase in the military establishment. A bill was introduced, hurried through the House and Senate and is now a law. The title of it is a confession of cowardice. It is not a bill to increase the size of the standing army, but a bill "To increase the efficiency of the permanent military establishment of the United States." It provides that the army of the United States shall consist of fifteen regiments of cavalry, a corps of artillery, thirty regiments of infantry, one lieutenant-general, six major generals, fifteen brigadier generals, etc., etc., etc. Each regiment of cavalry and infantry has one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, three majors, fifteen captains, fifteen first lieutenants and fifteen second lieutenants, besides sergeants, sergeant-majors, corporals, etc.—the etc. including, among other persons, privates ranging from forty-three to seventy-six in each cavalry troop, and from forty-eight to one hundred and twenty-seven in each infantry company. The President is given the dangerous power to increase the army to the maximum. The number of enlisted men is limited to one hundred thousand. The maximum of enlisted men may include twelve thousand natives to be enlisted in the Philippine Islands if the President sees fit to enlist them.

If anyone will read the bill complete and

count the number of generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, captains, first lieutenants, second lieutenants, adjutants, inspectors, quartermasters and other officers with life tenure, he can understand something of the force which militarism can command in any legislative contest with the taxpayers.

It is easier to increase an army, especially the official part, than reduce it, and the people have before them a difficult task, but the burdens and menace of militarism can be relied upon to arouse the people. When the awakening comes it will be found that the people who profit by a large military establishment, however powerful in present influence, are insignificant in numbers compared with those who are injured.

## A Worthy Ambition.

Hon. Tom L. Johnson, of Cleveland, O., announces that he has retired permanently from business and intends to devote all of his time and energy to social and political questions, with a view to aiding in the enforcement of the doctrine of equal and exact justice to all and special privileges to none.

It is a worthy ambition, and he carries into his work an honest heart, a clear head, an eloquent tongue and an enthusiasm which comes from deep conviction.

During his service in Congress he gave evidence of both ability and fidelity to the public weal, and his present determination is not a surprise to those who have known him intimately.

Mr. Johnson, though comparatively young, is a man of large means and has laid aside enough to keep the wolf from his own door while he is battling for the rights of others. His success as a business man will protect him from the contempt which the well-to-do usually visit upon the reformer.

Long life to him, and may he find in his labor for his fellows a higher and more enduring enjoyment than is within the reach of those who strive only for themselves, or who make the accumulation of wealth their sole object.

## Chinese Atrocities.

Mr. George Lynch, an Englishman who has been doing newspaper work in China, gives a very uncomplimentary report of the action of the powers in the Orient. He says that a wave of fear and horror preceded the advent of the allies to such an extent that in many of the villages people committed suicide to save themselves from their Christian conquerors. He adds that some of the soldiers were so busy looting that they did not attempt to bury the bodies until finally the fear of disease compelled them. Other reports from apparently trustworthy sources seem to leave no doubt that the foreign troops have felt relieved from observing the usages of war which prevail

among civilized combatants. This is not mentioned for the purpose of captious criticism, but only as an illustration of the fact that in a war between different races, the superior race as a rule sinks to the level of the inferior. The result is, that for generations to come the power of the superior race to benefit the inferior race by moral influence and example is entirely destroyed. The Boxers who used the open threats of dismemberment to arouse prejudice against foreigners will find new facts upon which to base their hatred. The foreign merchant and the missionary must live and labor under great disadvantages for years hence.

## Abraham Lincoln.

Had Abraham Lincoln lived until February 12, 1901, he would have reached the age of ninety-two years; that is not an impossible age for a sturdy man. When we remember that the years have not multiplied to the extent that, under ordinary circumstances, Lincoln would be precluded from being a living witness to this country's attitude today, we are reminded that it is an easier thing to forget a good man's teachings than to lose recollection of the man himself.

The anniversary of Lincoln's birth will be generally celebrated throughout the country. Republican orators will claim him as the patron saint of their party; but the claim must seem a mockery when we realize the fact that that party has ignored Lincoln's warnings and violated Lincoln's precepts.

Society is not benefitted by observing the birthday of a bad man; nor is society benefitted by the observance of a good man's birthday if the lessons he taught are banished from the minds of the observers.

If we would not appear as hypocrites, we must in our observance of Lincoln day associate Lincoln's principles with the man whose memory we pretend to revere. Lincoln's fame is imperishable because of his contribution to society. A crisis confronted his country, and in the solution of the problems, he applied rules which, if correctly applied in Lincoln's time, may be correctly applied to similar problems in any period of human history.

On one occasion in replying to Stephen A. Douglas, Mr. Lincoln said:

We cannot say people have a right to do wrong. That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when the poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood the test since the beginning of time, and they will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself.

Lincoln recognized that the great struggles of society are over fundamental principles—principles which remain unchanged from generation to