

## The Commoner.

### Why Not Harlan?

The gold democrats seem anxious to find a presidential candidate who is not "tainted with the silver heresy" and insist that that was their main objection to the ticket nominated in 1896 and in 1900.

Why do they not urge the nomination of Justice Harlan? Of course, Mr. Harlan is not a democrat, but that objection ought not to weigh with the gold democrats who voted for Mr. McKinley. Mr. Harlan has not only placed himself on record against imperialism, but he also wrote a dissenting opinion in the income tax case, and opposed the position taken by the supreme court in the sugar trust case. He has a splendid record on three prominent questions, but this is the very reason why the gold democrats would object to him. They prefer a democrat who endorses republican policies to a republican who supports democratic policies.

### The Growth of Imperialism.

It is an old saying that a truth fits into every other truth, while a lie fits nowhere. Likewise, it can be said of a correct principle that it harmonizes with everything that is right, while an erroneous principle is in conflict with all that is good. Let a false theory be once adopted and it requires a constant re-arrangement of views, methods of thought, and ideals. It is not strange, therefore, that the doctrine of imperialism is manifesting itself in a multitude of ways never contemplated or imagined by those who first proposed it. The Boston Herald in a recent editorial discusses the third term idea in the light of recent events. Washington refused a third term and Jefferson declined to consider it, and thus an unwritten law prohibiting a third term was established. The precedent was never disputed until the friends of President Grant prevailed upon him to become a candidate for a third time. Grant had the prestige of a successful military career; he was the commander of a victorious army, the leader of his party and the idol of a grateful people. At the close of his second term he took a trip around the world and was the recipient of honors and attentions never before paid to an American in foreign lands. And yet, so deep-seated was the sentiment against a third term that he was defeated in a republican convention.

The Herald, however, argues that imperialism has so altered our government, and so enlarged the responsibilities of the executive as to remove the objections made to a third term. The following extract from the editorial presents the main reasons given by the Herald:

Our government itself has undergone a change in its character much greater than anything that is implied in accepting this third-term idea. Taking the case from the present standpoint, and it may be said that the greater can be brought to include the less with an effect upon public opinion proportionate the one to the other. Four years ago ours was a different form of government from what it now is. It was then a republic of states, to which were added territories in preparation to become states. There was not a foot of it included in any other category. Since then it has been made, in effect, a republic of states owning provinces which stand toward it in the relation of dependencies. They do not share in that privilege of self-government, present or prospective, which

was accorded to all the nation as it was earlier constituted. This nation is still, and it is intended to continue to be, the United States of America. Very few advocate making it the United States of America and Asia. We hold the Philippine islands as of us, but never to become a part of us, as was all that existed in the nation before the Spanish war changed its character.

To hesitate about agreeing to a third term in the presidency, as doing violence to the national traditions of the people, while accepting this vastly more important change, is to strain at a small point while accepting a large one. Let it here be noted that we are not arguing for this change in the presidency. We are simply looking at facts as they are, accepting them in their natural relations and considering what may logically grow out of them. The nation is not as it was when it was composed only of contiguous territories, and based on an agreement that there should be equality between the peoples that inhabit them. It extends now seven thousand miles away into another continent; it is not to allow the people there over whom it holds sovereignty representation in its home government; they are to be controlled by the home government as it is administered by congress and by the president. The president is to be the executive officer in this. He is to select its governors, its judges, its commissioners of customs, all its more important officials. It is not a logical operation of this system to make frequent changes in the occupant of an office that has such extraordinary powers. Enlightened students of government would not have framed our present system of government as it is now in operation as one best adapted to working that feature in its operation. They would have said that the term of the president should either have been longer or it should be open to greater extension. It is entirely natural that this latter should be made to apply, if not to the term of President McKinley, to that of his successors.

The Herald puts forth this proposition tentatively to ascertain public sentiment on the subject, and it reports that the press among its exchanges "has much commented upon it, and almost invariably admit its plausibility, if nothing more." It concludes by saying:

The attempted, and what in many quarters has been assumed to be the accomplished, rigid rule that there shall be no third term in the presidency of the United States may have to yield to these conditions.

There is nothing startling in the above suggestion. If imperialism becomes a settled fact in this country it will be difficult to invoke tradition, a fixed custom, or even a written constitution against anything which the people may, for the time being, desire to do. Not only is a third term a small innovation compared with the changes which have already been advocated, but it is in perfect harmony with the colonial idea. In the last campaign the republicans claimed that the Filipinos were encouraged by the prospect of a change in administration. The same argument can be made at any time when a state of war exists anywhere in the empire—and a state of war generally does exist somewhere in an empire. Imperialism would not be tolerated but for the spirit of commercialism which is abroad in the land, and commercialism, equally with imperialism, protests against frequent elections. We need not be surprised, therefore, to hear of suggestions in the line of extending the president's term. Next will come the proposition to allow the president to hold office during life. This would be entirely satisfactory from a commercial and an imperialistic standpoint, but as even this system would involve an election when the president died, a hereditary presidency would be even more in harmony with the new order of things. If you teach a boy that it is right to steal an article of small value he will be able to raise the limit without further advice. So, when you admit the princi-

ple of imperialism those who are placed in charge of the government will be able to enlarge upon the principle until all of the truths once supposed to be self-evident are denied and dethroned. The Herald's discussion shows the growth and extension of the imperialistic principle.

### The South Carolina Situation.

In view of the action of Senator McLaurin in withdrawing his resignation, the reader may be interested in reviewing the dialogue which brought about the resignation.

At a meeting at Gaffney Senators Tillman and McLaurin met in joint debate and the former in the course of his speech said:

"Let McLaurin resign and go before the democratic primary this year, and I'll go home and keep my mouth shut and let the other fellows attend to him. If you elect him I will take it as notice that you don't want me. If he is a democrat, then I'm not."

Senator McLaurin replied:

"Oh, yes. Tillman says, 'Why don't I resign.' If I'm elected it will mean the people don't want him. But he stopped there. He's smart. You'll never catch him committing himself too far. He did not say if I'm elected he'd resign. Oh, no. You'll never hear of Benjamin, the Tillmanite, resigning."

And the dialogue continued as follows:

Tillman: I will say it, and do say it!

McLaurin: Agreed.

Tillman: I will resign right now, if you will, and we will go before the people.

Mc. Laurin: Agreed.

Tillman: Draw up the paper and we will sign it right now.

Mc. Laurin: That suits me.

In pursuance of this agreement the resignations were prepared, signed and delivered to the governor, who, after a few days consideration, addressed communications to the senators advising them to recall their resignations and giving as the main reason therefor that a campaign this year would involve the people in an unnecessary and harmful political agitation. Senator Tillman promptly replied that great issues were at stake, that the next session of the senate would deal with questions of the highest importance and that South Carolina was entitled to a voice in the settlement of these questions. He renewed his assertion that Senator McLaurin was misrepresenting the wishes and interests of the people of the state and ought to be replaced by some one who would reflect the sentiment of the people. He insisted that he was willing to risk his own term in order to enable the people to get rid of Senator McLaurin.

Senator McLaurin, however, seized with alacrity upon the suggestion made by Governor McSweeney and withdrew his resignation. One paragraph of his letter to the Governor is worth re-producing. He says:

"I appreciate fully the force of the reasons given by you and the effect upon the people of the state of a heated and strife-producing contest for United States senator this year. For the sake of the peace, prosperity and happiness of the people of this state, I am willing to hold on to my commission as United States senator and to continue to serve the state as I have done in the past to the best of my ability."

His willingness "to hold on to" his commission "for the sake of the peace, prosperity and happiness of the people" of his state recalls a story told by John Allen of Mississippi. A