

The Commoner.

conclusion that the people of Porto Rico can entrust their rights to the protection of an unrestrained congress?

Justice Brown is a citizen of the state of Michigan, and Michigan also has a constitution and a bill of rights. Is Justice Brown willing to go before the people of his own state and tell them that their legislature should be vested with full and unrestrained power to act on all questions affecting the rights and property of the citizens? If not, why not? Is a Congress more reliable than a state legislature? Is a representative body more trustworthy as it gets farther away from the people? Is delegated authority more carefully exercised in proportion as the seat of government is farther removed from the voters?

The position taken by Judge Brown would be ludicrous if it were not so serious. It is strange that his language is not challenged by republicans. Two republican Judges out of six dissented from this position; have the republican newspapers less independence than the judges? Have the rank and file of the republican party, who are under no obligation to the party, less independence of thought and action than the justices who hold their commissions from republican presidents? Unless the people are wholly absorbed in money-making and entirely indifferent to that constitutional liberty so highly prized and so dearly bought by our ancestors there will be so emphatic a protest against the imperialistic utterances of the court that no body of officials on the bench or elsewhere will soon again disregard the spirit of American institutions.

"The Best Form of Giving."

In addressing a Sunday school class recently, Mr. Rockefeller of the Standard Oil Trust said that his organization paid twenty-two millions a year in wages, and that in thirty years it had paid out between six hundred and seven hundred millions to laboring men. "This," he added, "I regard as the best form of giving."

There is no doubt that remunerative employment is more helpful than charity, but Mr. Rockefeller can hardly credit his charity account with the amount paid out in wages. During the past seven years the dividends declared by the Standard Oil Trust have amounted to \$252,000,000. Thus it will be seen that the dividends for seven years amount to more than one-third of the wages paid during a period of thirty years. Mr. Rockefeller's share of the dividends for the past five months are said to amount to ten millions—this is at the rate of twenty-four millions a year. If Mr. Rockefeller can make twenty-four millions (not to speak of the dividends paid to other stock-holders) by paying twenty-two millions in wages he has found a very profitable investment, even though it cannot properly be described as the "best form of giving." As Mr. Rockefeller gets more out of it than the thousands of men who do the work, and as he could get nothing out of the business but for the work done by the wage earners, it is evident that the day laborers are doing some "giving" themselves. Mr. Rockefeller has the reputation of

being a very liberal man, but it is quite evident that he is giving away some one else's money. If the employes are not receiving wages enough he is giving away their money or money which should be paid to them, and they should be credited with his donations. If the employes are receiving wages enough it must be apparent that the consumers of oil are paying too much, and therefore they should be credited with Mr. Rockefeller's donations. Some one has described the Chicago University as a national university, because it is supported by money collected from all the people, by that most successful taxgatherer, the Standard Oil Trust.

As a matter of fact, the payment of wages is not "a form of giving." You do not speak of giving a man a horse when you receive for the horse as much as it is worth. There is much less reason for describing wages as a gift because the wage earner not only earns all he receives but he earns for his employer a profit besides. But even if the ordinary wage earner could count his wages as a gift it would be a perversion of language to say that Mr. Rockefeller was giving to his employes when the employes give back to Mr. Rockefeller all that he pays for wages and more than one hundred per cent profit on the wages besides.

When Mr. Rockefeller is ready to render an account of his stewardship, he will not find the amount paid by him in wages standing to his credit, but he will find some charges made against the amount which he has received. A part of his enormous income represents money which his employes ought to have received, and a part represents money taken from the public in violation of human as well as divine laws. Not only will he find it impossible to obtain credit for wages paid to employes, but he will find that much that he has given to religion, to education and to charity, has been set down in the "incidental expense" column and not under the head of benevolence. The money which he has paid to subsidize the press—not money paid to proprietors of papers, but money expended in such a way as to silence criticism and to provoke eulogy, the money paid to prevent ministerial denunciation of trust methods—not money paid to the ministers themselves, but money given to religious enterprises, and money used to corrupt colleges and to support professors who will defend, or at least deal gently with, monopolies—all these expenditures are not given to charity but are a part of the business. Mr. Rockefeller has given so small a part of his income that he has become fabulously rich in a short time. Measured by the rule laid down by the Master in the case of the widow who gave in two mites, Mr. Rockefeller is a miser. Thousands have given more liberally in proportion to their income, although their gifts have not amounted to so much in dollars. If Mr. Rockefeller had given, not a small per cent but all of his income to church and charity, he could not have compensated for the harm he has done, nor could he have justified the criminal methods which he has employed. Mr. Rockefeller cannot boast of his giving, least of all can he boast of giving to his employes.

He Misrepresents the South.

The editor of the Macon (Georgia) Telegraph discusses the recent supreme court decision in a vein which not only misrepresents southern sentiment but gives the republican papers of the north an excuse for slandering the people for whom the Telegraph assumes to speak. The Kansas City platform denounced imperialism as an attack upon the declaration of independence and the principles which underly our form of government. Whatever difference of opinion may have existed on the money question, no difference of opinion was manifested on the question of imperialism. Every southern state, excepting Maryland and West Virginia, gave its electoral vote to the candidates nominated on that platform and nearly every representative of the south in the senate and house of representatives endorsed the principles set forth in that platform. Senator Bacon of Georgia, whose home is at Macon, introduced the resolution which the party supported. The supreme court by a narrow majority of one sustained the republican theory, while four judges, two democrats and two republicans, supported the position taken by the democratic platform. And now, instead of viewing the court's position as an attack upon the doctrine of self government and constitutional liberty, in this country as well as Porto Rico, the editor of the telegraph uses the occasion to utter a tirade against those who a generation ago opposed the doctrine of secession.

The question involved in imperialism is a very different one from that involved in the civil war. The doctrine of secession was harmless so long as it was merely theoretical, and it never would have become a practical question but for the fact that slavery became interwoven with it. As the north grew in population and political influence, it became apparent that slavery was doomed unless the right of secession could be established. While Lincoln's fight was not against slavery itself but against the extension of slavery, the abolition sentiment was growing so rapidly that far sighted men could see that it was only a question of time when the issue would be joined. The war, however, seemed unavoidable; passion and prejudice made amicable settlement impossible. It is needless to recount the horrors of that war. The fire of battle consumed the system which had separated the two sections of the country, and terrible as were the wounds of that conflict they have healed. As time goes on the animosities aroused between '61 and '65 are disappearing, and the people, north and south, are able to recognize what they did not recognize immediately, namely, that the soldiers on both sides fought with equal bravery in defense of convictions equally honest and sincere. Now that slavery is abolished the people of the south would not restore it if they could, and the editor of the Telegraph does injustice to his own people when he insinuates that they are less attached to the constitution and the declaration of independence than the people of the north.

The question in 1861 was whether we should have two republics or one; the question now