

The Commoner.

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The Prince of Peace.

Christmas is at hand, and its coming always recalls the benediction pronounced in the presence of the shepherds who kept their flocks by night—

"On earth peace, good will toward men."

Isaiah, the prophet, in speaking of the coming of Christ, said that he would be called among other things the "Prince of Peace," and immediately after this prophecy as to His title follows this explanation of the title: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever."

It is as true today as when the prophet uttered the words, that no government can be permanent or insure peace unless it is established with justice. At this season of the year, held sacred in all Christian lands and observed even by those who are indifferent to the origin of Christmas festivities, it is well for us to ask ourselves what our nation as a nation and we as individuals are doing to promote peace by establishing justice? Until within a few years our nation has been known as a peace-loving nation; it has boasted of its small standing army and it has had no ambition to compete with foreign nations in naval expenditures. But a change has come over a portion of our people. They advocate wars of conquest which they once condemned; they justify military expenditures which they once denounced, and they clamor for a navy as big as the biggest. What is to be the end? Was the hope of universal peace a dream? Is right to be measured by might, and violence, robed in hypocrisy, to be substituted for justice?

A Kansas City minister indorses the assertion of Maxim, the gun-maker, who declares "often at the bayonet's point, trade, and even Christianity have been forced upon the savages, and upon exclusive and warlike peoples, and now Christianity, civilization and militarism, sisters of strange relation, hand in hand, embrace the world."

Is this the construction which the modern church is going to set upon the teachings of one who rebuked the doctrine of hate and preached the gospel of love?

Christmas should be more than an occasion for the exchange of presents. It should be a season for conscientious self-inspection by citizens individually and by that great family of citizens, the nation.

"On earth peace, good will toward men."

Iglesias' Terrible Crime.

Samuel Gompers, president of the American federation of labor, recently protested to President Roosevelt because of the arrest of Santiago Iglesias by the American authorities in Porto Rico.

Iglesias arrived in San Juan November 10, and was immediately arrested. The Associated press dispatches say: "The public prosecutor asked that he be sentenced to a term of imprisonment on the ground that he is a dangerous labor agitator and is continually causing unrest." On December 12 Iglesias was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

It has never been regarded as a serious crime for one to be a "labor agitator," that is, on United States territory. The labor agitator has never

been regarded as a criminal. The supreme court, in one of its several insular decisions, plainly showed that there was a difference between the government of these new possessions, while they were under military authority and the government after the peace treaty had been ratified and congress had assumed control. Under military authority very nearly anything that happened to suit the pleasure of the soldier in power, was lawful. But congress has already legislated for Porto Rico and provided it with a form of government—a form, it is true, that is "wonderfully and fearfully made" judged by well-defined American notions—but a form of government nevertheless. And yet one who has become quite accustomed to old-fashioned American notions and doctrines cannot entirely escape a shock when he is told that on territory subject to United States jurisdiction, governed by the United States law, and controlled by United States policies, a man has been thrown into jail and "sentenced to a term of imprisonment on the ground that he is "a dangerous labor agitator and is continually causing unrest."

What does the thoughtful American citizen require to direct his attention to the innovations now being fixed upon his form of government? Who shall say that this labor agitator is dangerous? The decree must certainly be by the public prosecutor, or the man in police authority in Porto Rico. What is "unrest" which this public prosecutor tells us this "dangerous labor agitator" is continually causing? The men who founded this government declared that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Eternal vigilance is but another name for "unrest." A man who agitates is wholly harmless in the presence of an intelligent people, if the doctrines he upholds and the policies he supports are unwise or impracticable. And in the presence of despotism, in the vicinity of tyranny, the agitator is a public benefactor and the man who is most dangerous to society is the one who counsels submission to wrong and who urges the people to refuse to avail themselves of the right of petition or of the power which is given them through the medium of the ballot.

And now the question that must force itself upon every thinking American citizen is: If to be a labor agitator in Porto Rico is a crime, how long will it be before to be a labor agitator within the United States will be an offense against the law? And if the man who agitates in behalf of laboring men is to be branded as a criminal, how many days will intervene before every man who dares stand up and protest against the policies of the dominating party, who dares appeal to the people to change existing laws through the orderly process of the ballot, who dares register manly protest against wrong and infamy in high places—how many days, we say, will intervene before men who make these protests will also be sentenced to "a term of imprisonment?"

When Mr. Lincoln said that this country could not endure half slave and half free, he uttered a truth that applies to other conditions. This country may not exist half subject and half citizen. This country may not exist half monarchy and half republic. This country may not exist half despotism and half free. Proceedings such as those resulting in the arrest of this so-called "labor agitator" are part and parcel of the trappings of a monarchy and have no place in a re-

public, they have no part in a nation of freemen.

Every step we take towards the monarchical notion, every advance we make towards a despotic theory is injurious to the republican form of government—a form which we have for so long a period of time preserved at a sacrifice of the best blood of our nation—a form which our best thinkers have sustained in some of the most eloquent speeches and essays that are recorded in the history of the world.

The Meaning of Bimetallism.

A reader of The Commoner asks for a definition of bimetallism, and specifically inquires whether the Kansas City platform demands that the government shall maintain the parity between gold and silver.

Bimetallism is the name given to the monetary system under which gold and silver are used as full legal tender money at a fixed ratio, and admitted to unlimited coinage. The Kansas City platform declared in favor of the free coinage of silver as well as its unlimited coinage, the reason being that free coinage is now accorded to gold and was formerly accorded to both metals. Under the bimetallic system the two metals are treated exactly alike. A charge sufficient to cover the cost of coinage would, however, be entirely consistent with the bimetallic system. Mr. Carlisle favored such a charge in 1878 when he denounced the gold standard, but such a charge would create a difference between the coin and the bullion value of the coin. If, for instance, the government charged one cent for converting bullion into coin, the coin would necessarily lose one cent by melting and the bullion value would, therefore, remain one cent below the coinage value.

Bimetallism does not depend upon any particular ratio. We first had bimetallism in this country at the ratio of 15 to 1, and afterwards at the ratio of 16 to 1. Other nations have had bimetallism at different ratios, as, for instance, France, at the ratio of 15½ to 1. The ratio of 16 to 1 was specifically named in the Chicago platform and afterwards in the Kansas City platform, first, because that was the legal ratio existing between the metals when demonetization took place; second, because it is the ratio at which the standard silver dollars and gold coin now circulate; third, because the advocates of bimetallism believe that the opening of the mints at that ratio would create a demand for silver which would make an ounce of silver, whether melted or coined, worth \$1.29 in gold the world over; and, fourth, because, if a new ratio were desired, it would be impossible to select it intelligently without first opening the mints at the present ratio in order to measure the effect that free coinage would have upon the price of silver bullion. When the Sherman law of 1890 was enacted it was thought that it would utilize all the silver available for coinage, and under the stimulus of this law-created demand silver rose to \$1.21 an ounce, not only here, but all over the world.

It was necessary to name a specific ratio because advocates of the gold standard had for several years been securing office on indefinite or ambiguous platforms, and then, when in office, had been betraying their constituents. It became necessary to make the platform specific in order to protect the voters from fraud and deception. That necessity is still present; a general demand for