

# The Commoner.

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## Steadfastness.

Among the traits of character which distinguished Andrew Jackson, no trait was more prominent or more helpful to his country than his steadfastness. When he believed a thing, he believed it. Where duty led, he followed without questioning. When he decided that anything ought to be done, he did it, and no power could overawe him. He did not have in his veins a single drop of "anything to win" blood. When Nicholas Biddle declared that through the national bank he could make and unmake congresses, Jackson replied that that was more power than any one man ought to have in this country, and he then began his war against Biddle and his bank which resulted in the overthrow of that great financier and the institution which he so autocratically controlled. Others were afraid that Biddle's influence, if antagonized, would defeat the democratic party, but Jackson saw in it a menace to his country and he did not stop to consider what effect an attack on the bank would have on himself or on his party. He won, and we revere his name and celebrate his day. Benton, in reviewing Jackson's work, said that, as Cicero overthrew the conspiracy of Cataline and saved Rome, so Jackson overthrew the bank conspiracy and saved America.

We shall observe this day in vain if we fail to gather from the life of Jackson inspiration and encouragement for the work which lies before us. Today, the democratic party needs to learn from the hero of New Orleans the lesson of steadfastness; it needs to learn from him, not only that to be right is more important than to be successful, but that to be right is the best way to insure success.

A party must have principles or it can have no claim upon public confidence; and how can it commend its principles better than by standing by them? Who will have faith in the creed of a party if the party stands ready to barter away its creed in exchange for the promise of patronage? A halting, hesitating, vacillating course, not only fails to invite recruits, but it alienates and drives away veterans.

Another reason for steadfastness is found in the fact that no one can tell until the attempt is made what obstacles courage can overcome. The bold and fearless triumph where the timid fail. The victories which live and light us on to noble deeds are the victories snatched from the jaws of defeat by intrepid spirits who preferred death to retreat.

There is a profound philosophy, as well as a religious truth, in the words: "He that saveth his life shall lose it." The party that has no higher purpose than to save its own life will die because it deserves to die; the party that is willing to die, if need be, for the sake of a great cause will live because it deserves to live.

Who says that the money power is omnipotent, and that the democratic party must compromise with it or surrender to it? Not until human nature is entirely changed can the financiers be entrusted with the guardianship of the producers of wealth; not until greed becomes just can the money changers construct a system for themselves which will be fair to any one else. A top can be balanced upon the point only when it is in rapid motion, and so the financial structure designed by Wall street for the benefit of Wall street will stand upright only so long as it can be

kept whirling; the collapse will come when the speed is slackened.

Who says that we cannot afford to measure strength with the great monopolies which now arrogantly assume to control the domain of politics as well as the field of industry? Not until we can gather good fruit from an evil tree, and figs from thistles, can we expect a private monopoly to bring forth public blessings. The water that has been poured into the stocks of our great corporations has for the most part been drawn from the agricultural regions, and the drouth that is sure to follow will teach the farmers the meaning of the trust system.

Must we abandon the self-evident truth that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed? Must we accept imperialism as an accomplished fact and join in the shout for blood and conquest? Our republic rests upon solid rock and while its principles are revered it cannot be overthrown from within or from without; but if all the members of all parties joined together to erect an empire upon American soil they would build upon the sand and the edifice could not endure. It is a law divine in its origin, irresistible in its force and eternal in its duration, that wrong-doing ultimately destroys the wrongdoer; no nation or combination of nations is strong enough to evade or resist retributive justice.

But suppose—what no one should assume and what no one can prove—that steadfast adherence to democratic principles would result in repeated defeat, is that any reason why we should abandon those principles and adopt others, or have none at all? Those who prefer prison fare or a servile subject's lot to the dangers of the battlefield may condemn the Boers for continuing what some describe as a hopeless struggle for independence, but those who can measure the mighty influence of great deeds know that the sturdy Dutchmen of South Africa have already conferred upon the world a benefit that cannot be measured by money. Their valor has brought greater security to all the republics of the earth; the bodies of their dead have built a bulwark behind which the friends of liberty will fight for centuries. The fact that England has been compelled to employ more than 200,000 soldiers to subjugate less than 25,000 men in arms—the fact that England has expended more than \$1,000 per Boer—the per capita wealth of the United States—and has neither been able to purchase them nor to kill them—these facts are immeasurably valuable to people everywhere who want free government for themselves and are content that others should enjoy it also.

So, the democratic party, whether in power or out of power, is serving mankind when it stands steadfastly for constitutional government and insists that that government shall be administered according to the Jeffersonian maxim, "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

## Entangling Alliances.

The poet laureate of England has written some verses setting forth the idea that England and the United States should be united as against the world and "stand or fall together." That there should be a friendly feeling between the people of this country and the people of England is perfectly proper. There should be a friendly feeling be-

tween the people of this country and the people of all countries. But a distinction should be drawn between the people and the government of a nation. The English government is a monarchy, limited, it is true, insofar as the people have been able to limit it, but still a monarchy. Between the English monarchy and the American republic there can be no sympathy. Can the American people consent to an alliance which will bring upon our nation either responsibility for wrongs done by the English government or a share of the punishment which much ultimately be inflicted upon wrong-doers whether they be individuals or nations?

England is sowing the wind; she will reap a whirlwind. This nation cannot join hands with her without adopting her policies and finally sharing in the terrible retribution which will come. Washington, Jefferson, and all the other early patriots warned us against entangling alliances, even when those alliances might have strengthened us. What excuse can there be for an alliance now, when we are strong enough to protect ourselves against all comers?

We cannot afford to be "unequally yoked together" with any government which recognizes force as the basis of government or in its administration disregards the doctrine that governments are the creatures, not the masters, of the people.

## "Equality Before the Law."

The state motto of Nebraska is "Equality Before the Law." It is inscribed upon the state seal and written upon the walls of the supreme court room. No better motto could be found. It harmonizes with the self-evident truth that all men are created equal and is, therefore, consistent with the Jeffersonian maxim, "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none." What does the motto mean? It can mean nothing else than that all citizens, be they high or low, rich or poor, great or small, stand upon a common level, not only in contemplation of law, but also in the contemplation of the officers chosen by the people to administer the government. There has been in recent years an increasing tendency to disregard this motto and to show respect to persons, not only in matters of legislation, but in matters connected with the judicial and executive branches of the government as well. A man who steals a great deal often escapes with a lighter punishment than the man who steals a small amount; the man who is prominent in society or politics often has an advantage over the man who is obscure or little known. We have had a recent instance of this in the state of Indiana, where a prominent republican, charged with complicity in an assassination, is protected from trial by the partiality of a republican governor. A more recent instance of it is found in the pardon of Joseph S. Bartley by the governor of the state of Nebraska. When the fusion officers took charge of the state government in 1896, Mr. Bartley, then state treasurer, was found to be a defaulter in the sum of several hundred thousand dollars. He was tried before a republican judge and sentenced to twenty years in the state penitentiary. Last summer the governor of the state gave Mr. Bartley a two months' parole, and it was explained at the time that it was done in order that he might collect and return some of the state's money which