

# The Commoner.

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Vol. 2. No. 2.

Lincoln, Nebraska, January 31, 1902.

\$1.00 a Year.

## Observing "Coronation Day."

At a mass meeting recently held in Chicago it was decided to send an invitation to Paul Kruger, president of the South African republic, to be the guest of the people of Chicago on June 26, the date of the coronation of the king of England. It is expected that five hundred thousand names will be signed to the invitation. President Kruger might feel that a visit to the United States on that particular day would be construed as a rebuke to the president, but it is to be hoped that he will come to the United States on some day of his own selection and give the American people a chance to show to the world that the administration does not reflect the wishes of the people of this country when it makes an ostentatious display of its sympathy with England's effort to overthrow two republics. If Kruger could be induced to come in April and help celebrate Jefferson's birthday the demonstrations which would greet him might induce the president to recall his special envoys and leave the king to adjust his crown without American aid.

At any rate it might be well to arrange for a few large Boer demonstrations on coronation day so that the true sentiment of the people may be made known to offset the demoralizing influence of the president's act. When the real feeling of the people is expressed the president may regret the concession he has made to the monarchical and aristocratic ideas which have developed with the progress of imperialism.

## What Two Women Did.

Miss Margaret A. Haley and Miss Catherine Goggin have recently shown what persistence and courage can do. The teachers of Chicago were brought face to face with a reduction in the school appropriation. Upon investigation they found that a larger sum could be expended for education if corporations would bear their fair share of public burdens. Beginning with this proposition, the ladies above mentioned, after informing themselves as to the facts, brought complaint against the board of equalization, and asked the court to compel the board to list for assessment about two hundred and thirty-seven million dollars worth of property belonging to twenty-three Chicago corporations. At first the corporations were inclined to smile at the effort of two comparatively unknown women. Having dealt successfully with a number of prominent and influential men, the corporations felt justified in looking down with contempt upon the plans of a couple of school teachers. But the school teachers were fortunate in getting into a court presided over by a righteous judge, and before long the corporations began to realize that they were engaged in a sure enough law suit, and the farther they went into the suit the bigger it got. They couldn't buy the teachers out or scare them away; they couldn't frighten the judge or corrupt him, and finally, in spite of all they could do, they were brought face to face with the law. The decision was against the board of equalization and therefore against the corporations. An appeal was taken to the supreme court of the state, but the decision of Judge Thompson was sustained, and unless some United States court can be found to restrain the collection of the tax it looks very much as if justice, accepting the invitation extended by Misses Haley and Goggin,

were about to take up her abode in Chicago. All praise to these fearless women and all honor to the just judge who listened to their petition! This is a case that ought to strengthen the faith of those who are inclined to be pessimistic.

## A Reflection on Our Nation.

The fact that the inhabitants of the Danish islands have protested against the sale of the islands to the United States and have demanded that the question be submitted to the people before final action is taken, is a sad comment upon this nation. That we should have so conducted ourselves as to make near neighbors prefer to be subjects of a king rather than risk the protection of their rights under the American flag is the most serious reflection that has recently been cast upon our government, and yet we have deserved the reproach.

We found the Porto Ricans enjoying representation in the Spanish legislature, but, although they welcomed our armies with joy, we have denied to them the privileges which they had under a king. No wonder the inhabitants of the Danish isles look with suspicion upon our efforts to secure title to them. Those who represent the United States in the negotiations that have taken place ought to have made a petition and a protest unnecessary. It ought to have been announced in the beginning that under no condition would the Danish isles be accepted by the United States even as a gift without the consent and approval of the inhabitants. We are not so much in need of territory that we should disregard the will of the people inhabiting those islands, even though a distant king were willing to dispose of them without consulting the people.

Are we not losing the moral prestige that we once possessed when we bargain for people as we would bargain for merchandise, and then find that they prefer to live under another flag?

## Filched From Whom?

The New York Press, republican, enters vigorous protest against the proposition that the tariff duties on Cuban sugar be reduced. The Press says:

If the American people on sentimental grounds think they ought to give Cuba \$40,000,000 this year or every year, let them go down into the pockets of all the American people for the gift, and not into the pockets of a few interests selected for proscription and spoliation. If Governor Wood or President Roosevelt or anybody else wants Santa Claus to stuff that forty millions into Cuba's Christmas stocking, why in the name of American industries and American decency should the forty millions be filched from two or three stockings in the fireplaces of American homes? Why not from all?

Republican papers have all along told us that the foreigner pays the tax and that a high protective tariff is to the interest of the American people, rather than of special benefit to any one concern. This being true, then the abolition of all tariff on Cuban sugar would be equivalent to "going down into the pockets of all the American people for the gift."

If, however, the Press is justified in saying that by the abolition or reduction of the tariff on Cuban sugar \$40,000,000 would be filched from "two or three stockings in the fireplaces of Amer-

ican homes," then the question naturally arises, how does it happen that the republican party has persistently advocated a tariff policy that would place \$40,000,000 in "two or three of the stockings in the fireplaces of American homes?"

And if a tariff on sugar would mean \$40,000,000 for "two or three stockings in the fireplaces of American homes," does not this fact raise the suspicion that, after all, the American people, rather than the foreigner, have been paying the tax?

Whence comes this \$40,000,000 that will be filched from "two or three stockings in the fireplaces of American homes?"

Is it paid by the foreign producers of sugar to the American manufacturer or does it represent the amount "filched" by the proprietors of the "two or three stockings in the fireplaces of American homes—"filched" from the great mass of American sugar consumers, and "filched" by reason of the republican tariff laws?

## Why Not Promise It?

President Jacob Gould Schurman of Cornell university has recently made a speech that ought to have great influence with republicans. His speech was not accurately reported, but in an attempt to correct the report he has written a letter to the Chicago Tribune which admits as much as any anti-imperialist could wish. His letter reads as follows:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 21.—(Editor of the Tribune.)—The report that I have joined the anti-imperialists, and that at a dinner last night I said "The Filipinos must have their independence" and that "McKinley so intended" is not correct. I have not joined the anti-imperialists. I was a guest of the Boston Reform club last night, and after dinner spoke on the Philippine question. My speech was a part of a long address recently given before Cornell university, which is now in the press of Charles Scribner's Sons. I must refer for details to that publication, which will appear in a few days. In the meantime I would say this to the Tribune: When President McKinley invited me to accept the presidency of the first Philippine commission he said the sole object of taking the Philippines was the humanitarian one of carrying them the blessings of liberty. Our commission reported that the intelligent Filipinos, though recognizing the need of temporary American intervention and tutelage, all desired and hoped for ultimate independence. I said last night that these two objects coincided. The Filipinos want ultimate independence, and our progressive grants of liberty and home rule must eventuate in independence, and it is American sentiment and Philippine sentiment that must finally settle the question.

JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN.

The statement which he makes in his correction is fully as strong as the one first attributed to him. He says that President McKinley in inviting him to accept the presidency of the first Philippine commission said that "the sole object of taking the Philippines was the humanitarian one of carrying them the blessings of liberty." That completely does away with the pecuniary argument now made for holding the Philippines. If the sole object was a humanitarian one, it is entirely out of keeping with the original purpose to discuss the profit that may arise from a colonial policy, and yet those who defend imperialism never fail to emphasize its commercial advantages.

Mr. Schurman proceeds to say that his com-