

The Commoner.

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Fear Political Effect

During the course of the examination of Mr. Mitchell, Mr. MacVeagh, attorney for the mine owners, referred to the strike which was settled just before the election of 1900 and developed the fact that Mr. Mitchell was in telephonic communication with Mr. Hanna just before the settlement. Continuing Mr. MacVeagh said:

"Mr. Bryan was again a candidate for the presidency, and you were conscious of the great apprehensions entertained by the financial interests as to the possibility of his election?"

"I believe," replied Mr. Mitchell, "that the fact that an election was pending had something to do with the early settlement of the strike."

Here is proof, brought out by the attorney of the mine owners, first, that the financial interests of the country were arrayed on the republican side in the campaign of 1900, and, second, that the mine owners settled with the miners because they feared that a continuance of the strike would do political harm to the republican party.

If Mr. MacVeagh had pursued the same line of inquiry and asked in regard to the present strike he might have shown that the fact that a congressional election was pending had something to do with the appointment of the board of arbitration that is now conducting the examination. And yet the rank and file of the republican party continue to credit the president and Mr. Hanna with disinterested patriotism in settling strikes just before the election, and the republican laboring men and farmers continue to vote with the financial interests that control the republican party and can make and settle strikes and panics according to their pleasure. This blind faith will be shattered some day. In the meantime those who are aware of the dangerous tendency of republican policies and methods must redouble their efforts both to maintain the integrity of the democratic party and to make converts among those who have had such implicit faith in republican leaders.

Mitchell on Violence.

Mr. Mitchell rendered a distinct service to the cause of labor when he declared in answer to an inquiry relative to the influence of violence upon the success of a strike: "I should say that its success would not be dependent upon it at all. The very conditions alleged would reduce the chances of winning the strike. In my judgment, violence never contributed to the success of a strike, because it loses for those on a strike the sentiment of the public."

Mr. Mitchell is entirely right. Violence hurts the strikers infinitely more than it does the employers. In fact, the employers so well understand the influence which a display of violence exerts upon the public that they have been accused of instigating the violence themselves in order to profit by the indignation aroused. Mr. Mitchell has done much to strengthen the cause of labor, but nothing that he has said has shown a clearer discernment or a more just appreciation of the forces that move society.

Cannon For Speaker.

It seems that "Uncle Joe" Cannon is to have an easy victory in the speakership contest. Mr. Babcock, who intended to run on his tariff reform record, scarcely got started in the race, and Mr. Littlefield, who trusted to his anti-trust record, was entirely distanced.

"Uncle Joe" is simply a republican; he is perfectly satisfied with the republican party; he has implicit faith that the crops will be good when the republican party is in power, that prices will be high to those who want high prices, and low to those who want low prices, provided republican rule is not disturbed. There is nothing that he wants to reform, and therefore he does not have to worry about platforms or promises. He is the natural and logical candidate of those who accept Mr. Hanna's doctrine of "let well enough alone." If he is chosen speaker, as now seems certain, we may count on the republicans adopting a policy of masterly inactivity.

The Financial Situation

That very conservative paper, the New York Evening Post, quotes and emphasizes the warning uttered by Comptroller Ridgeley at the bankers' convention recently held at New Orleans. The comptroller says:

"In spite of all this we cannot disguise the fact that with reserves running down not only in the reserve cities, but in all the banks of the country, the situation is serious and requires close attention and careful handling."

This from a democrat would sound like a gloomy prediction, and he would be called a calamity howler, but coming from a republican prominently connected with the administration it is merely what the republican papers call a "timely warning," and the Post regrets that it was not uttered months ago. If such conditions occurred under a democratic administration the party in power would be blamed for the situation, but as it is the republican editors attribute it to conditions which the party cannot control. The republicans have so fallen into the habit of claiming credit for everything that is good and shirking responsibility for everything unfavorable that this new instance will excite no surprise.

Garvin the Reformer.

It seems that Dr. L. F. C. Garvin, the democratic governor-elect of Rhode Island, has been something of a reformer. He was denominated a crank, and the republican papers made fun of his bills, but according to the Courier-Journal he was largely instrumental in overthrowing the landed property qualification for foreign voters and in changing the constitution so as to provide for the election of state officers by a plurality instead of a majority. He also assisted in the passage of a secret ballot law, a law creating a bureau of industrial statistics, a factory inspection law, a ten-hour law, and some others. The final triumph of Mr. Garvin recalls the pithy statement of Lady Somerset, namely, that when one person sees a thing he is a fanatic; that when a number see it, he is merely an enthusiast, and that when all see it he is a hero.

The Political Weekly

In a recent speech at the quarterly dinner of the Atlas club—a club composed of Chicago advertisers and advertising agents—Mr. Bryan took occasion to present some observations relative to the political newspaper. As the readers of The Commoner are either supporters of its policy, or intelligent republicans who are liberal enough to desire to read democratic arguments, the substance of his remarks is given below (with some additional suggestions which would have been out of place at a non-partisan dinner):

The daily paper in the large cities is so huge a business enterprise that the owner is seldom the editor. As a rule, the editor, or, rather, the editors of a metropolitan daily are unknown to the public and the paper does not, therefore, stand for the convictions or reflect the views of any particular person.

It is not always known who owns a controlling interest in the stock of the large daily, neither is it known what pecuniary interest the owner of the paper has in the various enterprises which it indorses (or falls to denounce). The business end of such a paper is so large and so lucrative that it is apt to dictate the editorial policy and make the owner timid about attacking an evil that has strong financial backing.

For these reasons, and for the additional reason that it is necessarily local in its circulation, the daily paper is likely to incline more and more to "independence," which in the light of recent events might be defined as another name for plutocracy, for the independent papers usually support the candidate backed by organized wealth. Some paper must take the place of the former political daily if our people are to maintain an interest in public questions. Those who are busy and cannot investigate for themselves must have access to the writings of those who do investigate and who place before the public the results of their investigations. The people are like jurors; they can decide intelligently when they have heard the testimony and the arguments, but the editors and public speakers bring forth the facts and the arguments on both sides. The weekly paper can circulate throughout the entire nation and it is not so large or costly but that the editorship and the ownership can be combined in one person. The political weekly is likely to grow in influence as the daily loses its distinctively political character.

There is another advantage about the political weekly, namely, that its subscription price is so low that political opponents can afford to take it. Every patriotic and intelligent man wants to read both sides of a question. The most upright judge cannot decide fairly until both sides have been presented, and so a citizen, however well-meaning, must have a chance to read the arguments presented by those opposed to his views as well as the arguments advanced by those of his own party, if he would be sure of his ground. It would be well if there were more papers, like The Commoner, devoted to the discussion of the political, economical and social questions that effect national politics. There should be papers representing dif-