

# The Commoner.

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## JAS. MARSHALL HEAD

The Commoner has received the following in regard to James Marshall Head, of Nashville, Tenn., whose name has been mentioned in connection with the presidential nomination.

"James Marshall Head was born in Sumner county, Tennessee, July 25, 1855. His father was a prominent physician whose practice in that county extended over a period of fifty years. The son, James M., attended school at Gallatin, the county seat, and then read law for two years in the office of Hon. James J. Vertrees. He also attended Harvard university, completing the course and receiving his degree in 1876. From that date until his removal to Nashville in 1883, Mr. Head practiced his profession at Gallatin. At Nashville he became a member of the firm of Champion & Head, and later of the firm of Champion, Head & Brown, and enjoyed a large and lucrative practice, especially in the chancery court.

"In 1894 Mr. Head became editor-in-chief of the Nashville American, at that time one of the leading democratic papers in Tennessee. While the American was under his editorial control it was a staunch supporter of democratic ideas and policies.

"Mr. Head was prominently identified with the Centennial exposition held at Nashville in 1897. In 1896 he became the Tennessee member of the democratic national committee, and was thoroughly identified with the work of the party in the campaigns of 1896 and 1900.

"He is a man of conviction, discretion and determination and he has been one of the most useful members of the national committee.

"He was nominated and elected mayor of Nashville in 1899 and since that time has devoted himself to the working out of municipal problems. Being a firm believer in the municipal ownership of city franchises, he has gradually, but constantly enlarged the city's control over its own work and has made an enviable record in this direction. The city of Nashville has for years owned waterworks, and they have been so well conducted that they realize a net balance to the city over and above all expenses. During his administration he has established an electric lighting plant, the first effect of which was to reduce by one-third the charges of the private company, and the city plant promises to give the city twice the light for a little more than half of what was formerly paid to the private plant. He has also secured a contract with the gas plant and street car company that gives the city a chance to buy the gas plant at the end of ten years and the street car company at the end of twenty years. At the present time the gas is sold at not more than a dollar per thousand, and the city receives 5 per cent of the gross income from the gas plant, and a privilege tax of 2 per cent of the gross income from the street car company.

"Mr. Head has proven his ability as an executive; he is diligent in his business, affable in his manner, and yet firm in dealing with public affairs. As a speaker he is ready and clear, and his character gives strength to his discourse. His sympathies are with the common people, and he deserves a foremost place among the earnest and conscientious students of the problems of the present day. In his first fight for the nomination for mayor he had the opposition of the local corporations, but his administration has been so universally popular that he was re-elected practically without opposition."

## A Republican in Disguise.

The Nashville American speaks of Mr. Bryan as "implacable," and proceeds to read him a lecture because he does not stand silent while the corporation democrats debauch the party again

as they did when they had control. The American is a splendid specimen of the reorganizing element. It is a republican in every thought and aspiration, and only uses the democratic name as a convenient cover under which to make its assaults upon the people. It is ready to flatter those who join in its unholy conspiracy against the public, and to condemn all who enter a protest against its plans. When the party wrote the Chicago platform, not at Chicago, but at the primaries throughout the country, the American was not slow to set up its opinion against the opinion of the rank and file, but now violently assails Mr. Bryan or any one else who refuses to accept the dictates of the unregenerate bolters as the voice of the party. As a rule more democracy can be found in the news columns of republican papers than can be found in the editorial columns of papers like the Nashville American, that uses the democratic name for the same purpose that a burglar wears a mask over his face when he goes out upon a predatory errand. The platform of 1896 was more clearly and emphatically written by the voters than any other platform in the last quarter of a century, and the Chicago platform was indorsed by every state and territorial convention but two in 1900, although between 1896 and 1900 the reorganizers that call themselves democrats talked just as they do now. What reason have we for believing that since 1896 a majority of the voters of the party have changed their minds and become the supporters of the monopolistic element of the party? And no matter what doubt there may be in other states, there is certainly no doubt about Tennessee, for her last state convention rebuked the American as emphatically as a renegade paper can be rebuked, and the vote in the state was a clear indorsement of the party's position.

## A VOICE FROM EUROPE

The Financial Chronicle of London, in its issue of February 3 last, contains the report of a meeting of the stockholders of the London Trading Bank (limited). Mr. Wightman Cooper, president of the bank, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, made some remarks in regard to the silver question. The following is a quotation from his speech as it appears in the Financial Chronicle:

"Continuing, he said that he desired to make a few special observations upon that occasion in regard to silver. There seemed to be a need of more metallic money. Banking had to some degree saved the circulation of metal, but its usefulness in that direction had now about reached its limit. Although we were steadily adding to the supply of gold and silver, still its production was out of all proportion to the world's demand, hence the greed of nations to possess more gold-fields. (Hear, hear.) The millions of people in the east who relied upon America and Australia for their supply of silver might, at no distant date, be cut short of metal by the closing of the mines, due to displacing the silver standard for gold. The falling price of silver was causing serious damage to commerce in many parts of the world, especially so in China, where the injustice was felt of having to pay the war indemnity on a gold basis with a silver currency, and some claim for exemption in this connection was, he believed, being made. It was a well-known fact that the great silver deposits of the world were worked out, and as the silver area was small as compared with the gold area it would appear safe and wise to open the Indian and American mints to the free coinage of silver on the terms that prevailed previous to the movement against silver, which had resulted in cheapening the bullion value and upsetting our business relations with silver-using countries and so disturbing the power of exchange."

## ROOSEVELT'S DEFENSE

On another page will be found the speech of President Roosevelt, delivered at Milwaukee a few days ago and reported in the Chicago Tribune. The full text is given because it is the president's defense of his administration's record on the trust question and after a careful study of it the reader can better understand the criticisms herewith submitted.

In the first place, it is evident that Mr. Roosevelt neither desires nor intends to kill the trusts. He starts out by saying that he does not "approach the subject from the standpoint of those who speak of themselves as anti-trust or anti-corporation people," etc. He thus admits that he is not opposed to the trust as such.

Then he proceeds to defend the trusts by declaring that they are "in many cases efficient economic instruments, the result of an inevitable process of economic evolution." This is the phraseology of the trust magnate and, strange to say, it is also the language used by the extreme socialist. Both the trust magnate and the extreme socialist regard the trust as natural and necessary, the former accepting it as a blessing to be distributed through the benevolence of private individuals, the latter considering it a blessing to be administered by the state acting for all the people.

The all-important point at issue is whether the trust is really "an economic evolution." If it is, we may as well prepare to meet the question proposed by socialism. The word, trust, is usually understood to mean monopoly, and if the monopoly is a natural growth, if it is an "economic evolution," the only question that remains is, whether the benefits of monopoly shall be enjoyed by a few who hold stock in the private corporation or by all the people as shareholders in the government.

Is Mr. Roosevelt prepared to discuss the question which his argument inevitably raises?

Again, a careful reading of his speech will convince any candid student of public affairs that the president is at heart in full sympathy with the trust magnates. This is evident, first, from the language he uses. He is bitter when he speaks of the anti-trust people and apologetic when he speaks of the trusts themselves. He praises the feeble efforts put forth by the administration and says that they were "removed as far as possible from rancor, hysteria and unworthy demagogic appeal." He says that "nothing of value is to be expected from ceaseless agitation for radical and extreme legislation." He also fears "legislation of a general and indiscriminate character." He thinks that "many of the alleged remedies are of the unpleasantly drastic type." "We are against all radical and unwise change"—this is the keynote of his speech and it is apparent that he is more alarmed lest good trusts may be embarrassed than he is lest bad trusts may hurt the people. He spends more time warning against radical anti-trust legislation than he does in pointing out a remedy. In the second place, to relieve the trusts of further apprehension he eulogizes Knox and declares that the legislation already secured is all that is now needed. He does not hold out hope of anything more effective than the anti-rebate bill which Mr. Archibald, the attorney of the Standard Oil company, expressly indorsed in a telegram to Senator Quay, and the publicity amendment which was so weak and ineffective that Littlefield, the blue-ribbon, far-famed republican "trust-buster," refused to vote for it.

When he attempts to quote from his Minneapolis speech which it will be remembered led many to believe that he was against the trusts, he quoted the part wherein he defended the large fortunes and left out the "violent and radical" part wherein he suggested that it might become necessary to "shackle cunning" as we have