

# The Commoner.

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Vol. 3. No. 42.

Lincoln, Nebraska, November 6, 1903.

Whole No. 1462

## A SOMERSAULT.

Speaking of the tariff question, Mr. Roosevelt said: "It is exceedingly undesirable that this (the protective) system should be destroyed or that there should be violent and radical changes therein. Our past experience shows that great prosperity in this country has always come under a protective tariff."

Those who have read these remarks of Mr. Roosevelt may be interested in reading something Mr. Roosevelt wrote in his "Life of Thomas H. Benton." On pages 66 and 67 of that book, it will be found that Mr. Roosevelt wrote the following: "The vote on the protective tariff law of 1828 furnished another illustration of the solidarity of the west. New England had abandoned her free trade position since 1824, and the north-west strongly for the new tariff; the southern seacoast states, except Louisiana, opposed it bitterly; and the bill was carried by the support of the western states, both the free and the slave. This tariff bill was the first of the immediate irritating causes which induced South Carolina to go into the nullification movement. Benton's attitude on the measure was that of a good many other men who, in their public capacities, are obliged to appear as protectionists, but who lack his frankness in stating their reasons. He utterly disbelieved in and was opposed to the principle of the bill, but as it had bid for and secured the interest of Missouri by a heavy duty on lead, he felt himself forced to support it; and he so announced his position. He simply went with his state, precisely as did Webster, the latter, in following Massachusetts' change of front and supporting the tariff of 1828, turning a full and complete somersault. Neither the one nor the other was to blame. Free traders are apt to look at the tariff from a sentimental standpoint; but it is in reality purely a business matter, and should be decided solely on grounds of expediency. Political economists have pretty generally agreed that protection is vicious in theory and harmful in practice; but if the majority of people in interest wish it, and it affects only themselves, there is no earthly reason why they should not be allowed to try the experiment to their hearts' content. The trouble is that it rarely does affect only themselves; and in 1828 the evil was peculiarly aggravated on account of the unequal way in which the proposed law would affect different sections. It purported to benefit the rest of the country, but it undoubtedly worked real injury to the planter states, and there is small ground to wonder that the irritation over it in the region so affected should have been intense."

Mr. Roosevelt seems to have "turned a full and complete somersault." As the author of the "Life of Thomas H. Benton" he declared that "political economists have pretty generally agreed that protection is vicious in theory and harmful in practice," but as president of the United States, he insists that it is exceedingly undesirable that the protective system be destroyed.

As the author of the "Life of Thomas H. Benton," Mr. Roosevelt said that while in 1828 the tariff "purported to benefit the rest of the country, it undoubtedly worked real injury to the

planter states and there is small ground for wonder that the irritation over it in the region so affected should have been intense;" but as president Mr. Roosevelt declares that "our past experience shows that great prosperity in this country has always come under a protective tariff."

## BUT HE FORGOT MILES.

When an order was issued transferring Gen. H. C. Corbin from the war department to the command of the eastern division, Mr. Roosevelt took occasion to pay a high tribute to Corbin.

Recently Captain R. B. Bradford, chief of the bureau of equipment of the navy, gave up his bureau position to go on sea duty, and Mr. Roosevelt took occasion to pay Captain Bradford a high and doubtless entirely deserved compliment.

But when General Nelson A. Miles retired from the head of the army after forty years of faithful service, he was permitted to go into private life without one word of commendation from the president. He was dismissed with a cold-blooded order issued and signed by one of General Miles' discredited subordinates. It is not surprising that Mr. Roosevelt is being severely criticised, even at this day for his evidently deliberate snub to one of America's greatest soldiers. It is strange that Mr. Roosevelt places so small a premium upon the intelligence of the American people that, after his friends had undertaken to explain the Miles' snub on the ground that the customary order had been issued, the president goes out of his way to pay a high tribute to two other officers neither one of whom performed service at all to be compared with that rendered by General Miles.

It is not difficult to understand the statement made by one Washington correspondent, who said: "Among old soldiers the language used in criticising Mr. Roosevelt is bitter. They regard the Bradford incident as proof that it was personal enmity alone that prevented the president from saying something commendatory to General Miles when the latter gave up command of the army after forty-two years of honorable and distinguished service."

## The "Syren."

A quotation recently appeared in The Commoner in which reference was made to the "Syren" as "the organ of the steamship trust."

This was an injustice to the "Syren," which, as a matter of fact, is a fearless and thorough-going anti-steamship trust organ and is opposed to every other kind of a trust.

The Commoner regrets that an injustice was done the "Syren" and takes this method of correcting the error.

## Time Was Limited.

In speaking of corruption in politics, Mr. Cleveland could not, of course, go into details but if time had permitted he might have explained his appointment of Mr. Van Alen in return for a fifty thousand-dollar campaign contribution. He might also have mentioned the Havemeyer contribution to his campaign fund.

## THE BENNETT WILL

On another page will be found a copy of Mr. Bennett's letter to Mrs. Bennett, establishing a trust in favor of Mr. Bryan or such educational or charitable institutions as he should select, together with a copy of Mr. Bennett's letter to Mr. Bryan on the same subject. These letters will be found following Mr. Bryan's argument delivered before the probate court of New Haven, Conn., Monday evening, October 26. As he in that argument could only deal with the facts as they had been brought out in the evidence, this additional statement is given to the readers of The Commoner in order that they may be able to consider the case on its merits and not be compelled to rely on the misrepresentations of unfriendly newspapers.

Mr. Philo Laerman Bennett, of the New York wholesale firm of Bennett, Sloan & Company, lived at New Haven, Conn., and was a democratic elector in the presidential campaigns both of 1896 and 1900. Just before the election of 1896 Mr. Bennett wrote a letter (which Mr. Bryan did not receive until after the election) telling of his deep interest in the campaign just drawing to a close, expressing gratitude to Mr. Bryan for his work and saying that he desired to give him \$3,000 in case of his defeat. Before answering Mr. Bryan inquired whether he was interested in any silver mines, and finding that he was not, accepted the sum, which was paid, \$1,000 in 1897, \$1,000 in 1898, and \$1,000 in 1899. In 1900 Mr. Bennett voluntarily gave \$800 more, of which sum \$300 was given at the time of the drawing of the will. After this manifestation of friendly interest (begun when his acquaintance with Mr. Bryan was so slight that the latter could not have identified him on the street) they met and corresponded, and Mr. Bennett proved himself to be in full sympathy with the democratic platform of 1896 and with the efforts put forth by Mr. Bryan in defense of the principles set forth in that platform. The acquaintance ripened into a close personal as well as political friendship, and Mr. Bennett always met Mr. Bryan when the latter thereafter had occasion to visit New York. Their conversations and letters covered a period of nearly seven years. In April or May of 1900 Mr. Bennett made an appointment to visit Lincoln, Neb., and when he arrived, produced a former will and certain memoranda to be used in the drawing of a new will. He desired to incorporate in this new will a bequest of \$50,000 to Mr. Bryan. The campaign of 1900 was just opening, and as it was certain that Mr. Bryan would be renominated and, as he thought that it was probable that he would be elected, he told Mr. Bennett that he would not need the money in case his candidacy was successful. The latter suggested that he would probably need the money more if elected than if defeated. He was informed that Mr. Bryan did not desire to accumulate money beyond an amount sufficient to protect himself against want in old age and to protect his family in case of a breakdown in his own health, and knowing that Mr. Bryan would not accept the money unless at the time of his (Mr. Bennett's death) he needed it, he requested Mr. Bryan to distribute among educational and charitable institutions any part of the