

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 3. No. 44.

Lincoln, Nebraska, November 20, 1903.

Whole No. 148.

..A BLACK SPOT..

In the public statement issued by the state department, Secretary Hay placed great emphasis upon the fact that in the treaty between this government and that of New Granada (now Colombia) in the year 1846, the latter government guaranteed the right of way across the isthmus of Panama. Mr. Hay says that "this is the right which we acquired by the treaty for an important compensation."

It will be interesting to examine the treaty of 1846. In that treaty, after New Granada had guaranteed to the government of the United States the right of way across the isthmus and certain other privileges which the representatives of our government eagerly sought for, it was provided:

"And in order to secure to themselves the tranquil and constant enjoyment of these advantages, and as an especial compensation for certain advantages, and for the favors they have acquired by the fourth, fifth and sixth articles of this treaty, the United States guarantee positively and efficaciously to New Granada, by the present stipulation, the perfect neutrality of the before-mentioned isthmus, with the view that the free transit from one to the other sea may not be interrupted or embarrassed in any future time while this treaty exists; and, in consequence, the United States also guarantee in the same manner the rights of sovereignty and property which New Granada has and possesses over the said territory."

It will be seen, therefore, that the Roosevelt administration is very particular with respect to the obligations which Colombia owes the United States, but is not at all particular as to the solemn pledge the United States made to Colombia.

In order to secure to themselves the tranquil and constant enjoyment of certain important advantages and as an especial compensation for these advantages and favors, the United States guaranteed "the right of sovereignty and property which New Granada has and possesses over the said territory." And yet instead of fulfilling this guarantee, instead of standing by this pledge in an honorable way, there is ample evidence that representatives of the United States deliberately encouraged a scheme to destroy the sovereignty, which this government was pledged to maintain, and gave encouragement to a secession movement among the citizens of a South American republic, with which we were under treaty agreement.

However popular Mr. Roosevelt's filibustering expedition against Colombia may be, it is safe to say that our connection with the Panama revolt will be regarded as one of the black spots in American history.

Waved His Hand in Glee.

In the Chicago Record-Herald of Wednesday, November 11, Walter Wellman, the Washington correspondent for that newspaper, printed an interesting dispatch. That dispatch follows:

President Roosevelt likes a joke, even if it is one which touches a tender spot. Last night, with Mrs. and Miss Roosevelt, he occupied a box at the National Theatre to hear Fritz Scheff score a great success in Bar-bette. One of the lines ran as follows:

"What, a diplomat steal? A diplomat never steals. He only annexes!"

The entire audience turned toward the president's box and joined in a shout of laughter. The president laughed as heartily as anyone and waved his hand in glee at Senator Hanna, who was in another box. It

was some minutes before the singers could go on with the opera.

It was bad enough for the president of the United States to give his sanction to a filibustering expedition against a weak and helpless power with which we were under solemn treaty agreement. But have we not the right to insist that the president shall not make sport of so serious a situation, displaying before a theatre audience the great pride he evidently has in a very questionable transaction for which transaction his administration is responsible?

Bennett's Bequest to Colleges.

The multitude of letters received since the publication of the Bennett will would indicate that many do not understand the nature of the bequests. The will provides that \$10,000 shall be distributed by Mr. Bryan among twenty-five institutions of learning. The \$400 given to each institution is to be invested by such institution, and the proceeds used for an annual prize for the best essay on "The Science of Government." The institution, of course, determines the terms upon which the prize will be awarded, as it does in case of other prizes.

Another ten thousand dollars is to be distributed among colleges and institutions of learning, and is to be used for the aid of poor and deserving young men who are endeavoring to obtain an education. A similar amount is to be divided among colleges and institutions of learning by Mrs. Bryan and is to be used to aid poor and deserving young women to obtain an education. No attempt will be made by Mr. or Mrs. Bryan to select the persons to be benefited. Their duty is ended when they select the institutions to which the money will be given. A great many letters have been received from students who desire aid, who, not understanding the nature of the bequest, supposed that Mr. or Mrs. Bryan would attempt to select the individual students who were to be aided.

It will be some months before the estate is settled up, and no attempt will be made to select colleges or make a distribution of the fund until the estate is settled up and the money turned over to the trustees. The letters already received have been answered, and this notice is given for the information of those who may have been misled by the newspaper reports that have appeared in regard to the matter.

RIGHT JOURNALISM.

In the city of St. Louis while a once highly revered man lay stricken with disease and resting also under the shadow of suspicion affecting his personal integrity, one newspaper seemed to leave no stone unturned to add to the afflictions of the distressed man. The St. Louis Republic contained an editorial entitled "Right Journalism," and doubtless the writer had the conduct of this particular St. Louis newspaper in view. The Republic's excellent article on "Right Journalism" concluded in this admirable way:

"The heart of a newspaper, which is the heart of men, should be strong for duty, but it should be equally strong against inhumanities. Its strength should combine a sane sympathy; not a mere maudlin tenderness which forgets the wronged to weep over the wrongdoer, but an element of human nature consistent with rigid, inexorable justice—a touch of mercy that pities though it must punish—a humanity that will not unnecessarily wound—a decency that will not bound the stricken to death—a fair dealing that will give even the very devil his due."

That paragraph is good enough to be framed and placed in a conspicuous position in the editorial rooms of every newspaper in the world.

ARTISTIC SWINDLE

Receiver James Smith, jr., recently made his report on the United States Shipbuilding company. Referring to this report, the New York American says: "Members of the Morgan steel underwriting syndicate were painfully surprised at the recommendation of the receiver that a suit be instituted against all persons who received the stock of this company without paying full value therefor."

These "captains of industry" were "painfully surprised" because if the recommendations made by the receiver are carried out, it means that the J. P. Morgan company must be sued for the \$5,000,000 of bonus stock issued to them as managers for the steel syndicate in connection with the Bethlehem deal.

It will occur to a great many people that these "captains of industry" are "painfully surprised" on very slight provocation. In his report, Receiver Smith refers to this scheme as "an artistic swindle," and "wholesale plunder." Why should men who devise and carry out "an artistic swindle" and who engage in "wholesale plunder" be "painfully surprised" when, after their dishonest work has been exposed, it is recommended that an effort be made to require them to disgorge their ill-gotten gains? Every day men are arrested on the charge of petty larceny. Every day men are called to account for stealing a few hundred dollars. Why should men who steal several million dollars be permitted to escape the penalty for their wrong-doing? Why should they be "painfully surprised" because it is suggested that they be called to account?

The explanation is that as "captains of industry" men have done things on a large scale which, if done on a smaller scale, would very quickly relegate them to the class of common rogues. The explanation is that while we are very quick to call to account the minor offender, when a man's peculations reach into the millions, his influence and his power operate to discourage investigation and prosecution and serve, also, in the minds of many who are regarded as good citizens as ample justification.

In his report, Receiver Smith charges Schwab and his associates with the deliberate purpose of wrecking the shipbuilding company. He recommends that "as soon as the debts of the company shall have been ascertained, suit be instituted against all persons who received the stock of this company without paying full value therefor, to recover from them such an amount as shall be necessary to pay said debts in full."

The receiver does not hesitate to use the word "fraud" and he charges that earnings, prospective profits, working capital and assets were all falsely stated. He charges that the enormous sum of \$55,500,000 over and above their actual worth was paid for the different companies constituting the trust. He asks: "Who participated in this wholesale plunder? And then he says he will leave that for the proceedings in court to disclose. He adds, however:

"Blocks of the stock went to the vendors of the constituent plants and to the purchasers of bonds as bonus, absolutely without benefit to the company; \$20,000,000 of it admittedly went to Mr. Charles M. Schwab, in addition to the agreed price for Bethlehem. Some of it went to the promoters of this artistic swindle; and when all had been provided for, what was left of the bonds, amounting to \$1,500,000, was handed back to the company ostensibly to supply it with 'working capital.'"

The receiver refers to the gullibility of the dummy directors who authorized the issue of millions of the shipbuilding bonds and stock, saying that they should be held accountable; but