

viency to plutocracy. Those who left the republican party on account of the silver question would have returned had the republican party abandoned the gold standard; those who left the republican party on account of imperialism would have returned to the republican party if it had abandoned imperialism, and so those who temporarily abandoned the democratic party this year will return when the party again takes up the standard of reform and makes a vigorous attack against the privileges of those who are now preying upon the public.

We may expect a growth in the spirit of independence among republicans as we get farther and farther away from the war period and the deep animosities which it aroused.

It is both necessary and proper that men shall belong to parties, for through parties the policies of the government are developed and presented. It is also right that the citizen should hold his allegiance to his country above his attachment to his party.

The country can afford to take off its hat to the independent voter. He makes mistakes, but he means well. He has made a mistake this year so far as the national election is concerned, but the same spirit of independence will lead him to correct the mistake.

### The "Imprudent Benefactors"

"What world-wide benefactors," some one has said, "these imprudent men are! How prudently most men creep into nameless graves while now and then one or two forget themselves into immortality."

Prudence is a good word and it describes an excellent virtue, and yet when it is used to characterize one's care for himself when he ought to be willing to forget himself in an effort to advance some cause more important than self it describes a vice rather than a virtue. In this sense it may be used to describe the man who is too much absorbed in looking after his own business to give any attention to public affairs, and with equal propriety it can be used to describe those politicians—for they can not be called statesmen—who always consider the effect of a policy upon themselves. The great men of the world have not been prudent in the opinion of the selfish and the short-sighted; they have constantly done imprudent things and have always been warned that they were hurting themselves and injuring their own interests. They have, however, established the fact—and it is a fact—that no one can obtain a clear view of a subject if he looks at it through himself. If he would win immortality he must forget himself and devote all his energies toward the advancement of the reforms which he believes to be needed. The man whose first thought and last thought are of himself has little time to consider higher and more important subjects.

But this lesson is not for the great and conspicuous alone. The rule applies to all, whether in exalted or humble position. To every one, whether he acts in a small or in a large sphere, this question comes, and these two courses are open. He can forget himself and remember only his country or he can forget his country and remember only himself. If his thoughts are of himself, he is selfish; if his thoughts are upon his country and upon his country's good, he is patriotic.

The same rule applies to parties. The prudent party that considers only the chance to win is not nearly so apt to win as the party that devotes itself to a great cause and is willing to suffer if by suffering it can promote the public good. If a man can forget himself into immortality, a party can likewise forget itself into immortality. It is time for the democratic party to do a little forgetting; it is time for it to put aside, as a controlling purpose, the thought of getting hold of the offices and dividing the patronage. It is time for it to espouse the cause of the people and devote itself to this cause without stopping to ask what the effect will be on the election. In pursuing such a course it can never meet with dishonorable defeat; and such a course is the most likely to lead it to a real victory.

### The Meadow Lark

On another page will be found an article descriptive of the meadowlark and its service to the farmer. The article is written by Mr. William Dutcher, chairman of the American Ornithologists' Union, and appeared recently in the Nebraska Farmer. Space is given to it not only because it gives

needed information in regard to this valuable little bird, but also because the meadowlark is Mr. Bryan's favorite songster. It is to be found everywhere. He first saw it in southern Illinois when a boy; he has found it as far south as the gulf coast of Texas and as far north as northern Idaho, and it is the bird most seen about his home in Nebraska.

The meadowlark comes early in the spring, sings a strong, sweet song, and seems to delight in giving forth its notes of good cheer. It has not the variety of the mocking bird—that bewitching aristocrat of the feathered tribe—but what the meadowlark lacks in repertoire and compass it makes up in the number of songsters, in the constancy of its singers and in the hearty good-will that it throws into its work. If the mocking bird is a soloist of high repute, the meadowlarks form a chorus that can be heard throughout the summer from ocean to ocean. They are the common people—so to speak—of the singing birds, and even the bright yellow shield which each lark carries upon its little breast will not keep the editor of The Commoner from liking them and longing for their return when winter days drive them into temporary retirement.

Mr. Dutcher's article shows that the meadowlark is a double standard bird, being as useful as it is agreeable. May its tribe increase!

### Schurz Answers a Critic

The campaign of 1904 has brought out many bright things but it has probably brought forth nothing that will be appreciated more than the reply made by Carl Schurz to a Connecticut banker who sent Schurz an insulting letter. The letter and reply will be found below. The republican readers of The Commoner can pause in their rejoicing long enough to peruse this correspondence, and the democrats and populists may find in it some little relief from the unfavorable returns which were so frequent as to become monotonous:

Bristol Savings Bank, Bristol, Ct., Howard A. Warner, Pres't.; Miles Lewis Peck, Treas.—Oct. 26, 1904.—Carl Schurz, Esq.—Dear Sir: Your printed letter is at hand. Conditions here seem very unsatisfactory to you, I wonder you do not return to your native land. That I think is the best way for those who do not like the views of the rulers of this country—the voters. Yours respectfully, Miles Lewis Peck, 24 East Ninety-first St., New York,

Nov. 3, 1904.—Miles Lewis Peck, Esq.—Dear Sir: I thank you for your communication of October 26. I have received similar letters in the course of almost every political campaign, but they were uniformly anonymous. Yours is the first one of which the author was proud enough to sign it with his name. This deserves recognition, and entitles it to an answer.

Your demand that I should leave this country on account of my political disagreement with Mr. Miles Lewis Peck is unkind. I have lived in this country over 52 years, and as, to judge from your letter, you are still young, it may be that I was one of those voters, of whom you speak as the "rulers of this country," before you were born. I have become attached to it. During that half-century I have also tried to serve it, in peace and war, not to your satisfaction, perhaps, but as best I could. And now to be turned out of it because I do not agree politically with Mr. Miles Lewis Peck of Bristol, Ct., is little short of cruel.

But the rule you lay down is also unreasonable. In justice you will have to apply it, as well as to me, to all other persons in the same predicament. You will then, supposing you to be in the majority, send all those who differ from you politically, out of the country—the foreign born to their native lands, and the native born to the homes of their ancestors. But it is probable—I may say certain—that the remaining majority would also divide into parties. You being always of the majority party, would then, according to your rule, read the new minority party out of the country. Now you will see that this operation, many times repeated, might at last leave Mr. Miles Lewis Peck, of Bristol, Ct., on the ground, lonesome and forlorn, in desolate self-appreciation.

But it may also happen to you to find yourself sometime accidentally in the minority of the voters, and then, according to your rules, you would also be sent out of our be-

loved country, to the home of your forefathers. This, no doubt, would be very distasteful to you, and, I assure you, you would have my sincere sympathy. It would show you, however, how unstatesmanlike your theory is.

Let us agree, then, that it is, after all, best for us to respect one another's right as good Americans to differ politically, and that this country is large enough to hold both Mr. Miles Lewis Peck of Bristol, Ct., and his humble fellow-citizen,  
CARL SCHURZ.

### An Unjust Criticism

Professor Goldwin Smith of Toronto, Canada, makes a very unjust criticism of our presidential contests:

It is with regard to the form provided for the election of the president, however, that the work of the fathers has most signally and, perhaps, most unhappily failed. Their intention was that the president should be elected by chosen bodies of select and responsible citizens. For a time the nominations were kept, if not in the hands which the legislators had intended, at least in select hands. But since the Jacksonian era nomination and election have been completely in the hands of the democracy at large, and the election has been performed by a process of national agitation and conflict which sets at work all the forces of political intrigue and corruption on the most enormous scale, besides filling the country with passions almost as violent and antisocial as those of civil war. The qualification for the nomination is no longer eminence, but availability. It is not a question which man is most worthy of public confidence, but which man can carry New York or Ohio.

It is true that the electoral college does not answer the purpose now for which it was intended. At the time it was created we lacked the railroad, the telegraph and other means now employed to bring political information to the home of the humblest citizen, and it seemed to those who made the constitution that such an electoral body was necessary. The change that has taken place is not, however, a retrograde movement. It is rather a distinct evidence of progress. The presidency is safe when "completely in the hands of the democracy at large," and the agitation of which Prof. Smith complains is the stirring that is necessary to keep our political waters pure.

Canada has made progress because she also has stirring campaigns. The fact that our campaigns include the election of a president as well as the election of a congress is a fact to our credit rather than against us. There is no danger in leaving these questions with the people. The people make mistakes, but they do not make them so often as arbitrary rulers, and when the people do make mistakes they correct them more quickly and more easily.

If Professor Smith will cross the line and come among us he will find that the campaigns are educational, and that our people are the better for the political experiences through which they pass.

Responsibility is strengthening our people, and no one at home or abroad need lose faith in the ability of the people of this country to settle aright all the problems that concern them. Some one has said that the American people sometimes wait until the eleventh hour, but that when they do get to work they do enough in the remaining hour to make up for earlier inaction.

The American republic is all right. It is just now suffering from a republican victory and it is afflicted with imperialistic tendencies and an overdose of militarism, but it will recover. The people are enduring things just now that they ought to put an end to, but there is no reason to be discouraged. The democratic party ought to simply redouble its efforts and make its appeal to the moral sentiment of the country, and that appeal will ultimately be successful.

### Municipal Ownership

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Territory, bought out the private water works plant about three years ago by a bond issue, paying some \$72,000 for the plant. It has lowered the water rates about 25 per cent and has made enough profit to spend about \$30,000 in additions to the plant. Last year there was a balance of \$13,000 left over for the year after paying running expenses.

Municipal ownership is a success and the readers of The Commoner who live in cities ought